



CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: James Beere
Interim Chief of Police, OPD

SUBJECT: OPD Cadet Program Funding

DATE: February 25, 2026

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Feb 27, 2026 10:42:50 PST)

Date: Feb 27, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution To Accept And Appropriate Grant Funds From Oakland Police Foundation In An Amount Not To Exceed Nine Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$900,000), For Fiscal Years 2026-27 and 2027-28, For The Implementation Of The Oakland Police Department's Cadet Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approval of this resolution will allow the City to accept and appropriate a grant from the Oakland Police Foundation in an amount not to exceed \$900,000 for fiscal years 2026-27 and 2027-28 to allow OPD to reinstate its Cadet Program. The \$900,000 grant awarded to OPD will also be used to pay for:

- Cadets' salaries
- Training costs and administrative fees
- Uniforms and other materials.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The Cadet Program is a program built to recruit and maintain talent in the Oakland Police Department. It provides critical workforce development opportunities for Oakland youth, as young as 15 years old, offering a direct pathway to well-paying careers in public service, while building a police force that reflects and understands the community it serves. The program also serves as a pipeline program for law enforcement. Since OPD is operating at a deficit for its operational strength, the Cadet Program serves as an effective pathway to recruitment for future officers. This funding needs to be accepted so that the program can be reinstated by May 2026.

As of the most recent numbers, OPD has 616 sworn personnel, of which 92 members are on medical, administrative, or military leave. OPD's operational staffing level is effectively 524

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sworn members, well below adequate staffing levels, and the attrition rate is approximately 5.5 officers a month. Cadets provide critical support to understaffed OPD units, freeing sworn officers for core duties.

The Oakland Police Department has used various youth and auxiliary programs, including the Cadet Program, to foster interest in law enforcement and recruit Oakland residents who reflect the city's diversity. The Cadet Program has been successfully implemented at the Oakland Police Department for over 25 years. It was taken out of the budget in the 2023-2024 funding cycle, due to Oakland's historic budget shortfall. The program provides hourly, part-time employees with training and experience in multiple aspects of policing, emphasizing intensive supervision, counseling, and evaluation to develop leadership qualities. Students can work as cadets while completing their education. They are to maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average. This proposal reinstates the Cadet Program as a primary recruitment tool within the Department's Training and In-Service Division, maintaining its dual objectives of supporting education and preparing participants for the demands of a career in law enforcement.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

This policy advances the citywide priority of **holistic community safety** by building a diverse, locally rooted police workforce that understands Oakland's culture and communities. It also strengthens trust and legitimacy between OPD and residents by cultivating officers who come from the city they serve. Lastly it reduces long-term recruitment and training costs through improved retention, professional development, and performance.

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) Cadet Program is a professional development initiative designed for hardworking, ambitious youth and young adults to explore careers in law enforcement while completing their education. The program establishes a dedicated pipeline for local youth and young adults, bridging the gap between community interest and professional law enforcement by focusing on education, community engagement, and hands-on training. Its primary intent is to support Cadets in achieving their academic goals, provide practical experience, and prepare them for a seamless transition from Cadet to Police Officer Trainee.

The Cadet Program functions as a formalized preparatory system for Departmental positions:

- **Academic Standards:** Cadets must maintain a minimum "C" (2.0) average.
- **Recruitment Pipeline:** At age 21 ½, Cadets are given the options to apply as a Police Officer Trainee, apply for an extension (up to age 25), or resign.
- **Selection Process:** Candidates must pass a written exam, physical agility test, oral interviews, a background investigation, and a medical examination.
- **Streamlined Hiring:** Because Cadets already meet the medical criteria for Police Officer Trainee positions and have undergone background investigations, the transition to sworn status is expedited.
- **Hiring Leverage:** By the time a Cadet is eligible for the Academy, the Department will have a comprehensive evaluation of their work ethic, physical fitness, and character, significantly reducing failure rates during the formal background-check process and during the Basic Police Academy.

The Cadet Program will be coordinated by the Cadet Coordinator. The Cadet Coordinator, who will be a sworn staff member, will operate within the Training Division and will be responsible for the comprehensive management and professional development of the Police Cadet Program. This role centers on the direct supervision of all cadets, ensuring they adhere to department standards while overseeing critical administrative functions, including payroll, personnel file maintenance, and regular performance evaluations.

Short term and long-term benefits of the Cadet program

The Cadet Program delivers both short-term operational relief and long-term workforce recruitment and retention savings.

- **Reduced Overtime Costs:** Cadets provide critical support to understaffed OPD units, freeing sworn officers for core duties.
- **Higher Academy Success Rate:** Cadets who enter the Academy graduate at over 90%, compared to 60% for non-cadet recruits — significantly lowering training and attrition costs.
- **Return on Investment:** The annual program cost for 9 part-time cadets (4.5 FTEs) is \$402,735. Each cadet's cost is \$44,748 annually — a high-impact investment in a sustainable workforce solution.

OPD's Cadet Program strengthens social equity and diversity in policing.

- **Community Roots:** By focusing on youth and young adults residing in Oakland, the program ensures future officers reflect the neighborhoods they serve.
- **30x30 Initiative:** In alignment with the national goal to increase women's representation in law enforcement to 30% by 2030, the Cadet Program intentionally recruits young women and students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- **Education Access:** Cadet positions encourage Oakland youth and young adults to pursue their education while gaining professional experience and mentorship.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed resolution authorizes acceptance and appropriation of a grant in the amount of \$900,000. It is anticipated that the funding will be distributed as outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1: OPD Cadet Program Funding: How it will be used

| Cadet Program Costs | Year 1 | Year 2 |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Cadet Positions | \$402,735 | \$402,735 |
| Equipment | \$37,000 | \$37,000 |
| Administrative Costs | \$10,265 | \$10,265 |
| Total | \$450,000 | \$450,000 |

Funding will be appropriated to Fund (2999) Miscellaneous Grants, Org. (103430) Training Unit, Project (1001205) OPD Cadet Program, and Program (PS09) Police Training.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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For questions regarding this report, please contact Anthony Martinelli in the Training Division at (510) 907-0842.

Respectfully submitted,


James P. Beere (Feb 27, 2026 07:37:28 PST)

James Beere
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