

1. Compliance with Assembly Bill 2561 - Local Public Employees Vacancies, Recruitment, and Retention Efforts

Recommendation:

That the Honorable City Council receive and file the City of Victorville Vacancies, Recruitment, and Retention presentation.



Item Number: 1

City Council / Board of Directors

Public Hearing(s)

Meeting of: May 6, 2025

Submitted By:

Heather Barber, Human Resources Officer

Subject:

Compliance with Assembly Bill 2561 - Local Public Employees Vacancies, Recruitment, and Retention Efforts

Recommendation:

That the Honorable City Council receive and file the City of Victorville Vacancies, Recruitment, and Retention presentation.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. However, addressing recruitment and retention issues may involve future budget considerations, which would be presented to the City Council as may be necessary.

Strategic Plan Goal:

This presentation aligns with Goal G: Organizational Effectiveness and Sustainability in the City of Victorville Strategic Plan 2023-2026 as the City is committed to providing high-quality services through a commitment to best practices and employee development, support, and retention.

Background:

On September 22, 2024, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 2561 (AB 2561) into law to amend the Meyers-Milias Brown Act and create a new obligation for public agencies to publicly address the status of their vacancies, recruitment, and retention efforts. The new law became effective January 1, 2025.

AB 2561 was introduced to address the issue of job vacancies in local government, which adversely affects the delivery of public services and employee workload. In compliance with the new legal obligations, the City of Victorville is required to do the following:

- Public Hearing: At least once each fiscal year, at a public hearing before the City Council, the City shall present information regarding the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts (Gov. Code § 3502.3 (a)(1)) and identify any necessary changes to policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process (Gov. Code § 3502.3 (a)(3)).
- Employee Organization Participation: Allow the recognized employee organization, regardless of the vacancy rate, to make a presentation during the public hearing concerning vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts (Gov. Code § 3502.3 (b)). There is currently one recognized bargaining unit with the City of Victorville, The Victorville Professional Firefighters.
- Additional Reporting for High Vacancy Rates: If vacancies within a single bargaining unit meet or exceed 20% of authorized full-time positions in the bargaining unit, upon request of the recognized employee organization for that bargaining unit, the City must provide additional information during the public hearing, including the following: (1) the total number of vacancies; (2) the number of applicants; (3) the average time to fill positions; (3) and opportunities to improve compensation and working conditions for employees in the bargaining unit (Gov. Code § 3502.3 (c)).

Discussion:

This report and corresponding presentation outline the City's workforce composition, vacancy trends, and strategies to attract and retain employees. All data collected is from the 2024 calendar year.

On June 6, 2023, the City Council approved a total of 538 full-time authorized positions for the 2023-24 Fiscal Year budget (Resolution No. 23-038). On February 20, 2024, the City Council approved a total of 540 full-time authorized positions for the 2023-24 Mid-Year budget (Resolution No. 24-011). Lastly, on June 4, 2024, the City Council approved a total of 560 full-time authorized positions for the 2024-25 Fiscal Year budget (Resolution No. 24-036).

There is one bargaining group at the City of Victorville, The Victorville Professional Firefighters, consisting of 72 represented full-time positions.

City of Victorville Authorized Positions	Position Count
The Victorville Professional Firefighters	72
City of Victorville	488
Total Authorized Positions	560

Vacancies, Recruitment and Retention

Vacancies

Position vacancies are created for a number of reasons including when newly budgeted positions are approved, there is internal movement such as a promotion or transfer, or

when an employee leaves the organization due to retirement, voluntary resignation, or involuntary termination. When vacancies occur, it is a high priority for the Executive Team and the Human Resources department to fill vacant positions to ensure continuity of services to the public, maintain operational efficiency, minimize disruptions to departmental functions, and minimize the need for overtime. Timely recruitment and hiring efforts help the City maintain its workforce, uphold service standards, and provide opportunities for internal growth and external talent acquisition.

