



December 30, 2021

Chief Diaz and Director Lombard,

As you have made clear, Seattle has an urgent need for adequately staffed public safety departments, including the Community Safety Communications Center (CSCC) 911 dispatch team and sworn officers at the Seattle Police Department (SPD). Maintaining adequate personnel in these departments is paramount to the city meeting its obligations to provide prompt and an adequate response when our residents, workers and visitors face emergency safety issues.

As illustrated by the Emergency Order I issued on October 29, 2021, I recognize the staffing crisis being felt in our public safety departments and the impacts those shortages were having on our 911 responses and other public safety services. Both of your departments have been impacted by staffing shortages. Based, in part, on your recommendation I signed the Emergency Order that authorized hiring incentives as one tool to compete with other jurisdictions, attract the best candidates and accelerate interest in working for the City of Seattle amidst the pandemic, and ongoing uncertainty regarding budget and support by the City Council. I am pleased to hear of the early signs of success of the hiring incentives increasing interest in employment at the city.

Based on consultations with legal Counsel, it has been concluded that the City Council's actions to limit the Emergency Order were not effective. Thus, you should continue to hire and implement the terms of the Order, until incoming Mayor Harrell or the City Council effectively act extend or alter the terms of the Order. A copy of a letter I sent to Mayor-elect Harrell is attached.

Specifically, until and unless incoming Mayor Harrell or the City Council act to amend or repeal the Order, every individual who applies for city employment since the emergency order was issued (October 29, 2021) shall be eligible for the hiring incentives in the manner provided in the emergency order, regardless of when the offer of employment is extended and accepted and without monetary cap. Departments may also choose to apply the incentive to individuals who applied prior to the incentive but had yet to accepted an offer of employment at the time the emergency order went into effect.

These incentives are intended to attract the highest quality applicants and ensure those who are extended offers of employment accept the City's offer over competing jurisdictions who may have also made employment offers. I recognize that Seattle is not the only jurisdiction dealing with significant staffing shortages and to remain competitive for the most qualified applicants we must maintain consistent incentives that are competitive with those being offered around the region and across the nation. Due to the prolonged nature of public safety hiring, including important background checks and intensive testing and training requirements, having continuity and certainty in these benefits is important.

Thank you both for all your work, and tireless dedication to the city.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny A. Durkan".

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor