



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY, FINANCE
AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Robert Sapien, Jr.

SUBJECT: Fire Department Staffing,
Recruitment, Hiring, and
Bilingual Services Annual
Report

DATE: October 2, 2024

Approved

Date:

10/8/2024

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the annual report on Fire Department sworn personnel staffing, recruitment and hiring activity, and bilingual services in Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

BACKGROUND

The Department's mission is to protect lives, property, and the environment through prevention and response. The Department deploys resources to provide timely and effective all hazards response, including fire, rescue, hazardous materials releases, and emergency medical services. The Department's geographical service area is 208.17 square miles, including 181.36 square miles within City limits and an additional 26.81 square miles of area serviced by agreement between the Santa Clara Central Fire Protection District and the City of San José. The State of California Department of Finance estimates a citywide population of 969,491¹ as of January 2024. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the Department responded to 110,255 incidents, a 1% increase from the 109,136 incidents addressed in the prior fiscal year.

Emergency response resources are deployed out of 34 fire stations, including six Battalion Chiefs, 34 Engine Companies, nine Truck Companies, one Urban Search and Rescue Company, three Rescue-Medic Units (formerly "Squads"), and one Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Company. The Paramedic Field Coordinator (designator: Med30) was eliminated by budget action in Fiscal Year 2023-2024; however, the position was maintained until June 30, 2024.

¹ <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates-e1/>

The Memorandum of Agreement between the City of San José and International Association of Firefighters, Local 230² specifies the following staffing levels:

- Each single piece Engine Company shall have a minimum of four (4) line personnel.
- Each three (3) piece Engine Company shall have a minimum of six (6) line personnel.
- Each Truck Company or Urban Search and Rescue vehicle shall have a minimum of four (4) line personnel.
- Each Battalion shall have a minimum of one (1) Battalion Chief or person acting in the capacity per shift.

Additionally, the Squad Program Side Letter Agreement Between the City and the International Association of Firefighters, Local 230³ specifies that Rescue-Medic Units will be staffed with two (2) line personnel.

The resulting daily minimum staffing level for regularly deployed resources is 191 personnel working 24-hour shifts. To maintain the minimum staffing levels, position vacancies are backfilled by either on-duty relief personnel or off-duty personnel on an overtime basis.

Department Staffing Historical Background

The Department reached its highest staffing levels in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 with 758 authorized sworn positions. In subsequent years, the Department proposed substantial reductions to meet budget reduction targets as the impacts of the Great Recession challenged City resources. The Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Adopted Operating Budget⁴ eliminated 75 sworn positions, resulting in the closure of Fire Engine 30, Fire Engine 33, Fire Engine 34, Fire Engine 35, Truck 3, and reduced the Hazardous Incident Team (HIT 29) from four to two personnel. Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Adopted Operating Budget⁵ action resulted in the elimination of 28 sworn positions achieved by the reduction of Truck and Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) company daily staffing from five to four and Truck Company minimum staffing was reduced from five to four in the International Association of Firefighters, Local 230 Memorandum of Agreement. In that same year, the six remaining positions on the HIT 29 were eliminated and hazardous materials response was transferred to Truck 29. While many Department resources have been restored, Truck 3 and Engine 33 remain out of service indefinitely and Truck 29 is placed out of service when HIT 29 is committed to a hazardous materials response.

The Department has diligently explored opportunities to restore staffing levels to keep pace with the increase in emergency responses. The Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Adopted

² <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/40510/637068396204500000>

³ <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/40520/637068396235430000>

⁴ <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/50625/637152074933900000>

⁵ <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/50645/637152094524730000>

Operating Budget added 12 Fire Engineer positions and deleted 12 Firefighter positions to improve relief staffing levels. In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, 26 sworn positions were added to restore Fire Engine 30 and Fire Engine 34, which were previously eliminated in the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Adopted Operating Budget. The 26 added positions included 11 Fire Captains, 14 Firefighter, and only four Fire Engineers. The 2021-2022 Adopted Operating Budget authorized 719 sworn positions, which included 14 new positions for Fire Station 37 and the elimination of an administrative Battalion Chief and Fire Captain positions (incumbents were placed in vacant frontline positions) that were replaced with non-sworn positions, and the 2022-2023 Adopted Operating Budget authorized 720 sworn positions. With the activation of Fire Station 37, the 2022-2023 Adopted Operating Budget added 14 positions including four Fire Captains, four Fire Engineers, three Firefighter/Paramedics, and three Firefighters.

As additional fire stations become operationalized, the Department will seek to realign relief staffing levels through future budget actions.

2016 Fire Department Organizational Review

The Department first presented its City Council-directed *Fire Department Organizational Review* to the Public Safety, Finance, and Strategic Support Committee (PSFSS) on February 18, 2016.⁶ The Organizational Review, conducted by Citygate Associates, LLC, included a community risk assessment and a Standards of Response Coverage assessment that analyzed Department fire crew deployment. The Standards of Response Coverage assessment evaluated a variety of factors, including response time performance, effective firefighting force (resources) assembly time, call volume, and others. The recommendations contained in the Organizational Review have since guided the Department's Strategic Business Plan goals and objectives and recommendations to the City Council. On August 10, 2018, City Council voted to place the Disaster Preparedness, Public Safety, and Infrastructure Bond Measure on the November 2018 ballot. The passage of Measure T enabled the City to address gaps identified in the *Fire Department Organizational Review* and through Department analysis, including the construction of new Fire Stations 32, 36, 37, and a landside bay addition to Fire Station 20 at San José Mineta International Airport.

