



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Bien Doan

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** April 3, 2026

Approved

Date:

April 3, 2026

**SUBJECT: Lower Income Voucher and Equity Program Amendment**

## RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to:

1. Administer a preference for public employees including:
  - a. San José Police Department (SJPD) officers;
  - b. San José Fire Department (SJFD) personnel; and
  - c. K-12 public school teachers employed within San José.

## BACKGROUND

The Lower Income Voucher and Equity (LIVE) Program is designed to support housing affordability for public-sector employees who face significant cost barriers in San José's rental market. As housing costs in the region have risen sharply, many essential employees in the public sector, have struggled to live near their workplace. Acknowledging this strain, San José has proposed the LIVE program to retain workforce and promote long-term housing stability.

## ANALYSIS

San José continues to face staffing challenges across multiple essential service sectors, including public safety and education. High housing costs remain a significant barrier to attracting and retaining employees who serve the community.

SJPD personnel has well documented staffing shortages and retention issues, having historically relied heavily on overtime to fill gaps. Understaffing has been serious enough to trigger emergency measures and reassignment of officers.

SJFD personnel face demanding schedules that require rapid response times and geographic proximity to their stations. High housing costs often force them to live far outside city limits. Providing housing preferences would support operational readiness and reduce burnout associated with long commutes.

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Likewise, K-12 educators are increasingly unable to afford to live in the communities they serve. When educators are priced out, schools experience instability, larger class sizes and reduced educational continuity. Combined with the growing rate of school closures in the region, this creates a compound problem; one that ultimately undermines student success.

Providing housing preference across these sectors promotes workforce stability, strengthens public services, and reflects the City's commitment to supporting essential workers. Public safety personnel and educators each play indispensable roles in maintaining community stability. Establishing a defined preference within the existing unit allocation for these groups would align the program with demonstrated areas of need, while also continuing to support broader public service need.