While AB 2561 requires staff to present annually on the status of vacancies and efforts to recruit and retain staff, it has always been a priority for the City to fill vacancies as soon as reasonably possible. Throughout the 2024 calendar year, the City's average vacancy rate, including the bargaining unit, was 12.7%. The vacancy rate is calculated monthly by dividing the number of vacancies by the number of authorized full-time positions. As of December 31, 2024, the vacancy rate for The Victorville Professional Firefighters was 13.9%, while the vacancy rate for the City of Victorville was 14.1%.

City of Victorville Authorized Positions	Vacancy Rate
The Victorville Professional Firefighters	13.9%
City of Victorville	14.1%

* As of December 31, 2024

Recruitment and Retention Efforts

The Human Resources Department recognizes that recruitment is about identifying, attracting, and hiring well-qualified people, and retention is about keeping employees who exemplify the City's organizational values while also keeping them engaged, satisfied, and committed to the organization long-term. Both are critical for the success of the organization, especially in today's competitive job market.

For a recruitment to begin, the hiring department will notify the Executive Team of the need to recruit for a vacant position. Once the recruitment is approved by the Executive Team, the Human Resources recruitment division will work closely with the department to verify the job description and other recruitment information. Once the job posting has either reached the application limit or time limit, applications are screened. Candidates who pass the screening process are then invited to a test, if needed, and an in-person interview. Upon selecting a candidate, a conditional job offer is provided, the candidate completes the necessary pre-employment procedures (e.g., background check, physical, etc.), a start date is determined, and the job placement is complete.

In calendar year 2024, there were a total of 98 position vacancies, 67 job postings were opened, and staff successfully filled 92 vacancies. It should be noted that there were vacancies from calendar year 2023 which were filled in 2024 and vacancies from calendar year 2024, that will be filled in calendar year 2025.

The City received 4,443 applications for positions in calendar year 2024. Advertising sources included LinkedIn, local job boards, the Daily Press, state-and-nationwide association specific websites, as well as job sites such as Indeed and ZipRecruiter. The

top sources where applicants learned about job openings were the Government Jobs website, which is the City's main recruitment platform, and the City's website.

While the City's average vacancy rate for calendar year was 12.7%, hiring for certain positions remains a challenge. Contributing factors include the rising demand for talent in specific sectors, such as Engineering and Information Technology. In an effort to reduce the time to hire and attract qualified applicants, staff is exploring recruitment process enhancements.

Filling vacancies and recruiting top talent are critical to delivering core services to the community and carrying out Council's priorities, but retaining that talent is equally essential for sustaining long-term success and minimizing future vacancies.

For calendar year 2024, the City's retention rate was 97%, reflecting a strong ability to retain employees. When it comes to retention, the City incorporates several retention strategies and continues to explore programs and incentives to retain employees by keeping them engaged, satisfied and committed to the organization. The City offers compressed work weeks, such as offering 9/80 work schedules and hybrid-telework options to help employees balance work and personal life. The City also offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and access to an employee gym that can be used outside of normal working hours. Additionally, the City recently created and officially launched the Aspiring Leaders Mentorship program with the intent of developing leaders within the organization. Professional growth and development are also fostered through the Tuition Reimbursement Program, where employees are eligible to receive reimbursement for the cost of educational programs which are directly related to the employee's occupational field with the City. These programs demonstrate the City's commitment to employees' long-term professional development.

In closing, the City has made significant strides in addressing vacancies and recruitment, and it is clear that retention is a crucial element for continued focus. By continuing to invest in employee engagement, wellness, professional development, and recognition, the City can continue to foster an environment where talent thrives.

Staff remains available for any comments or questions.

Attachments: A. Assembly Bill No. 2561 Local Public Employees Vacant Positions

ATTACHMENT A

Assembly Bill No. 2561 Local Public Employees Vacant Positions



AB-2561 Local public employees: vacant positions. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 2561

CHAPTER 409

An act to add Section 3502.3 to the Government Code, relating to public employment.