The 2016 Fire Department Organizational Review included standards of cover assessment and made multiple recommendations toward improved service delivery. This roadmap has been integral in guiding Department strategic priorities. Strategic advancements have resulted in the achievement of many of its recommendations, including restoration of resources previously eliminated by budget actions, addition of fire stations and response resources, restoration of direct fire management level supervision to the Fire Communications Center, enhanced emergency response capabilities, strengthened public information and education capabilities, implemented citywide centralized emergency vehicle signal preemption (CEVP), technology upgrades

⁶ <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/18961/636683753806870000>

and completion of the Department's IT Master Plan. Within each goal are several specified objectives and the Department remains focused on achieving the goals and objectives of the Plan, which has now approached its targeted checkpoint to set the foundation for the Department's next strategic planning cycle.

ANALYSIS

Current Authorized Sworn Positions

The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Adopted Operating Budget authorized 723 sworn positions. As of June 30, 2024, 647 (approximately 89.49%) of the 723 authorized positions were filled, with 76 vacancies remaining, as seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Authorized Full-Time Sworn Positions

Sworn Position (Rank)	Authorized Positions	Filled Positions	Vacant Positions
Fire Chief	1	1	0
Assistant Fire Chief	1	1	0
Deputy Fire Chief	4	3	1
Battalion Chief	24	24	0
Fire Captain	175	160	15
Arson Investigator	4	4	0
Fire Prevention Inspector	13	12	1
Fire Engineer	234	210	24
Firefighter	267	232	35
Total	723	647	76

Vacancy Rate: 10.51%

Six of the authorized sworn positions are senior management classifications, including Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, and Deputy Fire Chiefs. Thirty sworn positions are assigned to 40-hour administrative staff roles. One Arson Investigator is on duty daily on a 24-hour schedule across three shifts. A fourth Arson Investigator position was authorized in the 2022-2023 Adopted Operating Budget to address absences or temporary vacancies for the Arson Unit. The remaining 683 authorized positions are assigned to 24-hour shift field assignments, approximately 226 per shift (A, B, C) to cover the daily 191 personnel minimum staffing level. Daily vacancies are filled by unassigned on-duty personnel (relief) or by off-duty personnel on an overtime basis. Actual staffing levels fluctuate due to attrition and timing of Firefighter Recruit and Firefighter Lateral academies. At the end of Fiscal Year 2023-2024, actual staffing (filled positions) was 647 sworn personnel.

The Department anticipates closing the vacancy rate significantly through firefighter academies in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025. However, aggressive hiring will need to continue to keep pace with attrition and anticipated growth. Construction of Fire Station 32 began on September 26, 2024, and Fire Station 36 is in the design phase. 42 sworn positions will be required to staff newly deployed Engine 32, Fire Truck 32, and Engine 36 (12 front-line and two relief positions per fire station) when they come online, which is not anticipated to be until October 2025 and January 2027, respectively.

Filled and Vacant Position Status

The Department maintains ongoing recruitment processes to keep pace with vacancies in sworn ranks that occur due to retirements, separations from employment, or added budgeted positions. Promotions to sworn ranks below Deputy Fire Chief are filled internally, and new sworn employees are onboarded at the Firefighter Recruit level. Firefighter Recruits must hold either an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification or Paramedic licensure at the time of their hire. The Department conducts one or two 25-30-person Firefighter Recruit Academies per year. In Fiscal Year 2022-2023 the Department conducted one Firefighter Recruit Academy and one Lateral Firefighter Academy utilizing funding appropriated at the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Annual Report. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024 the Department conducted one Firefighter Recruit Academy and one Lateral Firefighter/Academy.

From Fiscal Year 2018-2019 to Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the Department averaged 39 sworn employee separations annually. The average sworn vacancy rate over that period was 6.3%. Actual Department separations and hiring experience for Fiscal Years 2018-2019 to 2023-2024 are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Separations and Hiring Experience
(Fiscal Year 2018-2019 to Fiscal Year 2023-2024)

Fiscal Year	Authorized Positions	Retirements (Service and Disability)	Other Separations	Total Separations	Total Hires	Actual Staffing as of 6/30/24
2018-2019	710	21	6	27	50	690
2019-2020	711	19	6	25	22	689
2020-2021	707	27	3	30	24	681
2021-2022	719	36	15	51	47	677
2022-2023	720	38	13	51	27	652

Fiscal Year	Authorized Positions	Retirements (Service and Disability)	Other Separations	Total Separations	Total Hires	Actual Staffing as of 6/30/24
2023-2024	723	32	16	48	34	647

Maintaining Minimum Staffing Levels

Daily absences and vacancies in field positions are backfilled with on-duty relief personnel and/or off-duty personnel who are called in on overtime to meet minimum staffing requirements. As shown in Table 3, the aggregated total hours of absence and vacancy required 549,009 hours of backfill in Fiscal Year 2023-2024, for a total absence and vacancy hours percentage of 27.6%.

