

RCW 43.43.385 Expedited recruitment incentive program. (1) The Washington state patrol shall develop and implement a state trooper expedited recruitment incentive program for the purpose of recruiting and filling vacant trooper positions. Recruitment must redouble the effort to create a more diverse workforce and must also provide an accelerated pathway for joining the state patrol for individuals who have previously been employed as a general authority peace officer.

(2) The state trooper expedited recruitment incentive program established by the Washington state patrol may include:

(a) Hiring procedures and an accelerated training program for lateral hires from other agencies that recognizes the knowledge and experience of candidates previously employed in law enforcement; and

(b) A sign-on bonus or other bonus for each trooper hired through the expedited recruitment incentive program.

(3) The establishment of the state trooper expedited recruitment incentive program is subject to a change to the applicable collective bargaining agreements negotiated with the exclusive bargaining representatives.

(4) This section does not interfere with, impede, or in any way diminish the right of the officers of the Washington state patrol to bargain collectively with the state through the exclusive bargaining representatives as provided for in RCW 41.56.473.

(5) Expenditures and eligibility for the state trooper expedited recruitment incentive program established in this section are subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose. The specific amounts, requirements, and other provisions related to the bonus policy for cadet hires or lateral hires are subject to applicable provisions as set forth in an omnibus transportation appropriations act.

(6) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Cadet" means a person employed for the express purpose of receiving the on-the-job training required for attendance at the Washington state patrol academy and for becoming a commissioned trooper.

(b) "Lateral hire" means an eligible employee previously employed as a general authority peace officer. [2023 c 459 § 2.]

Findings—2023 c 459: "The legislature finds that the Washington state patrol is experiencing historic levels of trooper vacancies, with almost 30 percent of trooper positions unfilled. At the same time, Washington is experiencing alarming increases in serious and fatal crashes on our roadways. The legislature recognizes that the Washington state patrol is working on strengthening its recruiting efforts, with a focus on broadening outreach to candidates from marginalized communities. This historic confluence of factors justifies extraordinary measures to assist the Washington state patrol in its efforts to attract and retain sufficient numbers of troopers for the protection of the citizens of the state of Washington." [2023 c 459 § 1.]

Effective date—2023 c 459: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 15, 2023]." [2023 c 459 § 3.]