

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

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) 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. This core responsibility is under extreme pressure due to increasing levels in "calls for service" duties. The growing demands for calls for service are stretching the two units to their limits. This compromises their ability to perform their primary functions, and it jeopardizes our goal of safe neighborhoods.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement prepares an annual Criminal Justice Agency Profile (CJAP) Report which breaks out the number of sworn officers for each law enforcement office in the State of Florida to produce a staffing-to-population ratio expressed as the number of Law Enforcement Officers per 1,000 residents. The CJAP Report for 2021 shows the state average ratio for police departments is 2.33 and 1.66 for sheriff's offices. It reflects that JSO has a population ratio of 1.90 which is above the state average. On the surface this suggests that the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office is adequately staffed.

Former Jacksonville Sheriff Michael Williams spoke before the Jacksonville Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission on Thursday, October 7, 2021. He stated then that JSO had 1,827 sworn officers in the agency. Using the state average of 2.33 officers per 1,000 residents for police departments the Jacksonville Sheriff's office should have 2,212 officers when applying the ratio to the 2020 Census number of 949,611. Based on this metric, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office had a staffing deficiency of 385 positions for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Sheriff Williams indicated that the annual limit on the size of the training classes at the Jacksonville Police Academy, would not allow JSO to cure a 396 position deficit in one year. Additions to the JSO staff must be phased in over a multi-year time frame.

Jacksonville is unique among Florida cities because of Consolidation. The JSO performs all law enforcement in Duval County excluding the three Beaches communities. JSO operations are 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 analyze JSO staffing using the population ratio of a police department.

Based on city population, Jacksonville is the largest city by population in the State of Florida. The 2020 Census reflects that Duval County had a total population of 995,567 with 949,611. The next four cities by population are Miami at 449,747, Tampa at 391,800, Orlando at 314,506, and St. Petersburg at 260,778. With a combined population of 1,416,831 and total law enforcement officers of

3,874, the average population ratio for these major cities is 2.73. Based on the 2020 Census, the Jacksonville population of 949,611, and the major city average of ratio of 2.73, JSO should have a total of 2,592 sworn law enforcement officers. Comparing Jacksonville to these cities, it suggests that JSO has a substantial staffing deficiency. The current staffing of 1,827 positions and the target staffing of 2,592 positions indicates that JSO is deficient by 765 positions.

As Jacksonville grows, adjustments must be made in order to close the current deficiency and maintain the staffing standard of 2.73 per 1,000. With a 2% estimated 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 2.73 per 1,000 of population and a population per 1,000 of 19, Jacksonville will need to add approximately 52 officers annually over the duration in order to accommodate the projected growth.

Using a projected eight year period to close the deficiency gap, Jacksonville will need a total of 416 additional officers on top of the current deficiency of 765 for a total of 1,181 new positions. Jacksonville must add approximately 148 positions per year to be fully staffed at the desired standard of 2.73 by fiscal year 2029-2030.

This increase in staffing will have a significant financial impact on the Jacksonville City Budget. Sheriff Williams indicated that each new position would cost an average of \$100,000 due to salary and benefits along with the associated costs for a vehicle and related equipment. Based on the 148 additional positions in the first year the total estimated cost is \$14,800,000.

Assuming a buildup period of eight years, there will be additional cost pressure to account for inflation. With a modest average inflation rate of three percent, the incremental costs for the remediation of the staffing deficiency will be \$15,244,000 in the second year, \$15,701,320 in the third year, \$16,172,360 in the fourth year, \$16,657,530 in the fifth year, \$17,157,256 in the sixth year, \$17,671,974 in the seventh year, and \$18,202,133 in the eighth year. Over the buildup period the aggregate cost is estimated at \$131,606,573 for an average annual cost estimated at \$16,450,821.