Table 3: Absence, Vacancy, and Backfill Hours for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Rank	Total Hours	Absence Hours	Vacancy Hours	Hours Requiring Backfill
Battalion Chief	61,152	13,566	3,136	16,702
Fire Captain	474,656	97,796	38,976	136,772
Fire Engineer	681,408	133,857	81,536	215,393
Firefighter	774,592	93,790	86,352	180,142
Total	1,991,808	339,009	210,000	549,009

The Department's relief staffing model estimates the number of relief positions needed to backfill absences and vacancies. The baseline is the lowest number of absences and vacancy hours used by the personnel in each rank in any fiscal year period. Once the baseline is established based on the actual absence and vacancy data, it can then be determined, by rank, how many relief positions should be staffed. To determine baseline hours by rank, six years of data by rank of absence and vacancy hours are used to smooth out potential anomalies in any given year. The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 baseline hours (lowest absence and vacancy hours that occurred in any pay period), excluding Battalion Chief positions,⁸ are as follows:

- Fire Captain = 3,892 hours (in 2019-2020 = 2,951 hours)
- Fire Engineer = 6,689 hours (in 2019-2020 = 4,919 hours)
- Firefighter = 4,684 hours (in 2019-2020 = 3,120 hours)

Utilizing this methodology, a comparison of the vacancy and absence average baseline hours and coverage hours by relief positions is presented in Table 4.

⁸ Battalion Chief positions are excluded from baseline analysis due to the limited number of duty positions (18 for 3 shifts).

Table 4: Average -Year Baseline Data and Relief Personnel (Hours)
(Fiscal Year 2019-2020 through Fiscal Year 2023-2024)

Rank	Average Absence and Vacancy Hours Baseline	Coverage Hours by Relief Positions	Coverage Hours by Relief (shortfall)/surplus	Relief Positions Needed to Cover Average Baseline Absence and Vacancy
Fire Captain	3,521	3,136	(385)	3.4 FTE needed
Fire Engineer	6,002	4,032	(1,970)	17.6 FTE needed
Firefighter	4,418	4,928	510	4.6 FTE available
Total	13,941	12,096	(1,845)	16.5 FTE needed

*FTE – Full Time Equivalent

As reflected in Table 4, the number of relief positions for the Firefighter rank is adequate to meet the daily minimum staffing level. However, the Fire Captain position falls short by 3.4 FTE (385 hours), and the Fire Engineer position falls short by roughly 17.6 FTE (1,970 hours). It is important to note that this methodology guides the Department in determining the appropriate number of budgeted relief positions to maintain; it does not serve to predict the number of hours that will need to be backfilled on an overtime basis.

In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, year-end overtime expenditures were \$31,588,470, \$290,600 of which was reimbursed by the State of California through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services for mutual aid resources provided by the Department. Total absence hours in 2023-2024 decreased by approximately 11% to 339,009, attributable to decreased vacation, sick, disability leave, and modified duty hours taken by sworn personnel, partially offset by an increase of hours in administrative leave.

Augmented Staffing Levels/Mutual Aid

The Department continuously monitors conditions and augments staffing levels to meet periodic hazards such as high fire danger periods (e.g., Red Flag Warning), flood potential, large events (i.e., sporting events), and significant incidents. During these periods, resources that best meet the forecasted hazard are staffed by relief personnel or on an overtime basis in addition to normal daily staffing. For example, when high fire danger is predicted, the Duty Chief⁹ may require additional personnel to staff wildland firefighting equipment such as Type 3 and/or Type 6 Engines that have four-wheel drive capability, and/or Water Tenders.

When resources are deployed for extended mutual aid assignments throughout the State of California, similar reserve resources are staffed by relief personnel or on an overtime basis to bring local coverage to normal levels. For example, when 22

⁹ Duty Chief: Any Chief Officer assigned to respond on a third and greater alarm calls and act as Incident Commander until relieved by a superior officer. Normally is one of the Deputy Fire Chiefs.

personnel are deployed to a significant incident as a Strike Team (five Engines, one Strike Team Leader, one Strike Team Leader trainee), five additional reserve Engines and two Battalion Chiefs are placed into service with equivalent number of personnel to provide standard coverage locally, restoring the daily local staffing minimum to 191 personnel.

Santa Clara County Fire Company Staffing Levels (Fiscal Year 2023-2024)

The Department cooperates with other Santa Clara County fire agencies to provide resources when and where they are most needed through local mutual aid and automatic aid agreements. While apparatus types are standardized, each agency is unique relative to how many resources they deploy and how they are staffed.

Tables 5-8 below provide individual Santa Clara County fire agencies' resource deployment and staffing relative to population, square miles protected, fire stations-to-population ratios, and fire company staffing levels. Areas protected by CalFire, including state responsibility areas, City of Morgan Hill, and South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District, are excluded.

Table 5: Santa Clara County Fire Agencies Staffing to Population¹⁰

Fire Agency	Population Served	Sworn Personnel	Staffing to Population
San José*	969,491	723	0.75 per 1,000
Santa Clara County	225,000	248	1.10 per 1,000
Sunnyvale DPS**	157,566	85	.54 per 1,000
Santa Clara	132,048	125	.94 per 1,000
Mountain View	86,535	80	.92 per 1,000
Milpitas	81,773	75	.92 per 1,000
Palo Alto	67,973	93	1.36 per 1,000
Gilroy	61,033	42	.69 per 1,000

*Excludes population within 26.81 square miles of Santa Clara County Zone 1 Contract coverage area.

**Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety provides both law enforcement and fire protection.

Table 6: Santa Clara County Fire Agencies Square Miles Per Fire Station

Fire Agency	Square Miles	Fire Stations	Square Miles per Fire Station
San José	235*	34	6.9
Santa Clara County	132	15	8.8
Sunnyvale DPS	24	6	4.0
City of Santa Clara	20	10	2.0
Mountain View	12	5	2.4

¹⁰ <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates-e1/>

Fire Agency	Square Miles	Fire Stations	Square Miles per Fire Station
Milpitas	14	4	3.5
Palo Alto	52	7	7.4
Gilroy	16	4	4.0

*Includes 26.81 square miles of Santa Clara County Zone 1 Contract coverage area.

Table 7: Santa Clara County Fire Agencies Population to Fire Stations Ratio

Fire Agency	Population	Fire Stations	Population per Fire Station
San José	969,491	34	28,514
Santa Clara County	225,000	15	15,000
Sunnyvale DPS*	157,566	6	26,261
Santa Clara	132,048	10	13,204
Mountain View	86,535	5	17,307
Milpitas	81,773	4	20,443
Palo Alto	67,973	7	9,710
Gilroy	61,033	4	15,258

*Excludes population within 26.81 square miles of Santa Clara County Zone 1 Contract coverage area.

Table 8: Santa Clara County Fire Agencies Fire Company Staffing

Fire Agency	Engine Staffing	Truck Staffing	Daily Staffing
San José	4	4	191
Santa Clara County	3	4	66
Sunnyvale DPS	2	2	26
City of Santa Clara	3	4	36
Mountain View	3	3	21
Milpitas	3	4	21
Palo Alto	3	3	24
Gilroy	3	3	9

National Staffing Levels

Amongst cities nationwide with populations of 800,000 or greater, all but one provide four or more personnel per Engine Company. In that same group, staffing-to-population ratios range from 0.73 to 1.98 per 1,000 residents in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. San José and San Diego ranked lowest at 0.73 for San Diego and 0.75 for San José per 1,000 residents. San Francisco, Chicago, and Philadelphia ranked highest at 1.98, 1.95, and 1.95, respectively. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 5.2.3 requires

that engine companies be staffed with a minimum of four on-duty personnel¹¹. 16 of the 17 most populous U.S. cities meet this requirement. Table 9 below details the 17 most populous U.S. cities for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

Table 9: Staffing to Population in Largest U.S. Cities (Population >800,000)

City	Estimated Population	Sworn Personnel	Staffing to Population
New York, New York	8,097,282	15,225	1.88 per 1,000
Los Angeles, California	3,795,936	3,510	0.92 per 1,000
Chicago, Illinois	2,638,159	5,160	1.95 per 1,000
Houston, Texas	2,319,119	3,897	1.68 per 1,000
Phoenix, Arizona	1,662,607	1,978	1.18 per 1,000
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1,533,828	3,000	1.95 per 1,000
San Antonio, Texas	1,513,974	1,893	1.25 per 1,000
San Diego, California	1,388,996	1,021	0.73 per 1,000
Dallas, Texas	1,302,753	2,097	1.60 per 1,000
Jacksonville, Florida	997,164	1,257	1.26 per 1,000
Fort Worth, Texas	996,756	1,784	1.78 per 1,000
Austin, Texas	984,567	977	.99 per 1,000
San José, California	956,433	723	0.75 per 1,000
Charlotte, North Carolina	923,164	1,638	1.77 per 1,000
Columbus, Ohio	915,427	1,104	1.20 per 1,000
Indianapolis, Indiana	876,665	1,270	1.44 per 1,000
San Francisco, California	788,478	1,564	1.98 per 1,000

Span of Control

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1561(2020 Edition): Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety states that “an effective span of control shall be determined by the ability of each supervisory position to monitor the activities of assigned subordinates and to communicate effectively with them.” NPFA fire officer instructional texts define span of control as “the maximum number of personnel or activities that can be effectively controlled by one individual (usually three to seven).” The Department maintains a 3-to-1 span of control on Engine and Truck companies with a Fire Captain (company officer) assigned to each deployed resource. Through the 2023-2024 Adopted Operating Budget, 3.0 Battalion Chief positions were added to the Department’s staffing levels to create a 6th battalion (Battalion 35), providing equitable and manageable levels of command and control in Central and East San José. As such, six Battalion Chiefs supervise 38 company officers with a span of control of 6-8 as indicated in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Current Battalion Chief/Company Officer Span of Control

¹¹ https://www.nfpa.org/~media/Files/Code%20or%20topic%20fact%20sheets/NFPA_1710_Fact_Sheet.pdf

	Battalion 1	Battalion 2	Battalion 5	Battalion 10	Battalion 13	Battalion 35
Company Officers	8	7	8	7	8	6

Arson Unit Staffing

The Arson Unit is the sole law enforcement division within the Department and is staffed with four Arson Investigators and one Fire Captain (supervisor). Arson Investigators are assigned to 24-hour shifts (A, B, C) to maintain around-the-clock response availability and the Arson Fire Captain is assigned to a 40-hour work week. To strengthen 24-hour availability for investigation and prosecution of arson crimes, the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Adopted Operating Budget added 1.0 additional Arson Investigator to address absences and vacancies.

EMT Certification and Paramedic Licensure

To deliver advanced life support services on all response resources, the Department maintains 94 EMTs and 173 paramedics in the Firefighter rank. At the end of Fiscal Year 2023-2024, there were 35 Firefighter/Paramedic vacancies. Firefighter Recruit EMT applicants far exceed paramedic applicants, and the Department continues to hear of Firefighter/Paramedic recruitment challenges across the state from other fire agencies. Presently, the Department is evaluating recruitment and internal staffing options to increase the number of available paramedics to reduce mandatory overtime assignments. The Department has expanded the number of Support Paramedics, reinstating paramedic status within the Fire Engineer and Fire Captain ranks to expand coverage of paramedic functions along with Firefighters. As the number of Support Paramedics increased, mandatory call-back hours for Firefighter/Paramedics significantly reduced.

