



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council **DATE:** June 8, 2026

DEPARTMENT: Administration Department

PREPARED BY: Juli Mortensen, Human Resources Manager

PRESENTER: Juli Mortensen, Human Resources Manager

AGENDA TITLE: Assembly Bill 2561 Vacancy Report

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City of Fort Bragg receive the FY 2024-2025 Assembly Bill (AB) 2561 Vacancy Report. The report provides an update on the status of vacancies, recruitment, and retention efforts for the City of Fort Bragg, in compliance with the AB 2561 law, which took effect on January 1, 2025, and was codified. ("AB") 2561. (Gov. Code § 3502.3)

BACKGROUND

AB 2561 was introduced to address the issue of job vacancies in local government, which adversely affects the delivery of public services and the workload of employees. Among other requirements, the bill mandates that public agencies conduct a public hearing to present the status of vacancies, recruitment, and retention efforts during a public hearing before the agency's governing body at least once per fiscal year prior to the adoption of the next fiscal year's budget and identify any necessary changes to policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process. The bill was enacted into law and is codified as Government Code section 3502.3, effective January 1, 2025.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In compliance with the new legal obligations, the City is required to do the following:

1. Public Hearing – Report on Vacancies: For the fiscal year 2025-2026, the City's annual average percentage of vacancies (i.e., regular, full-time equivalent) is 8%. The table below shows a breakdown of the percentage of vacancies:
2. Employee Organization Participation: Allow the recognized employee organization for each bargaining unit at the City to make presentations during the public hearing concerning vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts. The

Human Resources Department notified the two (2) represented bargaining units at the City of the opportunity to present. (Gov. Code § 3502.3(b).)

| FY 2024-2025 City of Fort Bragg AB 2561 Vacancy Rate | | FY 2025-2026 City of Fort Bragg AB 2561 Vacancy Rate | |
|--|--------------|--|--------------|
| Employee Group | Vacancy Rate | Employee Group | Vacancy Rate |
| FBEO | 0% | FBEO | 8% |
| FBPA | 2% | FBPA | 14% |
| Conf/Nbarg | 16% | Conf/Nbarg | 6% |
| CV Starr | 20% | CV Starr | 0% |
| Temporary | 20% | Temporary | 6% |
| Mid-Mgmt | 1% | Mid-Mgmt | 7% |
| Executive | 33% | Executive | 14% |
| Total Vacancy Rate | 13% | Total Vacancy Rate | 8% |

The City's overall vacancy rate for FY 2025–2026 shows meaningful improvement compared to the prior fiscal year. The total citywide vacancy rate decreased from 13% in FY 2024–2025 to 8% in FY 2025–2026, reflecting progress in filling key positions and stabilizing departmental operations.

The Executive Management employee group ended FY 2025–2026 with a 14% vacancy rate. This rate reflects both the addition of three new classifications—Director of Information Technology, Director of Broadband, and Director of Parks & Recreation—and transitions within existing positions. The Director of Information Technology role was successfully filled through an internal promotion, and the Director of Broadband position was filled for approximately nine months of the fiscal year. The Director of Parks & Recreation position remained vacant as the division continues to be developed. The Police Chief position was also vacant for two months; however, operational continuity was maintained through an appointed Interim Chief during that period.

The vacancy rate was further impacted by the continued vacancy in the Director of Planning & Housing position, which remained unfilled as of this report. To improve recruitment outcomes for this highly specialized role, the City implemented a hybrid recruitment strategy—using an executive search firm for candidate sourcing and outreach, while bringing screening and selection back in-house to reduce overall costs. This approach leverages the strengths of executive search firms while maintaining fiscal responsibility. It is producing positive results, and the City is optimistic that the Director of Planning & Housing position will be filled within the next few months.

In the Confidential/Non-Bargaining group, vacancies dropped from 16% to 6%, following successful backfilling of the City Clerk classification and reclassifications that stabilized internal staffing.

The above chart shows that the C.V. Starr Center has a vacancy rate of 0% due to rounding. In precise terms, the C.V. Starr achieved near-full staffing, with a vacancy rate of 0.19%, supported by ongoing recruitment for lifeguards and other seasonal positions. This level of staffing has enabled the Center to expand operating hours, including Sunday openings.

The Fort Bragg Police Association (FBPA) vacancy rate increased from 2% in FY 2024–2025 to 14% in FY 2025–2026, reflecting a combination of employee separations, internal promotions, and restructuring within the Police Department. This level of turnover is not unusual during periods of leadership transition, particularly following the departure of a Police Chief and the onboarding of a new Chief. In this case, several personnel changes occurred shortly before and after the change in command, contributing to the elevated vacancy rate.

Despite these challenges, the Police Department and the City are proactively addressing recruitment needs. The City is actively engaging with Police Academies, expanding social media outreach, and maintaining a visible presence at community events to attract new candidates. The Department has also brought on a college intern for the summer, providing valuable hands-on experience and supporting operational needs. In addition, the City is developing a high school internship program designed to build early interest in public service careers and create a local pipeline for future Police Department and City employees.

The City continues to recruit for both Police Recruits and lateral Police Officers on an ongoing basis. These combined efforts aim to stabilize staffing levels, strengthen the Department's workforce, and ensure continued delivery of high-quality public safety services.

