

CITY COUNCIL REPORT



Meeting Date: October 21, 2025

Charter Provision: *Provide for the orderly government and administration of the affairs of the City*

Objective: *Administer Classification and Compensation Programs*

ACTION

Adopt Resolution No. 13525 authorizing:

- 1) Establishment of the Public Safety Compensation Philosophy to guide and direct the city's compensation practices related to police and fire sworn classifications.

BACKGROUND

With the challenges of the local labor market over the last several years, attracting and retaining a skilled public safety workforce requires a strategic and proactive approach. Focusing on competitive compensation practices for public safety sworn professionals, the City Council authorized the Police Sworn Step Plan in August 2022, and the Fire Sworn Step Plan in November 2024.

These efforts have aligned Scottsdale with other valley cities using step plans, which match base pay methodology. Employees in step plans can receive annual pay progression based on experience until reaching the max step, along with market adjustments approved by City Council during the budget cycle. Since their implementation, both step plans in have been adjusted annually based on market factors. Additional incentives have been added or are under consideration. This fiscal year, Council authorized a longevity pay program for sworn police employees. However, despite these efforts other cities also proactively adjust sworn personnel pay and incentives, creating a highly competitive local compensation market. It is imperative that we monitor this market to ensure our pay remains competitive. Scottsdale needs ongoing strategic solutions to attract and retain talented sworn staff.

ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT

The City Manager has worked diligently with the City Council, Police Department, Fire Department, and the Human Resources Department to develop and present this resolution. It is

Action Taken _____

City Council Report | Public Safety Compensation Philosophy

intended to establish Council's commitment to maintain market competitiveness for public safety compensation. The following outlines the main components of the resolution:

- Establishes City Council direction for annual salary placement at or equal to the number three market position for salary and incentives at the benchmark ranks of police officer and firefighter.
- Establishes City Council commitment to conduct annual salary studies, and adjusting the Fire and Police Sworn Step Plans to maintain a top-tier market position.
- The City Council supports the implementation of compensation and incentives, as financially feasible, to strive for and maintain market competitiveness.

The proposed compensation practices are needed to guide and strengthen Scottsdale's position as a leading employer and ensure we are responsive to the operational realities of our public safety departments.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

At this time, there are no known fiscal impacts associated with the Public Safety Compensation Philosophy. Actual financial impacts will be determined upon completion of annual compensation studies. Market-based adjustments will be implemented, as financially feasible, to strive for and maintain market competitiveness.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this resolution.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT(S)

City Manager's Office, Police Department, Fire Department, and Human Resources

STAFF CONTACT

Greg Caton, City Manager

APPROVED BY

Greg Caton

Greg Caton, City Manager

480-312-7759, GCaton@Scottsdaleaz.gov

10/6/25

Date

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution No. 13525
2. City Manager Memo Dated September 22, 2025

RESOLUTION NO. 13525

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SCOTTSDALE,
MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA, ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC SAFETY
COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY FOR SWORN POLICE AND FIRE
PERSONNEL.

WHEREAS, the City Council values the dedication and contributions of all city staff. In recognition for their extensive expertise, excellent service, and responsiveness, the City Council establishes this resolution directing the following compensation philosophy in the City of Scottsdale; and

WHEREAS, all city staff members are highly sought after by other agencies and competitive compensation and benefits are critical to attract and retain top talent; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that there are some unique challenges when recruiting and retaining Sworn Scottsdale Police and Fire personnel and is therefore necessary to have a different compensation philosophy for those personnel; and

WHEREAS, the City Council values the dedication and contributions of Sworn Scottsdale Police and Fire personnel. In recognition for their talent, extraordinary efforts, responsiveness, and maintaining safety within the community, the City Council establishes this resolution directing the following public safety compensation philosophy in the City of Scottsdale; and

WHEREAS, in August 2022, the City Council authorized the Police Sworn Step Plan. The plan created non-overlapping salary steps for all ranks and 5% within rank step adjustments based upon anniversary dates up to top step; and