Department Status on Recruitment and Hiring

The Department engages in ongoing recruitment and training efforts to maintain authorized non-sworn and sworn staffing levels. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, staff conducted a variety of entry-level and lateral hiring as well as promotional recruitments that filled 150 sworn vacancies. Each classification has unique job requirements and minimum qualifications and requires a separate recruitment process. External recruitments are conducted for the entry-level Firefighter rank, and internal recruitments are conducted for promotion to non-management sworn ranks. Ongoing career development and training are critical to delivering safe, efficient, and effective responses to all community risks, including fire, rescue, hazardous materials releases, and emergency medical services requests. The Department provides ongoing training that assists sworn personnel in achieving their career development goals. Department staff are engaged in all sworn recruitments in coordination with the Human Resources

Department. Communication and marketing for external recruitments are supported by the Public Information Manager in the Office of the Fire Chief. The Department is committed to advancing initiatives toward increasing the number of qualified female candidates who apply for entry-level and lateral positions. Through the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Proposed Operating Budget, funding was approved to hire a consultant specializing in fire service recruitment to evaluate current hiring practices and recommend a strategic plan informed by industry best practices to increase the representation of women in the Fire Department. This Request for Proposal process is currently underway.

External Sworn Recruitments (Firefighter Recruit)

Firefighter recruitments attract many applicants for a limited number of position openings. The Department establishes and maintains Firefighter Eligibility Lists at approximately two-year intervals depending on the timing of hiring and list viability. Firefighter Recruits are external recruitments with a rigorous multi-step process and a 20-week entry-level academy that prepares them for field duty. Upon successful completion of the academy, they graduate/promote into the Firefighter classification and begin their one-year probationary period in the Bureau of Field Operations.

The Department's minimum qualifications allow persons with little or no firefighting background to enter the service; however, qualified applicants will have obtained emergency medical technician certification minimum qualifications or a paramedic license to meet desirable qualifications.

Firefighter minimum qualifications at the time of application include:

- Graduation from High School or equivalent (G.E.D. or California Proficiency Certificate).
- Possession of a valid driver's license at the time of application. Must obtain a California driver's license, if issued by another state, prior to promotion to the Firefighter classification.
- Possession of a current and valid State of California Emergency Medical Technician Certification or Certified by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, Emergency Medical Technician – Basic within one (1) year of application filing deadline (preferably at the time of application).
- Provide proof of a valid Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) within six (6) months of the application filing deadline and, additionally, within one (1) year prior to date of hire. The CPAT must be renewed annually to remain valid.
- At least 18 years of age at the written examination date.

The Department strives to reflect the community it serves by attracting a diverse and qualified candidate pool through extensive outreach and recruitment activities. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, 935 applicants expressed interest in joining the Department, of which

528 were considered qualified to continue the recruitment process. Table 11 below illustrates the demographic data of the total qualified candidates by ethnicity.

Table 11: Demographic Breakdown of Qualified Candidates by Ethnicity

Demographic Data Point	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1
American Indian, Alaskan Native, and/or Indigenous (1)*	6
Black or African American (1)*	35
Hispanic (4)*	159
Indian	2
Chinese	10
Cambodian	1
Filipino (3)*	39
Hmong	1
Indonesian	1
Japanese	3
Korean (1)*	2
Malaysian	1
Thai	2
Vietnamese	7
Native Hawaiian/Samoan/Tongan (1)*	5
White (not of Hispanic Origin) (10)*	224
Decline to State	29
Grand Total	528

*Number of qualified female candidates (Total: 21)

Recruitment Marketing and Outreach

The Department's goal is to optimize recruitment marketing and outreach efforts within its limited resource capacity. These efforts leverage interest from employee resource groups, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, social media, webpages, and advertising platforms. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the Department conducted enhanced recruiting efforts through the following actions:

- Participated in over 30 job/career fairs;
- Held the 5th Annual San José Fire Department *Women's+ Boot Camp*; and
- Advertised open recruitments across multiple online and social media platforms, as well as through Citywide messaging and fire station banners.

San José Fire Department Women's+ Boot Camp

The San José Fire Department (SJFD) Women's+ Boot Camp strives to increase the number of female applicants to entry-level Firefighter positions. This event was initially proposed and developed by a female firefighter in the Department in 2019. The boot

camp is intended to engage and inspire women to pursue a highly rewarding career in the fire service. Delivered by female firefighters, the one-day boot camp introduces interested attendees to the physical and mental demands of the job and offers hands-on exercises using firefighting tools and equipment and small group and one-on-one dialogue sessions. The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 boot camp was broadly marketed by the Department and drew 48 participants to the event on May 25, 2024. Attendee feedback was captured to guide improvements for future boot camps. The Department is committed to providing at least one Women's+ Boot Camp event annually.

San José Fire Explorer Post 888

The San José Fire Explorer Post 888¹², a Boy Scouts of America/Learning for Life program, maintained a presence in the community during Fiscal Year 2023-2024. This program helps young adults, 16 to 18 years old, prepare for a career in the fire service with classroom training and hands-on lessons on the drill grounds. Participants work with the Department to learn firefighting and leadership skills, all while having fun and earning community service hours. This program provides one of many pipelines to the fire service and many of these participants matriculate to local junior colleges and EMT programs to obtain their certification, a minimum qualification to become a firefighter.

