

2025-2026 Supplemental Department Questions

Due Oct 2

Please answer the following questions in a word document and return to Council. The answers to these questions will be provided to council as supplemental information. While not part of the physical budget presentation to Council, departments should be prepared to answer questions Council may have on these supplemental questions. If you feel that you have provided an answer in a previous question, please don't repeat your answer, simply refer to the earlier question/answer.

Strategic Goals

1. Provide your 2025-2026 strategic goals; How are they reflected in your budget request?

The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office strategic goals are *Public Safety, Trust and Transparency, Employee Investment, and Organizational Resiliency.*

Public Safety - *Professional service that is attentive to the complex needs of corrections inmates and holds people accountable through quality investigations and tactics that keep both our staff and our communities safer.*

The nexus to budget requests to meet our core obligations to our community can be found in our change requests that address critical staffing needs relative to investigative units that work on our most violent crimes, medical staffing charged with caring for an inmate population that is as fragile as we have ever encountered, training and equipment that help us meet current professional standards, and technology resources that will help us serve the community better with tools that facilitate better evidence for court, better transparency, and tools for apprehending dangerous people. To keep county staff safer and our community members that come to us on the county campus for protection orders, court or other services, we need to heed the security assessments and add the appropriate number of Marshals.

Trust & Transparency - *Effective policing requires support from our community that is built from the integrity of our words and actions. We must follow professional standards, continuously update policy and practices, and ensure leadership guides our staff in a manner that fulfills our oath to our community.*

The nexus to budget requests to meet this strategic goal begins with a plan to sustain our communication to our community through analysts who provide information to our public facing dashboard and critical drug information to other county departments. With the addition of Body Worn Cameras (thank you) come staffing obligations that we have under acknowledged, resulting in a need for additional supervisors to review and document field activity adjacent to administrative obligations. These same supervisors can also assist with more

community outreach events that help us connect into neighborhoods and address quality of life and crime challenges.

Employee Investment Initiative - Professionally and personally invest and support all Sheriff's Office staff for improved skills, better work-life balance, and overall health, which increases retention and builds a stronger workforce to better serve our community.

The nexus to budget requests to meet this strategic goal can be found in staffing requests that increases the number of employees in selected job descriptions, recognizing that being well below national standards not only impacts our ability to keep our community safe, but it also impacts the wellness of our employees, our most important resource. For example, our budget ask is to increase Deputy Sheriff's by six deputies each year, which would allow us to add one area beat every year, resulting in a steady increase of always having one more deputy on patrol; proven to help with de-escalation and reduce crime. Budget requests also lists the specific positions that need to be elevated in pay to be equitable, consistent with county's own assessments, and to show support to retain many of our non-commission positions.

Organizational Resiliency - Deliberate planning to strengthen leadership, administrative skills, and partnerships to better respond and adapt to change.

The nexus to budget requests to meet this strategic goal can be found in staffing requests for supervisors, crime analysts, technology, and equipment costs.

National, state and local landscape

- 1. What critical issues are you facing in your department/industry, and how are you addressing them?**

Population Growth and the Increasing Demand on Public Safety Resources

We have seen a steady increase in our population and the demand for not only law enforcement services broadly, but the complexity of our community's needs has increased the demand on our staff to address things such as public health issues (see next bullet). Washington State is last in the nation relative to officers per thousand, and county departments, like us, trail the bottom of those lists, all while we have greater state mandates (see question #2). Despite continuous growth and increasing demands for police responses, we have fallen further behind as our population has soared. Our only options as demand grows are: 1) Increase staffing and resources; 2) Look for technology to bridge gaps where we lack staff; 3) Reduce services with the smallest impact to our community. We currently use all three options as challenges arise.

Trifecta issues of Fentanyl, Mental Health, and Unhoused Community

Law enforcement fell behind in Washington State when the most addictive and deadly street drug we have ever encountered, Fentanyl, took hold at the same time a state law prevented our ability to interrupt its invasion into our neighborhoods, for two years (the Blake decision). With changes to the law, we can now make arrests. Although there are challenges to pieces of the law that continue to reduce our effectiveness, we support effective programs like the Prosecutor's Office LEAD program and diversion opportunities for people to choose treatment over incarceration. We greatly appreciate partnerships that we have with other county departments, including the Human Services and their SCOUT program, as we prioritize our limited resources in our Office of Neighborhoods to work with them to guide people (especially the unhoused or people with mental health or substance use disorder needs), to area resources and alternatives to help them get footholds for change.

