



Clark County Deputy Sheriff's Guild

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PRESS RELEASE

The Clark County Sheriff's Office has reached a critical level of staffing in all branches. In the past year Clark County residents have seen unprecedented increases in crime, and a troubling decrease in livability in the county we call home.

The law enforcement professionals of the Clark County Sheriff's Office are dedicated to public safety. In February, all four guilds reached out to CCSO administration with concerns about the extraordinary staffing shortages and the needs for change at the county level to assist us in providing and assuring public safety. On March 2nd these concerns were brought to the County Councilors and County Manager Kathleen Otto by CCSO Administration.

The message was clear. For years law enforcement agencies in our local area and across the nation have been creative and proactive in their efforts to recruit and retain adequate and safe staffing levels. CCSO employees have pushed for our county to provide similar incentives for the past few years, but our requests have not been heard. In the past year, despite our department's attempts at recruitment efforts, we have seen our applicant pool diminish to non-existent. More alarming, we are now seeing our employees leave our agency in droves to other local agencies who offer hiring bonuses and incentive packages that show a dedication to public safety. CCSO employees can currently lateral to local agencies within Clark County and make twenty percent more in salary and be provided a \$25,000 signing bonus.

Law enforcement staffing is measured in a ratio of officers per 1000 citizens. Washington State has the lowest ratio of all states in the nation. The Clark County Sheriff's Office has the lowest ratio in the state at .57 deputies per 1000 residents. All the while, Clark County's population is increasing at a rate higher than Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah counties combined.

These staffing shortages have tremendous adverse effects on the communities we serve. We have stood by and watched as low staffing levels in the jail have caused significant limitations on which types and degrees of crimes for which criminals can be arrested and housed in the Clark County Jail. The un-safe numbers of deputies on patrol has caused frequent instances of temporary service cuts and likely upcoming long-term service cuts to the crimes we are able to safely respond to. The result, more criminals and less deputies on the streets.

For Clark County citizens this means a continued decline in the quality of life and safety in our communities. Community members tell us daily they are fed up with the increases in lawlessness in our county. We have heard your concerns. We want to be there for you when you need us, unfortunately, our county's absence of commitment to your safety leaves us potentially unavailable at your time of need.

We are in this with you, but we cannot do it alone. If you are concerned about our County Administration's lack of dedication to public safety, we urge you to reach out to your County Councilors and County Manager. We are all in this together to make Clark County the beautiful, safe community we remember.

For more information visit www.safeclarkcounty.com