Internal Sworn Recruitments (Promotions)

The Department and Human Resources Department establish promotional eligibility lists for the five non-management ranks above Firefighter, including Fire Engineer, Fire Prevention Inspector, Arson Investigator, Fire Captain, and Battalion Chief. Each classification has minimum qualifications, unique job requirements, and requires a separate recruitment process. In promotional recruitments, applicants who meet minimum qualifications for the position and successfully pass all phases of the testing process are placed on a promotional eligibility list ranked by total test scores, seniority, and other points, as applicable. Promotional eligibility lists generally expire after two years and may be extended up to a year. The City's Municipal Code specifies how promotions from an eligibility list will be administered:

“Rank on an eligibility list determines the order of names certified as available for appointment. The ten highest are certified for one vacancy. Where there is more than one vacancy, the number certified is the number of vacancies plus ten. The appointing authority may select any eligible candidates among the certified eligible list to fill the available vacancies, as there is no requirement to select certified eligibles in rank order.” (City Municipal Code Section 3.04.780.F.1)

During Fiscal Year 2023-2024, there were 86 sworn promotions which included: one Deputy Fire Chief, seven Battalion Chiefs, one Arson Investigator, 23 Fire Captains, 13 Fire Prevention Inspectors, 41 Fire Engineers.

¹² San José Fire Explorer Post 888. <https://sjff.org/in-your-community/san-jose-fire-explorer-post-888>

Accredited Local Academy

The Department is recognized as a State Fire Marshal Accredited Local Academy. An Accredited Local Academy is defined as a partnership between a fire agency serving a specific authority having jurisdiction and the Office of the State Fire Marshal to deliver an approved State Fire Training curriculum within a given region. The Accredited Local Academy status enables the Department to deliver approved State Fire Training curriculum with the support of Department certified instructors, allowing internal scheduling, prioritization, and coordination.

South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium (The Academy)

The South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium¹³ operates under a Joint Powers Agreement with eight community colleges and certifies training in law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical training, dispatch, and more. The Academy reaches approximately 2,700 full-time equivalent students each year including professionals from more than 70 City and County agencies. The Academy delivers entry-level fire service training and continuing education curriculum for fire service professionals. The Department works closely with the Academy to provide timely courses for career development and offers opportunities for development and recruitment. For Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the Department continued the cooperative relationship, including the inclusion of two Department Firefighter Recruits in a Joint Firefighter Academy that included employees from the Palo Alto Fire Department and students from The Academy.

Advertising, Marketing, and Social Media Resources

The Department maintains a robust and user-friendly landing page that features current employment opportunities and the Electronic Interest Card via the E-Notification system. This system allows those interested in a job with the Department to sign up for notifications when jobs are open. The Department has a prominent social media presence and advertises employment opportunities and events on platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Fire Department “Vision 2023” Strategic Business Plan

The City Council approved the *San José Fire Department’s “Vision 2023” Strategic Business Plan*¹⁴ (Plan) on June 7, 2016. A key focus area of the Plan, titled “Sustainable Workforce,” established goals towards “Active recruitment of a diverse workforce, ongoing training for line staff, succession planning, reduced job-related injuries, improved health and safety of line staff.”

¹³ South Bay Regional Public Safety Training: <https://theacademy.ca.gov/>

¹⁴ http://sanjose.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&event_id=2139&meta_id=576586

These goals are:

- Actively recruit, train, and support a talented and diverse workforce.
- Ensure that all personnel have the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to excel within their role in the organization.
- Provide career development opportunities to personnel to reach their fullest professional potential.
- Provide and promote a culture of safety, health, and wellness.

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Firefighter Recruit & Firefighter Lateral Recruitment Activity

The Firefighter Eligibility List typically expires after two years and may be extended depending on Department needs and list viability. Demographics from the eligibility list established on July 14, 2023, are illustrated in Tables 12a and 12b below. Twenty-four Firefighter Recruits began Academy 24-01 on January 22, 2024, and 23 were promoted to the rank of Firefighter on June 7, 2024.

Table 12a: Firefighter Recruits Eligibility List Captured Demographics

Firefighter Recruit Academy 24-01 January 22, 2024, to June 7, 2024		
Demographic Data Point	Number	Percent
California Resident	24	100.0%
Out of State Resident	0	0.0%
San José Resident	5	20.8%
Non-San José Resident	19	79.2%
Gender: Male	22	91.6%
Gender: Female	2	8.4%
Gender: Undisclosed	0	0.0%
EMT Certified	13	54.2%
Licensed Paramedic	17	70.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2	8.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	8.3%
Black, African American	1	4.2%
Mexican, Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin	10	41.7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White, Caucasian	9	37.5%
Undisclosed (Race/Ethnicity)	0	0.0%

Firefighter Recruit Academy 24-01 began on January 22, 2024, with 23 Firefighter Recruits. Joining 10 weeks later on April 1, 2024, Firefighter Lateral Academy 24-02 started with 5 lateral Firefighters, for a total of 28 new Firefighters who graduated and joined the frontline on June 7, 2024.

