

**OFFICE OF THE PHILADELPHIA SHERIFF
FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET TESTIMONY
APRIL 17TH, 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Good Afternoon, President Johnson and Members of City Council. I am Rochelle Bilal, Sheriff for the City and County of Philadelphia. Joining me today are Tariq El-Shabazz, Undersheriff, Patrick Lee, Chief Financial Officer and Craig Martin, Sr., Chief Budget Officer, Deputy Chief Vonda Hairston, Court Operations, Chief Inspector Sean Thornton, Court Operations, Inspector Sean Marshall, Sr. Internal Affairs Division/Training Bureau, Inspector David Fallen, Civil Enforcement and Inspector Joshua Perez, Court Operations. I am pleased to provide testimony on the Office of the Philadelphia Sheriff for Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget.

Plans for Fiscal Year 2025: Our office’s main objectives are to support the Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia; execute all orders from the 1st Judicial District Courts; Deploy personnel, to find and return excess proceeds, to those citizens impacted by property sales which will allow them to have access to home buying or other economic opportunities that exist in Philadelphia.

In supporting the city’s Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia and in keeping with Mayor Parker’s platform to have a safer, greener and cleaner City, the Philadelphia Sheriff’s Office has contributed to this plan and stands poised to do more.

Under our Civil Enforcement and Warrant Units, deputy sheriffs and detectives have been essential in apprehending fugitives in 2023 while working in concert with the District Attorney’s Office and Philadelphia Police. In addition to our first order in serving and protecting the courts, our Civil Enforcement personnel have been instrumental in tracking repeat offenders who often appear first in domestic disputes; Complaints, Summons and Subpoenas and more.

If we are to achieve our goals towards improving the safety of Philadelphia, I propose we expand our efforts using technology and increased personnel to help us move in-concert with other law enforcement agencies. To that end, we are very excited to utilize our new Tyler Tech system which

will enable our deputy sheriffs to receive and execute PFA's (Protection from Abuse Orders) and other court orders in real time. In essence, deputy sheriffs will now be able to complete a court order on their mobile phone while out in the field, eliminating the normal waiting period. With this new technology, the normal delays between our office and the courts would be eliminated, potentially reducing the number of repeat offenders left out on the street. All of this will be beneficial to constituents.

The Sheriff's Office, as demonstrated in providing security detail during the elections in 2023, has become the backbone in meeting the demand for more trained law enforcement officers. This includes hiring more deputies in our Bike and K-9 units as an increased "on-foot" presence in our city as outlined in the Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia.

However, our offices' inability to retain high caliber deputies, to perform these duties, is because the deputy salaries are not comparable to other counties, within Pennsylvania, and on a national level.

Our Real Estate Department, through court mandate executes foreclosures and evictions, sells seized properties at auction, and returns excess funds from sales to former owners. Through the integration of a new civil process system, provided by Tyler Tech, our ability to lessen the amount of time per sales transaction along with providing transparency and accountability will only improve the Sheriff Sale process for our citizens.

The Sheriff Office continues to budgetarily fall below the number of personnel needed to effectively handle our responsibilities in protecting and serving citizens. Through our robust Community Outreach Department, our staff participate in hundreds of community events to educate our citizens on the importance of Gun Safety, Sheriff Sales, and the overall function of how the Sheriff Office works. My administration carries out this message through our citywide "Food Box Giveaways Events" and other signature community events.

With the leadership of this city council body, I am certain we can achieve our objectives together. We must first ensure that this budget process will be handled professionally and fairly. Earlier this year, we learned that the Sheriff's Office budget proposal from last year was not placed properly and therefore, was not considered. This is unacceptable and I trust this year's budget process will be executed honorably to reflect this year's budget proposal and forecast as we strive to adhere to the safety requirements that keep our citizens protected.

We will now proceed to our Fiscal Year 2025-29 Five Year Plan, thank you for your attention.

PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW

General Fund Financial Summary by Class						
	FY23 Original Appropriations	FY23 Actual Obligations	FY24 Original Appropriations	FY24 Estimated Obligations	FY25 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY25-FY24
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$28,345,027	\$28,108,342	\$30,232,235	\$30,232,235	\$35,182,332	\$4,950,097
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$1,305,267	\$1,508,473	\$1,347,080	\$1,347,080	\$5,412,225	\$4,065,145
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$1,203,507	\$1,522,714	\$1,287,133	\$4,097,900	\$3,949,768	\$3,949,768
Class 500 - Contributions		\$1,535,241		\$481,125	\$148,128	(\$332,997)
Total	\$30,853,801	\$32,674,770	\$32,866,448	\$36,158,340	\$44,692,453	\$12,632,013

Proposed Funding Request:

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 General Fund budget totals [\$46,655,029.00], an **[INCREASE]** of [\$13,788,581.00] over Fiscal Year 2024 estimated obligation levels. This **[INCREASE]** is primarily due to [An increase in class 100, Employee compensation, due to needed staff. This increase is essential due to the understaffing of uniformed and non- uniformed employees. This will increase our potential to adequately perform the duties of the Sheriff’s office. For class 200 Purchases of services, which entail professional services, improved technology, and computer augmentation. For class 300 and 400 for Material supplies, new vehicle purchase, and equipment, which includes needed tactical gear.

The proposed budget includes:

- [35,182,332.00] in Class 100, **[A \$4,950,097.00]** increase from FY24. This increase will cover the need for uniformed and non-uniformed staff. This will include at least 80 uniformed

employees to man all duties, and positions that are understaffed. To improve the security of the courts, and to assist PPD, when called upon. This will allow the office to assist in reducing outstanding warrants, man all the buildings under the Sheriff's responsibility, assist in reducing guns on the street, and perform the civil responsibilities of the office.

- In addition to supporting the uniform personnel, the non-uniformed personnel, of 30 is necessary. Areas of need are accounting and finance, to adequately keep the office in full financial control. I.T. staff that is essential in our computer augmentation. Our office is years behind in accounting, finance, and computer software. In addition, we have need for sufficient real estate employees, to ensure that our Sheriff sales in handled properly.
- [\$6,334,936.00] in Class 200, [A \$4,987,856.00 INCREASE OVER] the level of FY24. In class 211 Transportation cost pays for deputy travel in the line of duty, transporting prisoners, and serving warrants. Which is part of the goal of this administration to reduce outstanding warrants. This funding will pay for a commercial software license and software in class 216. It will pay for needed professional services. Such as Tyler Tech, which is essential for our computer augmentation, and for computers and major software for the system. These expenses are accounted for in class 250 and 251.
- It will be almost impossible for our office to come up to the level of performance needed for our Sheriff Sales, for accounting, auditing compliance, and for technician competency to assist law enforcement in areas where uniformed personnel are not assigned. Rent and lease payments for

computers and copiers are covered in class 285. This saves money because the needed office equipment can be rented instead of making expensive purchases. In addition, our much-needed training of employees will be covered. In previous years we have only been awarded \$12,000.00 dollars for over three hundred employees. Our employees must be trained and kept up to date. Finance, computer training, compliance with laws and auditing demands and findings, dictate that our employees are consistently trained. This expense is covered in class 216.

- [\$3,381,811.00] in Class 300/400, [**A \$3,850,628.00 INCREASE OVER**] FY24. This funding will [Cover electrical and communication expenses, in class 310. Fire Fighting and Safety in class 312, which is a major increase of \$1,623,539.00 which covers our tactical gear. For every deputy that is hired this is the expense that fully outfits the deputy for duty. This includes firearms, vests, shoes, uniform, tasers, and riot gear. In the past the Sheriff's Deputies have not been adequately supplied with riot gear.
- The expense is absolutely necessary and is a must have for each deputy. Class 313 is for food. This is the liquid portion that is separated from the food itself. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for feeding and providing water for all prisoners in transport, hence this expense is necessary to follow the mandates that are the responsibilities of the office. In addition, class 345, gasoline, fuel cost for Sheriff Vehicles. In the future with the approval of the ordering of new vehicles, the office can request electrical vehicles which would make the expense less.