WHEREAS, in November 2024, the City Council authorized the Fire Sworn Step Plan. The plan created non-overlapping salary steps for all ranks and 5% within rank step adjustments based upon anniversary dates up to top step; and

WHEREAS, the City Council acknowledges the potential for recruitment, retention and resultant challenges in the area of sworn public safety personnel due to retirements and resignations connected to intense local labor market competition; and

WHEREAS, the City Council acknowledges that becoming a fully functioning police officer or firefighter requires significant investment in hiring, training, time and cost, which underscores the critical importance of retention; and

WHEREAS, the City Council establishes a strong compensation philosophy to be a leader in the market based on top step for Sworn Police and Fire personnel, with annual placement at or equal to the number three market position for salary and incentives at the benchmark ranks of police officer and firefighter; and

WHEREAS, the City Council commits to annual compensation studies to occur each year, and adjusting the Fire and Police Sworn Step Plans to maintain a top-tier market position; and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the implementation of compensation and incentives, as financially feasible, to strive for and maintain market competitiveness.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Scottsdale, Maricopa County, Arizona, as follows:

Section 1. The City of Scottsdale hereby adopts a Public Safety Compensation Philosophy for sworn Police and Fire personnel as described above.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Scottsdale, Maricopa County, Arizona this ____ day of _____, 2025.

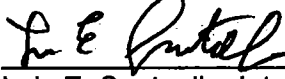
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE, an Arizona
municipal corporation

ATTEST:

Ben Lane, City Clerk

Lisa Borowsky, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Luis E. Santaella, Interim City Attorney

To: Honorable Mayor Borowsky and Members of City Council
From: Greg Caton, City Manager
Date: September 22, 2025
Subject: Public Safety Compensation Philosophy

This memo provides a brief overview of the proposed Public Safety Compensation Philosophy that will be put before Council for consideration in October 2025. This Public Safety Compensation Philosophy represents Scottsdale's commitment to ensuring our public safety staff are competitively compensated for the crucial work they perform.

Public Safety Focus

While Scottsdale works diligently on recruiting and retaining positions across the city, addressing the unique challenges associated with public safety professionals requires a specific strategic approach. Scottsdale's Police and Fire personnel possess extraordinary talent, dedication, and professionalism that is critical to the community's overall health and safety. Attracting and retaining these highly skilled professionals requires competitive compensation and benefits to bring talented professionals to Scottsdale and to retain them.

Becoming a tenured police officer or firefighter requires a significant investment in hiring and training by the city. therefore, it is critical for Scottsdale to prioritize retention efforts. We will continue to face a highly competitive labor market between local agencies. Police officers and firefighters are valuable to not only Scottsdale, but every city and agency. As we experience resignations or retirements, attracting new talent to Scottsdale is paramount. The Public Safety Compensation Philosophy outlines proactive solutions to attract and maintain highly skilled employees.

Step Plans

To better support the recruitment, retention and recognition of sworn police officers and firefighters, the City of Scottsdale authorized the Police Sworn Step Plan in August 2022 and a similar Fire Sworn Step Plan in November 2024. These step plan programs establish non-overlapping rank salaries and a tenure-based salary adjustment schedule.

Market Leadership

To ensure the city remains competitive, Scottsdale commits to maintain a top-tier market position on public safety compensation. Scottsdale aims to rank within the top three annually in benchmark ranks of police officer and firefighter salary and incentives.

To maintain this market position, Scottsdale will commit to annual compensation studies and make necessary adjustments to ensure continued market competitiveness. Depending on financial feasibility, salary and incentive adjustments will vary. As the market competitiveness increases, likely so will the needed investment to maintain market excellence.

Conclusion

Thank you for your continued support of public safety. By establishing a public safety compensation philosophy, the city can adopt a proactive and strategic approach to public safety compensation that aligns with the City's goals of operational excellence, workforce stability and public safety leadership.

Attachments:

Public Safety Compensation Philosophy

C: Charter Officers
Jeff Walther, Assistant City Manager
Monica Boyd, Senior Director Human Resources
Terrance Thornton, Chief of Staff to Mayor Borowsky