Table 12b: Firefighter Laterals Eligibility List Captured Demographics

Firefighter Lateral Academy 24-02 April 1, 2024 – June 7, 2024		
Demographic Data Point	Number	Percent
California Resident	11	78.6%
Out of State Resident	3	21.4%
San José Resident	1	7.1%
Non-San José Resident	13	92.9%
Gender: Male	14	100.0%
Gender: Female	0	0.0%
Gender: Undisclosed	0	0.0%
EMT Certified	2	14.3%
Licensed Paramedic	12	85.7%

As previously noted, the Department seeks to actively recruit, train, and support a talented and diverse workforce. To that end, demographic data is maintained to monitor progress and guide recruitment efforts. Table 13, shown below, provides gender and race/ethnicity data across sworn ranks.

Table 13: Sworn Personnel Demographics

	Senior Staff	BC	CA	AI	FPI	FE	FF
Female (24)	0	1	4	1	2	4	12
American Indian or Alaskan Native (4)	0	0	2	0	0	1	1
Asian/Pacific Islander (43)	1	2	15	0	2	12	11
Black, African American (13)	1	0	8	0	1	1	2
Mexican, Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin (98)	1	5	31	0	2	36	23

	Senior Staff	BC	CA	AI	FPI	FE	FF
White, Caucasian (234)	1	12	83	3	4	97	34
Two or more ethnicities (21)	0	1	9	0	1	4	6
Undisclosed/Declined to State (Race/Ethnicity) (234)	1	4	12	1	2	59	155
Total: (647)	5	24	160	4	12	210	232

Key: BC = Battalion Chief, CA= Captain, AI= Arson Investigator, FPI= Fire Prevention Investigator, FE= Fire Engineer, FF= Firefighter

Sworn Bilingual/Language Access Services

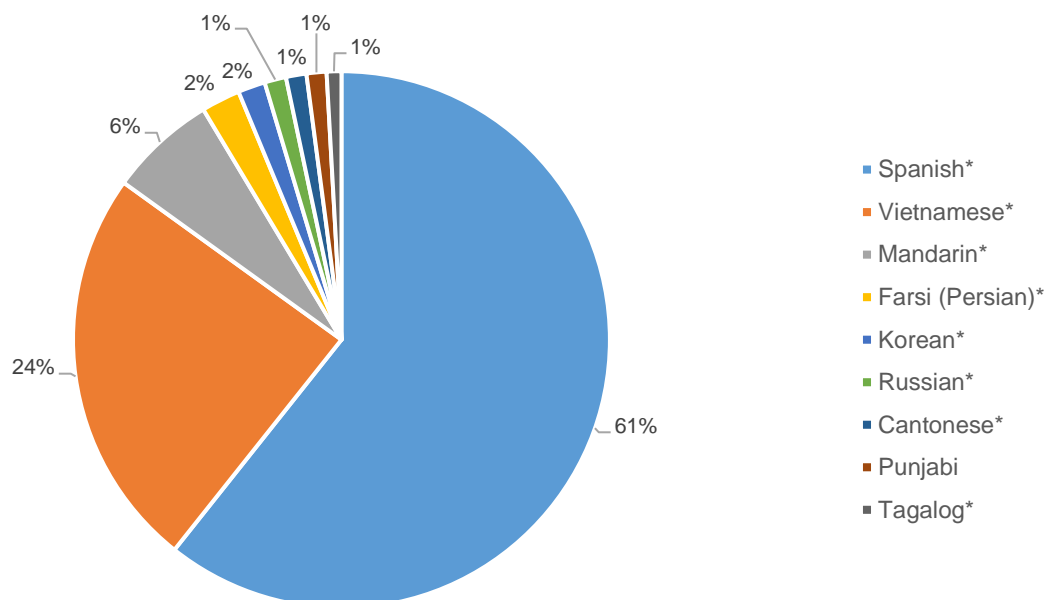
The Department maintains a vision to provide bilingual and language access capabilities in all services delivered, including emergency medical services, fire suppression, fire prevention, and public education activities, by staffing certified bilingual sworn employees at all fire stations on each work shift. As of June 30, 2024, there were 147 sworn employees (22.7%) in the Department who spoke a language other than English, with 23 languages recognized for certification.

Language Access Services for Emergency Dispatch and Response

In response to community emergencies, verbal communications are most critical in the 9-1-1 Dispatch Center as incident details are gathered and prearrival instructions are provided for 9-1-1 callers while field resources are en route. The Department's Fire Communications dispatchers utilize language interpreter services provided by Voiance, which is contracted by the California Office of Emergency Services to assist in processing incoming 9-1-1 calls. When a non-English speaking caller is on the line, the Voiance service is accessed by the dispatcher. When the language is known, the dispatcher can connect directly to an interpreter for the most encountered languages. Otherwise, a Voiance operator assists with the identification of the language and patches the call to an available individual meeting the language required. The dispatcher then proceeds to follow protocols with the interpreter's assistance.

Sworn responders frequently encounter non-English speaking civilians in emergency situations where translation is beneficial to emergency mitigation. In these situations, responders must rely on a Fire Department responder's matching language skill or a third-party translator. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, responders reported requiring language translation and interpretation at 3,390 incidents, approximately 3.4% of the 110,255 total incidents. These instances are logged in the Department's records management system (Firehouse), where responders reported meeting the language access need 100% of the time through bilingual Fire Department responders, assistance from bystanders, bilingual Police Department responders, Language Line Solutions services, or other means. The Department utilizes the Language Line Solutions service in situations where field responders are unable to communicate with the public on their behalf while on scene and when there are no available civilians nearby or capable of providing interpretation. Field responders may access Language Line Solutions via cell phone to connect to an interpreter, who can then provide interpretation services for all parties in real time. Figure 1 below displays frequently encountered language needs in which CyraCom and Language Line Solutions were utilized in Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

Figure 1: Fiscal Year 2023-2024 CyraCom & Language Line Translation Service Utilization



The languages denoted by an asterisk are included in the 20 languages recognized by the Department for certification. The City of San José's Human Resources Department provides testing and services for employees pursuing certification.

