



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members

**FROM:** Joya Hayes, Human Resources and Civil Service Director *JA*

**THROUGH:** Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager

**DATE:** July 28, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Increasing Compensation Philosophy for Two Titles: 911 Call Takers and Police Dispatchers (Resolution No. 20220616-094)

This memorandum responds to [Resolution No. 20220616-094](#), which directs the City Manager to report back to the Council by July 28, 2022, on adjusting pay grades and pay of 911 Call Takers and Police Dispatchers within the top quartile of the market rate for the positions.

The City's compensation philosophy establishes the market as the 50th percentile for cash compensation. Removing two specific titles from this philosophy causes several issues. First, it causes misalignment and inequity for other positions at a similar market position, internally aligned positions at Austin Police Department (APD), and other positions that are considered vital to health and safety. Secondly, if jobs are placed above the market, especially in the general fund, it is difficult to make corrections to accommodate changes in the market and economy.

In addressing the fundamental concerns of these critical employees, in the City Manager's proposed Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Budget, the Living Wage is proposed to increase to \$18.00 per hour. This increase will adjust the midpoint of the 911 Call-Takers and Police Dispatchers and the ranges will move to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market. This change will be made unilaterally to all impacted classifications and does not involve removing specific titles outside of the compensation philosophy. This maintains equitability across all classifications.

The Human Resources Department contracted with Gallagher Benefit Services to conduct a market study and internal equity review for 911 Call-Takers and Police Dispatcher job families. The results supported an increase in pay grades. In addition to these increases, a pay program was implemented for employees with a TCOLE Telecommunicator Certification to receive a stipend of an additional \$1,800 annually. A one-time \$3,000 retention incentive, paid out over 12 months, was also implemented.

	Value	Relative to 75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
<b>75<sup>th</sup> Percentile 911 Call-Taker</b>	<b>\$25.54</b>	
Current 911 Call-Taker Midpoint	\$24.07	-5.8%
FY23 911 Call-Taker Midpoint (Proposed)	\$25.75	+0.8%
Average Pay 911 Call-Taker w/10+ Yrs Svc	\$25.77	+0.9%
<b>75<sup>th</sup> Percentile Police Dispatcher</b>	<b>\$27.86</b>	
Current Police Dispatcher Midpoint	\$26.54	-4.7%
FY23 Police Dispatcher Midpoint (Proposed)	\$28.12	+0.9%
Average Pay Police Dispatcher w/10+ Yrs Svc	\$28.40	+1.9%

## Additional Data

### Encumbered Positions

There has been a decrease in filled positions since the implementation of the market study and the additional pay program. In July 2022, four fewer positions were filled than in May 2022. In the Market Study implemented in May 2022, the trainee position was retired, and starting pay for 911 Call Takers and Police Dispatchers is no lower than \$20/hour.

#### Austin Encumbered position as of 7/11/2022

Title	# of EEs
911 Call Taker	60
Asst Mgr, Emergency Comm	3
Police Dispatcher	55
Police Dispatcher Lead	15
Supv, Telecommunication	11
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>144</b>

#### Austin Encumbered positions as of 5/6/2022

Title	# of EEs
911 Call Taker	63
Asst Mgr, Emergency Comm	3
Police Dispatcher	49
Police Dispatcher Lead	10
Supv, Telecommunication	12
911 Call Taker/Dispatch Trainee	11
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>148</b>

### Applicants & Postings

There has been an increase in applicants. Focusing on 911 Call Takers and Police Dispatchers, the following table shows the number of applicants for each position before implementing the pay increases and additional pay programs and then after implementation.

Title	# of Applicants 1/2022 to 4/2022	# of Postings	# of Applicants 5/2022 to 7/2022	# of Postings
<b>911 Call Takers</b>	100	7	130	4
<b>Dispatcher</b>	95	7	85	4

There have been more applicants in May, June, and July (to date) for 911 Call Takers than we saw in the four months prior. Additionally, there have been almost as many Dispatcher applicants in the 2.5 months since implementing the pay increases. When a 911 Call Taker or Dispatcher position is advertised, another one is immediately posted as soon as the first is taken down.

### Exit Surveys

We reviewed the data APD has collected from the Emergency Communication employees on the reason they were leaving:

	Call Takers			Dispatchers		
	2022	2021	2020	2022	2021	2020
<b>Other employment outside COA</b>	5	14	6	1	8	4
<b>Other employment inside COA</b>	4	7		1	1	
<b>Moving</b>	2	2	2		2	1
<b>Retired</b>	1	1	1			2
<b>Other reason</b>	1	9	9	2	3	6

Employment opportunities in 2021 for Call Takers outside of the City included leaving for a position in the medical field, teaching, a position closer to home, health services, and the private sector. During this three-year time frame, one person indicated they were joining a police academy, and two indicated they were joining other police departments. Other reasons employees left included returning to school, family issues, shift work, and work environment. One person indicated they felt underpaid and overworked.

## Turnover Reports

The following information shows the turnover for the 911 Call Taker and the Police Dispatcher positions from 2019 to 2022 (to date). Through this process, the Trainee title has been retired, and those individuals are hired directly into the 911 Call Taker title and Police Dispatcher title.

	2020		2021		2022	
	Resigned	Retired	Resigned	Retired	Resigned	Retired
911 Call Taker	12	1	19	1	9	1
911 Call Taker/ Dispatch Trainee	11		6		3	
Police Dispatcher	4	2	12		2	

As shown in the data, implementation of the market study, stipends, and retention incentives have addressed concerns and has shown success in recruiting more candidates for positions. Additionally, allowing the City Manager's plan to adjust the living wage will bring the two specific titles at issue to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile in FY23. It also does not remove the titles from the current classification plan and remains equitable and consistent. Staff does not recommend adjusting these two classifications before October 1, 2022.

If you have additional questions, please contact me at [Joya.Hayes@austintexas.gov](mailto:Joya.Hayes@austintexas.gov).

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Anne Morgan, Acting City Manager  
Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager  
Joseph Chacon, Chief, Austin Police Department