Staffing

Staffing is not just a public safety challenge, but the issues continue to be harder in law enforcement due to the shifting public sentiment. We are working hard to attract new people with new programs and efforts, and we will need to continue to support those efforts, but here I specifically want to speak about retention on non-commissioned staff. Once someone has selected us, come in the door, and started our long investment of training and certifications required to do our jobs, we need to do a better job of aligning compensation to match the required work skills. None of our positions can be done remotely full time and almost everyone requires contact with the community, sometimes in hostile ways. We work to motivate our cause as a part of public service, but when like jobs in government (both cities and similar Snohomish County positions) pay more, it makes it difficult to retain. The best way to fill a spot is to not let it go vacant in the first place. We need help for fair pay for non-commissioned positions.

Increased Medical Needs for Corrections Inmates

The most vulnerable, ill, and addicted members of our community make-up most of the corrections inmates in our county jail. Often people who are unhoused, who have undiagnosed/untreated chronic medical conditions, end-up arrested for a variety of issues, including reasons related to mental health. The toxicity of Fentanyl in minute amounts, often so small it is difficult to find on people being booked into the facility (legal restrictions), adds to the increased difficulty of our obligation to keep this population safe. We currently have exceptional correctional, medical and MHP staff, as well as scanners and other tools to address many of these challenges, including the recent add of a drug detecting canine. We will look to add medical staff to increase the ratio of inmates to medical staff (currently 40% of inmates come into the facility with Fentanyl in their system). We are also asking to also add technology to help us watch for

people starting to go into medical crisis (bracelets) and developing a methadone program, to help stabilize people and help them as they leave the facility for a better chance of long-term success and reduced recidivism.

Body Worn Camera's Community Expectations

Snohomish County graciously met the needs of community expectations for transparency and funded the Sheriff's Office Body Worn Cameras (BWC). This is a critical tool, and we appreciate this investment. Over time, our agency is learning the downstream impacts to our staffing, not just public disclosure, but review of the content to meet the ongoing obligations to our community. It is not enough to simply record every interaction, as our deputies have the added burden of going back and making sure everything is labeled correctly, view for evidentiary needs for court, as well as for administrative oversight. For example, a deputy who works a 12-hour shift, often without a meal break, has always also had to make time to then write the reports from the shift, now has the added duty to ensure all video footage is marked appropriately, and in some cases, slowly review it again for evidence. As an example of administrative work for supervisors, our work has increased substantially due to the amount of video footage that needs to be reviewed for some cases. Right now, the work means less breaks, more overtime, sometimes reports getting delayed, all of which increases stress and impacts wellness. We are asking for increase in both line-level staffing and supervision to fulfill our obligation that comes with BWC and community transparency.

2. Are there federal, state, and local issues/mandates that will impact your department, operationally and/or fiscally. Please address what it is, the anticipated impact, and how you plan to mitigate it.

There are always unfunded mandates that impact law enforcement in new ways each legislative session, as well as continuous law changes, which tends to impact multiple positions (how arrests are handled, interviews recorded, records are handled, notifications made, etc.). We are currently still burdened with State mandates on reporting use of force, officer involved deadly force incidents, tracking, and reporting administrative investigations, including pursuit reviews and alleged misconduct, and changing requirements to certifications. We continue to be impacted by backlogs for academy dates for corrections and patrol deputies.

Programs

1. With ARPA funding ending, what programs/services will be impacted and how? What is your plan for mitigating the impacts?

Marshal: We were provided one project Marshal FTE. We appreciate the ARPA funding for this position. We will continue to ask for additional Marshals to provide adequate security services to the Courthouse which increased by 28,000 square feet, outlying District Courts, and the Denney Juvenile Justice Center because people who work or come to these locations for help should be able to expect it to be a safe environment.

Jail Transport Van: Thank you for the transport van that will allow for the movement of more inmates with less staff. It will be completed (retrofitted) by year-end. There may be impacts to future costs for repair/maintenance.

Domestic Violence Coordinator: ARPA funding is currently being used by the Sheriff's Office to fund the support of a domestic violence coordinator program; a first of its kind program for the Sheriff's Office to support victims of domestic violence and provide victims with help navigating the criminal justice systems and obtaining services. We have requested and the Executive has granted ongoing funding for this vital program in our 2025 & 2026 budget through the general fund. We are thankful for the Executive's funding of the program.

2. What new programs are you proposing for 2025-2026? What need or efficiency is that new program addressing? How is that program funded for sustainability? What metrics are in place to determine effectiveness?

The following programs were requested but did not make the Executive Budget. Each one has a separate budget justification explanation, what problem it is addressing, and effectiveness can be demonstrated through measurable results. If more information on any specific budget items is needed by Council, we can provide additional details.