- In class 400, this includes \$148,128.00 in supplies, office equipment, furniture, and fixtures. Class 428 will cover new vehicle acquisition. For current vehicles that are in mechanical deterioration interior and exterior, \$558,000.00. Our vehicles operate 24 hours a day and are called upon to support the Philadelphia Police Department on all major events and protests. For Civil Enforcement Expansion Service, \$1,050,000.00 for an additional 20 vehicles, to execute writ services due to potential overflow from landlord tenant operations, that maybe reassigned to the Sheriff's office.

STAFFING LEVELS

The department is requesting [439] budgeted positions for FY25, [an increase of 110 position[s] over 329 position[s] from FY24.

The [INCREASE] is attributed to [Eighty uniformed positions and thirty civilian positions The uniformed positions are needed in all areas, the courts, City Hall, and various locations, including our bikes and canine units. Deputies will be called on to assist PPD, for conventions, and crowd control, in the event there are protests. To increase the foot Patrol units on the streets. To maintain adequate staff in the event of retirements and those in the drop program. To man the various polling locations during the elections, if needed, which will be essential this upcoming election, prisoner transport, and to help reduce the outstanding warrants in the city. To have sufficient staff to be a part of the pipeline of law enforcement agencies with the city, state, and federal government law enforcement officers.

Office of the Philadelphia Sheriff

Employment Levels (as of December 2023)		
	FY25 Budgeted	Filled as of December 2023
Number of Full-Time Positions	432	322
Number of Exempt Positions	53	31
Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)	22	25
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions	\$74,321	\$67,487
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions	\$66,022	\$66,022

NEW HIRES

New Hires (from 7/1/2023 to December 2023)	
	Total Number of New Hires
Black or African American	7
Hispanic or Latino	1
White	1
Total	9

PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING: OFFICE OF THE PHILADELPHIA SHERIFF

FY25 Proposed General Fund: \$45,047,029.00

Program Description: Law Enforcement Real Estate Services Administration and Organizational Implementation of Warrant, Protection from Abuse (PFA) and Excess Proceeds Search Units

FY25 Strategic Goals:

[NEW\$ Hire 50-80 new deputy sheriffs.

NEW\$ Utilize newly added corporal positions to augment administrative support within our court operations and installations. The Corporal position will provide administrative impact and support to sergeants tasked with monitoring activities in court spaces—enhanced operational efficiency.

NEW\$ Outline a sheriff explorers program to target high school students and young adults between the ages of 16-20 to support our recruiting efforts.

NEW\$ Hire special investigators for PFA and excess proceeds activities to research and settle open cases.

NEWS Establish targeted and continuous training for supervisors and senior management, both civilian and sworn.

Other Budgetary Impacts

Federal and State (Where Applicable)

Our office relies on an operating budget from the City of Philadelphia and has yet to qualify for state or federal grants. The impact of the increases, as a public facing agency and member of the City's emergency response team, will allow our office to conduct:

- Acquisition of 21st century equipment and software technology for both sworn and civilian personnel.
- Hiring functional staff to build efficient, audit capable operations and reporting systems.
- Support the use of the augmentation contract for IT staff, to manage our office, hardware, software and automation processes.
- Installation and management of the inventory management system to maintain the office reporting requirement to the city.
- Obtain services using local business entities via the RFP and contracting process.
- Create a plan for enforcing red flag laws.
- Coordinate planning with other law enforcement partners regarding enforcing the lost and stolen gun ordinance.
- Enhancing our warrant units' ability to decrease the backlog of felony warrants.
- Developing strategies for enacting safe storage requirements.
- Train our sworn personnel in the latest law enforcement tactics, techniques and procedures.
- Upgrade the skill sets of civilian personnel.

- Translate all sheriff office literature into the **9 languages** that represent the citizenship of Philadelphia.