The Fort Bragg Employee Organization (FBEO) vacancy rate increased from 0% in FY 2024–2025 to 8% in FY 2025–2026. This change is primarily the result of a few employee departures, transfers, and the addition of several authorized positions needed to support major City initiatives, including the solar project, the C.V. Starr HVAC replacement, broadband implementation, and a growing portfolio of Public Works projects. These added responsibilities expanded overall headcount and temporarily increased the number of positions requiring recruitment.

Finally, Temporary/Seasonal classifications saw vacancy rates improve from 20% to 6% as incumbents transitioned into full-time positions, though recruitment in this group remains challenging due to wage competition and the limited benefits typical of temporary roles.

Overall, the staffing outlook for FY 2025–2026 shows positive momentum. Continued recruitment efforts, strategic reclassifications, and targeted retention initiatives have contributed to lower vacancy rates across most employee groups. Remaining vacancies are concentrated in specialized classifications where recruitment difficulties are common statewide. Continued monitoring and proactive workforce planning will be essential to maintaining service levels and supporting organizational effectiveness in the coming fiscal year.

Hiring Summary FY 2025-2026

Number of Requisitions

To date, during FY 2025-2026, the City processed or is processing sixteen requisitions, slightly higher than the prior year. The term 'requisition' is interchangeable with 'job posting'. Of these requisitions, seven are filled. Three openings are in the pre-employment processing stage with tentative hire dates in June or early July. Of the remaining openings, most are in the interviewing stage.

Time to Fill FY 2025-2026

The City's current Time to Fill is 109 days. This figure is skewed by the Administrative Assistant – Police recruitment, which was intentionally opened early in February 2026 so the selected internal candidate could be prepared to move into the role at the start of FY 2026–27 and receive cross-training ahead of a planned retirement later in the year. Because the candidate will not transition into the position until July, the recruitment remains listed as "open," inflating the overall metric. Removing this intentional, long-lead recruitment results in a City Time to Fill of 98 days, which more accurately reflects typical hiring timelines."

A Time to Fill of 98 days reflects that, overall, positions are taking longer to fill. Several factors contribute to this trend. Police Department recruitments generally require additional time due to background checks and statutory hiring requirements. In addition, the Human Resources Division experienced a temporary staffing shortage earlier in the year, which, despite HR's continued commitment to maintaining service levels, slowed recruitment timelines. As staffing stabilized, recruitment processing times improved, and the City remains committed to further streamlining hiring in the coming year.

Recruitment Successes and Challenges

The City reduced its overall vacancy rate from 13% to 8% in FY 2025–26, driven by stronger hiring across most employee groups. Expanded recruitment—including Police Academy outreach, enhanced social media efforts, greater community presence, and new internship pathways—strengthened the hiring pipeline. Executive Management vacancies remained at 14% due to additional positions and the ongoing Planning and Housing Director vacancy, which affects staffing capacity, though further improvement is expected next year. While Police and FBEO vacancies rose due to turnover and added positions, HR processed sixteen requisitions and reduced the adjusted Time to Fill to 98 days as staffing stabilized. Overall, the City achieved meaningful progress in reducing vacancies and improving recruitment effectiveness Citywide.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

The cost of publication of the public notice in the local paper is the only fiscal impact. The advertising cost was \$182.23 to publish the hearing notice in the Fort Bragg Advocate. Other than the advertising cost, there is no direct fiscal impact associated with conducting the public hearing required under Government Code § 3205.3.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply to activities that will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment or is otherwise not considered a project as defined by CEQA Statute §21065 and CEQA State Guidelines §15060(c)(3) and §15378. The public hearing and reporting on vacancy rates, recruitment, and retention efforts meet the above criteria and are therefore exempt from CEQA. No additional environmental review is required.

STRATEGIC PLAN/COUNCIL PRIORITIES/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

This is in alignment with the City's Strategic Plan: 6A Develop and implement a Recruitment and Retention Program for all departments that attracts the best and brightest who will invest in the well-being of our City, where we build community through work.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Notice of the hearing to the public will be provided in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, Assembly Bill 2561 (Gov. Code § 3502.33502.3(a)(2), Gov. Code § 3502.3(a)(3)), Gov. Code § 3502.3(b), Gov. Code § 3502.3(c). The City of Fort Bragg has provided outreach to notify each of the respective bargaining units, the Fort Bragg Employee Organization (FBEO), and the Fort Bragg Police Association (FBPA), of their respective boards of directors, in compliance with Assembly Bill 2561 (Gov. Code §3502.3(b)). A notice of public hearing was published.

ALTERNATIVES:

There is no alternative. This is a legal obligation as outlined in Assembly Bill 2561 (Gov. Code Section 3502.3).

ATTACHMENTS:

- Assembly Bill 2561
- 2026.06.08 AB 2561 Vacancy Report

NOTIFICATION:

Service Employees International Union Local 1021

Field Representative – Patrick Hickey, patrickhickey@seiu1021.org

Fort Bragg Employee Organization Board

President - Cody Filosi, cfilosi@fortbraggca.com

Vice President – Steve Baxman, sbaxman@fortbraggca.com

Member at Large – Adriana Hernandez Moreno, amoreno@fortbraggca.com

Member at Large – Justin Celeri@fortbraggca.com

Mastagni Holstedt, A.P.C.

Labor Relations Consultant – Shaun A. Du Fosee, sdufosee@mastagni.com

Fort Bragg Police Association Board

President – Padriac Ferris, pferris@fortbraggca.gov

Vice President – Rory Beak, rbeak@fortbraggca.gov

Treasurer – Antoinette Moore, amoore@fortbraggca.com