Bilingual/Language Access Capabilities per Fire Station

Fire personnel may bid for positions at fire stations where vacancies exist as announced in Assignment Orders. These positions are awarded in the bidding process principally by seniority in rank except in circumstances where organizational needs supersede. Vacant positions at fire stations identified as high need for bilingual capabilities are awarded to the high seniority certified bilingual bidder. In these circumstances, this information is communicated during the bidding process via the Assignment Order announcement. The last Assignment Order was published on June 28, 2024.

The Department has a vision of providing bilingual and language access capabilities at every fire station on every shift and encourages bilingual personnel to bid on these positions as they become available. Based on the needs of the community, the Fire Chief may elect to assign personnel with bilingual skills to these stations. Using the bid results of Assignment Orders, the following fire stations are to be considered the priority group for bilingual assignments on the next bid. This priority list of fire stations is not a static list and can change with each assignment order; the changes will be based on personnel movement and language need. Battalion Chiefs are encouraged to assign bilingual relief personnel into those fire stations where a language need has been identified. Table 14 below reflects the current number and assignment distribution of language-certified line personnel.

Table 14: Bilingual Capabilities per Fire Station

Fire Station	A-Shift	B-Shift	C-Shift	TOTAL	Fire Station Bilingual Status
1	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish (2)	4	High Need
2	Spanish (2) Cantonese Vietnamese	Spanish	Cantonese Spanish	7	High Need
3	Russian		Spanish Mandarin	3	High Need
4	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	3	High Need
5	Khmer Spanish (2)	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	5	High Need
6		Japanese Spanish	Spanish	3	
7			Vietnamese Spanish	2	

Fire Station	A-Shift	B-Shift	C-Shift	TOTAL	Fire Station Bilingual Status
8		Spanish Vietnamese		2	High Need
9	Spanish	Tagalog		2	
10	Spanish		Vietnamese	2	
11	Spanish	Spanish (2)		3	
12				0	
13			Spanish Korean	2	
14		Spanish	Russian	2	
15		Tagalog	Spanish French	3	
16	Turkish Vietnamese	Spanish (1)	Spanish (3)	6	High Need
17	Spanish	Spanish		2	
18		Vietnamese	Spanish (2)	3	High Need
19	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	3	
20		Spanish (2) Russian	Spanish (3)	6	
21	Spanish (3)	Spanish (2) Vietnamese	Cantonese	7	High Need
22			Spanish (2) Vietnamese	3	
23	Vietnamese	Spanish (2)	Cantonese	4	
24	Spanish		Tagalog	2	High Need
25	Tagalog	Spanish	Spanish	3	
26	Russian Vietnamese (2)	Spanish		4	High Need
27			Spanish	1	
28	German Spanish (2)	Spanish	Spanish	5	
29		Spanish	Spanish	2	
30	Spanish (2)	Tagalog Cantonese	Spanish Portuguese (2)	7	
31		Spanish		1	

Fire Station	A-Shift	B-Shift	C-Shift	TOTAL	Fire Station Bilingual Status
33				0	
34	Spanish (2)	Italian	Armenian Tagalog	5	High Need
35	Spanish Vietnamese	Tagalog	Khmer Spanish (2)	6	
37				0	
Relief Personnel	Spanish (5) Vietnamese Portuguese	Assyrian Spanish (9)	Cantonese Spanish (5)	23	
Total	42	44	50	136	

The Department will continue to consider adding to the list of recognized certified languages on a case-by-case basis, in response to community needs. Additionally, it will evaluate the assignment distribution of bilingual relief personnel, especially relief personnel, to close the gap in bilingual positions at fire stations where bilingual skills are not currently available.

The Department's Bilingual Policy requires the Department to strive to achieve the assignment of a certified bilingual employee at each fire station on each shift. With 34 fire stations and three shifts, 102 placements are required to achieve the program vision. At the end of 2022, fire station bilingual skill assignments improved from 122 to 154 assignments. In Fiscal Year 2022-2023, there were 51 bilingual relief personnel available, and they could be assigned to fire stations lacking bilingual skills when feasible. At the end of this Fiscal Year 2023-2024, there are 23 bilingual relief personnel available capable of being assigned to fire stations to meet the Department's operational needs. The Department will continue to optimize the placement of relief personnel and will continue to engage the International Association of Firefighters, Local 230 and other stakeholders to improve the distribution of bilingual skills across fire stations.

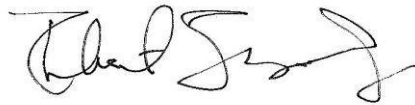
October 2, 2024

Subject: Fire Department Staffing, Recruitment, Hiring, and Bilingual Services Annual Report

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COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, City Manager's Budget Office, and Human Resources Department.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Sapien, Jr.", with a stylized, cursive script.

ROBERT SAPIEN, JR.
Fire Chief, Fire Department

For questions, please contact James A. Williams, Assistant Fire Chief at James.A.Williams@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 794-7001.