

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Graciela Reynoso Chief Human Resources Officer

DATE: May 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Annual Report Regarding City of Santa Maria Workforce Vacancies, Recruitment and Retention Efforts Pursuant to AB 2561

Description:

The City Council will receive and file a report on the City's workforce vacancies, recruitment, and retention efforts in compliance with Assembly Bill 2561 (Gov. Code § 3502.3.) as of December 26, 2025.

Environmental Notice: The activity is not a "Project" as defined under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to State Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) no environmental review is required.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Conduct a public hearing to report on vacancy levels, evaluate hiring and retention efforts; and
2. Receive and file this report and attachments on the City's workforce vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts in compliance with Assembly Bill 251 (Gov. Code § 3502.3.).

BACKGROUND:

Assembly Bill 2561 (AB 2561) was signed into law on September 22, 2024, by Governor Newsom. The bill amends the Meyers-Milias Brown Act ("MMBA") and creates Government Code Section 3502.3 (GC 3502.3), thereby creating a new obligation for public agencies to hold a public hearing annually to report on vacancy levels and evaluate hiring and retention efforts. Additionally, AB 2561 entitles recognized bargaining groups to make a presentation before the agency's governing body at the public hearing in which the agency makes its presentation.

DISCUSSION:

The City Workforce and Vacancies

The City of Santa Maria has a well qualified workforce in many different job types as City operations are varied and complex.

As of December 2025, the City had 741.60 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) budgeted full-time and part-time benefitted positions across 10 departments. The City maintains labor agreements in the form of either Memorandums of Understanding and Wage and Benefits Agreements (Resolutions for unrepresented groups) with the following employee groups:

Bargaining Units / Employee Salary Groups
Firefighters Union Local 2020
Non-Management & Confidential Employees (Unrepresented)
Police Officers' Association
Public Safety Managers (Unrepresented)
Service Employees International Union 620
Santa Maria Police Association of Middle Management

As of year-end 2025, the City's vacancy rate was 13.3% of the total FTE count. No represented unit had a vacancy rate of 20 percent or higher.

The table below includes the total vacancies for the end of calendar 2025 in each of the employee groups:

Bargaining Group	Budgeted FTE	Vacancy Count	Vacancy Rate
Firefighters Union Local 2020	74.0	8.0	10.8%
Non-Represented Management & Confidential Employees (Unrepresented)	114.0	22.0	19.2%
Police Officers' Association	148.0	19.0	12.8%
Public Safety Managers (Unrepresented)	10.0	0.0	0.0%
Service Employees International Union 620	372.6	48.4	12.9%
Santa Maria Police Association of Middle Management	23.0	1.0	4.3%
Overall	741.6	98.4	13.3%

While this report is a representation of City workforce data from December of 2025, it is important to note that City has worked to clean up long-term vacant positions so as to clarify position control and budget. As of January 20, 2026, the City has an overall FTE count of 719.4. The City currently has 82.0 FTE vacancies as of April 17, 2026.

Recruitment Efforts and Strategies

The City maintains positive employee relations, a robust system for talent management, succession planning and employee engagement while protecting employee health and supporting workplace safety protocols. We strive to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse,

well-qualified and professional workforce that reflects the high standards of the community we serve.

To meet these goals, Human Resources partners with departmental representatives when a vacancy occurs to ensure that Human Resources and the department align the recruitment process to focus on current and future needs, and to ensure the recruitment examination process is reflective of the position and accurately captures the position's duties and responsibilities. The City advertises job opportunities with industry-specific journals and websites; and social media and networking sites to attract talent to fulfill the City's mission and public good.

In calendar year 2025, the City conducted 56 recruitments, receiving a total of approximately 1,684 applications. These efforts resulted in 241 appointments for the City, in both full-time, part-time, and limited-service positions. Of these appointments, 93 were promotional appointments, which signals a healthy workforce with growth opportunities within the organization.

Competitive Employment Offers

In an effort to attract and retain quality employees, the City offers incentives such as:

- Education incentive for certain degrees and certifications
- Hiring incentives for hard-to-fill positions
- Relocation assistance
- Various options for medical coverage for eligible employees and their dependents at minimal cost
- Competitive pay programs and salary reviews
- Advanced accruals for vacation and sick leave available for negotiation

Retention Strategies: Maintaining a Competitive Position and Positive Employee Relations

The City has initiated a comprehensive classification and compensation study that is now well underway and will continue through the next phases of reviewing classification specifications and market data. This review encompasses more than 200 City classifications and is essential to addressing labor market changes, regulatory requirements, and evolving organizational needs to ensure both market competitiveness and internal alignment for the complex work our employees perform.

The study will also modernize and streamline the City's classification structure. This includes developing updated, legally compliant classification descriptions that reflect current roles, responsibilities, duties, and qualifications, as well as contemporary industry standards.

When the study launched, Human Resources partnered with the labor groups and a variety of stakeholders to select a qualified vendor to conduct this work, ensuring a collaborative and transparent process.

Conclusion

The City's tangible efforts and continuous improvement of our employee offerings will continue to attract and retain top talent through employee-centric initiatives such as the classification and compensation study, employee training programs, engagement initiatives, and positive employee and labor relations, and the opportunity to serve the Santa Maria community.

Alternative(s)

This is a mandated report to be presented to City Council.

Fiscal Considerations

There is no fiscal impact to Council receiving this report.

Impact on the Community

As a result of this report, the community will be informed of the status of position vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts at the City.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- A. 2025 Appointments
- B. Job Announcement Sample LinkedIn