

Staffing the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office: An Assessment of the Future

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office consists of six operating departments. The Jacksonville Sheriff is accountable for Corrections, Executive Office of the Sheriff, Investigations and Homeland Security, Patrol and Enforcement, Personnel and Professional Standards, and Police Services.

The core Law Enforcement responsibility is the functional duty of two departments, Investigations and Homeland Security and Patrol and Enforcement. Some observations indicate that this core responsibility is under extreme pressure due to an insufficient level of staffing in these two departments. The "calls for service" duties are stretching the two units to their limits. This jeopardizes their ability to perform their primary functions, and it indicates that the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office is significantly understaffed.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement prepares an annual Criminal Justice Agency Profile (CJAP) Report. It breaks out the number of sworn officers for each police department and county sheriff's office in the State of Florida. The state average for police departments is 2.36 and 1.70 for sheriff's offices. According to the report the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office has a population ratio of 1.96 which is above the state average. On the surface this suggests that the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office is adequately staffed.

Jacksonville is unique among all Florida cities because of its Consolidated nature. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office performs all law enforcement in Duval County excluding the three Beaches area communities. From an operational perspective, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office is analogous to a metropolitan police department which happens to operate a jail and perform other constitutional duties required of a county sheriff.

It is more appropriate to utilize the population ratio of a police department when analyzing the staffing of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. Based upon the state average of 2.36 officers per 1,000 residents for city police departments the Jacksonville Sheriff's office should have 2,223 officers when applying the ratio to the 2020 Census number of 941,568.

Jacksonville Sheriff Michael Williams spoke before the Jacksonville Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission on Thursday, October 7, 2021. He stated that he currently has 1,827 officers in the two departments. For Fiscal Year 2021-2022 the Jacksonville City Budget provides for 1,854 officers in the two departments.

Based on the 2020 Census, the total population for Duval County is 995,568. Excluding the Beaches area, it results in a population of 941,568. That produces a population number per 1,000 of 941.57 or 942 rounded. Using the state average of 2.36 Jacksonville should have the equivalent of 2,223 officers in the two core departments.

The current staffing level for the two relevant departments should be 1,854 according to the City Budget and the JSO currently stands at 1,827. If the desired standard is 2,223 and the current approved staffing is 1,854, there is a deficiency in personnel of 369 positions.

It is not possible to cure a deficiency of 369 positions in one year. Due to the limitations on the size of the training classes at the Jacksonville Police Academy, the addition of the staff must be phased in over a multi-year time frame.

In an inquiry to Sheriff Mike Williams, he indicated that the Academy can accommodate an annual addition of 150 positions. The identified staffing deficiency is for the fiscal year 2021-2022. As Jacksonville continues to grow, additional adjustments must be made in order to close the deficiency and maintain the staffing standard of 2.36 per 1,000 with the marginal growth of Jacksonville. The marginal growth is estimated at 2% per year. With a 2% annual growth rate the population of Jacksonville will grow by approximately 18,831 per year. The population per 1,000 is estimated at 18.83 or 19 rounded. With a desired standard of 2.36 per 1,000 of population and a population per 1,000 of 19, Jacksonville will need to add between 45 and 49 officers annually over the duration in order to accommodate the projected growth of Jacksonville.

Using a projected five year period to close the deficiency gap, Jacksonville will need to add 45 officers the first year, 46 officers the second year, 47 officers the third year, 48 officers the fourth year, and 49 officers the fifth year. This is a total of 235 additional officers in addition to the current deficiency of 369. That is a total of 604 new positions over the five year term. Jacksonville must add approximately 120 positions per year to be fully staffed at the desired standard of 2.36 by fiscal year 2026-2027.

This increase in staffing will have a significant financial impact on the Jacksonville City Budget. Sheriff Mike Williams has indicated that each new position will cost an average of \$100,000 in the first year due to salary and benefits along with the associated costs for a vehicle and related equipment. Based on the 120 additional positions in the first year the total estimated cost is \$12,000,000.

Assuming the buildup in staffing occurs over a five year period there will be additional costs to allow for inflation. With a modest inflation rate of three percent, the incremental costs for the remediation of the staffing deficiency will be \$12,360,000 in the second year, \$12,730,800 in the third year, \$13,112,724 in the fourth year, and \$13,506,106 in the fifth year. Over the five year buildup period the aggregate cost is estimated at \$63,709,630. The average annual cost for the public safety enhancement is estimated at \$12,741,926.

The looming question is, "How do we pay for this investment in public safety?"

Over the four year period ranging from fiscal year 2018-2019 to fiscal year 2021-2022 the ad valorem tax revenue has experienced an average increase of \$53,445,500. The ad valorem tax revenue growth for fiscal year 2021-2022 alone is shown at \$57,481,000. Using the average growth of \$53.445 million and the average annual cost of the public safety enhancement of \$12.741 million it reveals that this necessary public safety investment can be accomplished by utilizing only 23.84% of the marginal growth in ad valorem tax revenue. Using the marginal growth in ad valorem tax revenue of \$57.481 million for fiscal year 2021-2022, the investment can be achieved for 22.17% of the marginal growth in ad valorem tax revenue.

Based on the information submitted in this paper, it is evident that there is a significant deficiency in staffing in the Office of the Sheriff. This is the result of competing needs for public investment over the past several years. This is a deficiency that must be corrected very soon if the mission of the Sheriff's Office is to be executed successfully.

I urge the Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission to adopt a resolution supporting this approach to rectify the situation over the next five years starting in fiscal year 2022-2023 with completion in fiscal year 2026-2027.

Respectfully Submitted,



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