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

Over the four year period ranging from fiscal year 2019-2020 to fiscal year 2022-2023 the ad valorem tax revenue has experienced an average increase of \$65,247,639. The ad valorem tax revenue growth for fiscal year 2022-2023 alone is shown at \$98,962,680. Using the lowest growth of \$52,800,180 and the average annual cost of the public safety enhancement of \$16.450 million it reveals that this necessary public safety investment can be accomplished by utilizing only 31% of the marginal growth in ad valorem tax revenue. Using the marginal growth of \$98.962 million for fiscal year 2022-2023, the investment declines to 16.62% of the marginal growth in ad valorem tax revenue.

Based on this analysis, it is evident that there is a major staffing deficiency in the JSO. 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 law enforcement is to be executed successfully.

Another interesting development for the JSO is a recent grant for \$10 million over three years that started in April of 2022. This grant permits an upgrade to the “Co-responder Program” and provides an increased presence of mental health professionals on “Calls for Service” when needed. When this grant expires in 2025, the City must assume the estimated \$3,500,000 annual cost.

There are many voices in our community demanding a shift in resources from the core mission of JSO to enhancements in Co-responder Programs. As indicated in this analysis, any shift in financial resources creates an erosion in the core law enforcement functions within JSO and places additional burdens on our front line officers and seriously damages the public safety of our neighborhoods.

In my opinion, this is not a time to “Defund the Police.” This is a time for our community to stand united and increase our public investment in law enforcement to create safe neighborhoods.

These are the goals I will continue to pursue during my tenure on the TRUE Commission.

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As a member of the Jacksonville TRUE Commission, I have reviewed the budget of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO). Jacksonville Sheriff Michael Williams spoke to the Commission on October 7, 2021, and stated that JSO has 1,827 sworn officers. He noted the agency is under pressure due to levels in calls for service duties.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement prepares a Criminal Justice Agency Profile Report showing the number of law enforcement officers in Florida as a population ratio per 1,000 residents. The 2021 Report shows that police departments have an average ratio of 2.33 with 1.66 for sheriff's offices. JSO has a ratio of 1.90 which suggests that it is adequately staffed.

Jacksonville is unique among Florida cities due to Consolidation. JSO is an urban police force which operates a jail and performs other duties required of a sheriff. It is more accurate to analyze JSO staffing using the police department ratio. Based on population, Jacksonville is the largest city in Florida. The 2020 Census shows Duval County had a total population of 995,567 with 949,611 in the City of Jacksonville. The next four cities by population are Miami, Tampa, Orlando, and St. Petersburg. With a combined population of 1,416,831 and total law enforcement officers of 3,874, the average population ratio for these major cities is 2.73. Based on the 2020 Census Jacksonville population of 949,611 and the major city average of ratio of 2.73, JSO should have 2,592 sworn law enforcement officers. Comparing Jacksonville to the major cities, with the current staffing of 1,827 and the target staffing of 2,592 JSO is deficient by 765 positions.

With a 2% estimated growth rate, Jacksonville will grow by 18,831 per year. The population ratio is 19. With a target ratio of 2.73 and actual ratio of 19, Jacksonville needs to add an average of 52 officers annually to meet that growth. Using an eight year period to close the deficiency, Jacksonville will need 416 additional officers on top of the deficiency of 765 for a total of 1,181 new positions. Jacksonville must add 148 positions annually to be fully staffed at the 2.73 by fiscal year 2029-2030.

Increased staffing creates a significant impact on the City Budget. A new position costs around \$100,000 due to salary, benefits, vehicle, and equipment. Based on 148 new officers, the initial cost is \$14,800,000; with an average of \$16,450,821 over the eight year build up the total cost is \$131,606,573.

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

From fiscal year 2019-2020 to fiscal year 2022-2023 the ad valorem tax revenue has experienced an average increase of \$65,247,639. With the average revenue growth and the average annual cost of new staffing, this public safety investment will utilize about 25% of the marginal growth in ad valorem tax revenue.

This is not a time to Defund the Police. This is a time for our community to stand united and increase our public investment in law enforcement to create safe neighborhoods.