- Crime Analyst for Community Communication, Deployment of Patrol Staff, Transparency, other County Departments (Change Request # 422)
- Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) Methadone Program (Change Request # 277)
- Body Worn Cameras – Support Work (Change Request 288 & 298)
- Staffing – Investigations, Patrol, Supervisors, & Non-Commissioned Pay (Variety of Change Request #s)
- Flock Cameras for Investigative Leads and Suspect Apprehension (Change Request #525)
- Smart Watches for Monitoring Vitals of ill Corrections Inmates (Partially funded under Change Request #73. 2025 Requested \$175k, rec'd \$50k; 2026 Requested \$103k, rec'd \$50k)

3. Are there departmental change requests not in the Executive's Recommended Budget that you feel Council should consider including? If so, please provide the change request number and justification for the inclusion of the request.

- We appreciate the Executive Recommended 50% restore of our resource alignment. We would meet the remaining resource alignment by holding onto correction deputies and deputy sheriff positions. Please see answer to #1 under Internal Operations below for our justification. (Change Request #326 for Sheriff and #329 for Corrections).
- The Sheriff's Office relies on overtime funds to meet patrol staffing minimums, conduct special operations, provide mandatory training, and maintain specialty unit certifications. Despite these needs, the overtime budget has not increased since 2019. In 2021, the Deputy Sheriff's Association reached a labor agreement with Snohomish County, resulting in a 23.1% salary increase for Deputy Sheriffs and Sergeants from 2021-2025. We are to understand the department is to absorb the increases to overtime resulting from labor agreement settlements. We do not have the capacity to absorb increases in overtime or contractual obligations (premium pay) that stem from labor agreement settlements. We are open for further discussions on overtime and other pay components. (Change Request #419).
- Discovered after departments had access to their budgets, not requested: commissioned staff received a 4.51% COLA on April 1, 2024. This COLA is not reflected in the salary rates in our 2025 or 2026 budget. We understand this to be a timing matter with the new budget software. While we understand a budget amendment can be requested from non-departmental, we feel we should be fully funded for known salary rates. As a note, our commissioned staff's current labor agreements (DSA & SOMT) expire on March 31, 2025, and therefore, the April 1, 2025, COLA (if any) is currently not known.

Internal Operations

1. Please explain how you intended to meet the Executive's 3% Resource Alignment request.

We would meet the Executive's 1.5% resource alignment by holding onto vacancies of corrections deputies and deputy sheriff positions. This is greatly preferred to cutting positions as it gives the county some flexibility to those handful of positions and has less of an impact on hiring. It should be noted that anytime the Sheriff's Office pauses hiring, it can take years to fix the effects of that, since it can take almost two years for a deputy sheriff to go from being hired to being solo on patrol and serving our community.

2. How are increasing Internal Service Rates impacting your department/programs?

We plan on incorporating these increases into our Law Enforcement Service ILAs (Airport, Community Transit, Stanwood, Snohomish, Sultan, Granite Falls, Gold Bar and Darrington). We are currently scheduling meetings with our partners to discuss and provide documentation. If Council adopts the 2025-2026 with the Executive recommended Internal Service Rates, we will then amend our ILAs to include these increases.

Overall, the impact means less money going to the core functions that is needed at the department levels. For the Sheriff's Office, the funding is diverted away from keeping our community safe and meeting the expectations of our citizens.

Our new Finance Manager started in July and noted that we were not fully funded for ER&R in our general fund 2025/2026 budget. As recommended, it is estimated that our general fund is short about \$270k in 2025 and \$540k in 2026.

3. To help inform Council on experiences around hiring and retention, please provide a list of all vacant position titles, position codes, FTE amount (1.0, 0.5, etc.), date vacated, and date first posted. Template spreadsheet attached for convenience and conformity; if already tracking information in another format, that is acceptable as well. Please list each vacancy separately.

Please see attached FTE spreadsheets for information requested.

4. When was the last time your department implemented a fee increase? Do you have any plans to increase fees? Are your current fees established based on a full cost recovery model?

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement Service ILAs: If Council adopts budget with interfund increases, we will be amending our ILAs. All our ILAs currently expire on December 31, 2026. *(Full cost recover model expect school districts (75% School 25%, County 25%).*

Civil Rates: Based on SCC 2.10.035 and last updated in 2018. Our costing model includes salaries of our support staff as well as some of our deputies. We will revisit our costing model when our CBAs settle, and salary costs are known. *(Not a full cost recovery model).*

Corrections

Jail Services: Last updated in 2021. Current contract includes a 3% inflator. Contracts currently expire in 2026, with one allowable 3-year extension to get us to 2029. *(Not a full cost recovery model).*