[Approved by Governor September 22, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State
September 22, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2561, McKinnor. Local public employees: vacant positions.

Existing law, the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (act), authorizes local public employees, as defined, to form, join, and participate in the activities of employee organizations of their own choosing for the purpose of representation on matters of labor relations. The act requires the governing body of a public agency to meet and confer in good faith regarding wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment with representatives of recognized employee organizations and to consider fully presentations that are made by the employee organization on behalf of its members before arriving at a determination of policy or course of action.

This bill would, as specified, require a public agency to present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts at a public hearing at least once per fiscal year, and would entitle the recognized employee organization to present at the hearing. If the number of job vacancies within a single bargaining unit meets or exceeds 20% of the total number of authorized full-time positions, the bill would require the public agency, upon request of the recognized employee organization, to include specified information during the public hearing. By imposing new duties on local public agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would also include related legislative findings.

The California Constitution requires local agencies, for the purpose of ensuring public access to the meetings of public bodies and the writings of public officials and agencies, to comply with a statutory enactment that amends or enacts laws relating to public records or open meetings and contains findings demonstrating that the enactment furthers the constitutional requirements relating to this purpose.

This bill would make legislative findings to that effect.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions for costs mandated by the state pursuant to this act, but would recognize that a local agency or school district may pursue any available remedies to seek reimbursement for these costs.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares as follows:

- (a) Job vacancies in local government are a widespread and significant problem for the public sector affecting occupations across wage levels and educational requirements.
- (b) High job vacancies impact public service delivery and the workers who are forced to handle heavier workloads, with understaffing leading to burnout and increased turnover that further exacerbate staffing challenges.
- (c) There is a statewide interest in ensuring that public agency operations are appropriately staffed and that high vacancy rates do not undermine public employee labor relations.

SEC. 2. Section 3502.3 is added to the Government Code, to read:

3502.3. (a) (1) A public agency shall present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts during a public hearing before the governing board at least once per fiscal year.

(2) If the governing board will be adopting an annual or multiyear budget during the fiscal year, the presentation shall be made prior to the adoption of the final budget.

(3) During the hearing, the public agency shall identify any necessary changes to policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process.

(b) The recognized employee organization for a bargaining unit shall be entitled to make a presentation at the public hearing at which the public agency presents the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts for positions within that bargaining unit.

(c) If the number of job vacancies within a single bargaining unit meets or exceeds 20 percent of the total number of authorized full-time positions, the public agency shall, upon request of the recognized employee organization, include all of the following information during the public hearing:

- (1) The total number of job vacancies within the bargaining unit.
- (2) The total number of applicants for vacant positions within the bargaining unit.
- (3) The average number of days to complete the hiring process from when a position is posted.
- (4) Opportunities to improve compensation and other working conditions.

(d) This section shall not prevent the governing board from holding additional public hearings about vacancies.

(e) The provisions of this section are severable. If any provision of this section or its application is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

(f) For purposes of this section, "recognized employee organization" has the same meaning as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 3501.

SEC. 3. The Legislature finds and declares that Section 2 of this act, which adds Section 3502.3 to the Government Code, furthers, within the meaning of paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) of Section 3 of Article I of the California Constitution, the purposes of that constitutional section as it relates to the right of public access to the meetings of local public bodies or the writings of local public officials and local agencies. Pursuant to paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) of Section 3 of Article I of the California Constitution, the Legislature makes the following findings:

It is in the public interest, and it furthers the purposes of paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) of Section (3) of Article I of the California Constitution, to ensure that information concerning public agency employment is available to the public.

SEC. 4. No reimbursement shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code for costs mandated by the state pursuant to this act. It is recognized, however, that a local agency or school district may pursue any remedies to obtain reimbursement available to it under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) and any other law.