

SFY2026 MA Municipal Public Safety Staffing Program – Police

Applicant Name: Somerville Police Department

Applicant Type: Municipal Police Department

Applicant Address: 220 Washington Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Police Chief

Name: Shumeane Benford

Title: Chief of Police

Email: sbenford@police.somerville.ma.us

Phone: 617-625-1600 x7450

Is the Authorizing Official Contact mailing address the same as the agency address? No

Mailing Address: 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143

Grant Point of Contact

Name: Emily Wisdom

Job Title: Director of Finance and Administration, Somerville Police Department

Email: ewisdom@police.somerville.ma.us

Phone: 617-625-1600 ext. 7239

Is the Grant Point of Contact address mailing address the same as the agency address? Yes

Fiscal Contract Manager

Name: Emily Wisdom

Job Title: Director of Finance and Administration, Somerville Police Department

Email: ewisdom@police.somerville.ma.us

Phone: 617-625-1600 ext. 7239

Is the Fiscal Contract Manager Contact address mailing address the same as the agency address? Yes

Department Staffing

Please list the total number of full-time employees in your department as of the dates indicated, as well as the number of employees by rank. Please include part-time employees as part of one FTE. For example, two half-time employees = 1 FTE.

Fiscal Year	Total Number of Sworn Officers	Number of Officers in Command Unit	Number of Officers in Patrol Unit	Reserve	Total Number of Civilian Employees

FY2023	123	35	94	0	52
FY2024	114	35	79	0	37
FY2025	123	35	88	0	46
Authorized in FY2026	123	35	88	0	51

Please list number of recruits currently in the academy: 3

Please list below the number of layoffs and the total number of positions eliminated (through attrition, retirement, etc.) or left open since July 1, 2022 as of the date of this application. Please include part-time employees as part of one FTE. For example, two half-time employees = 1 FTE

Total Number of Layoffs: 0

Command: 0

Reserve: 0

Patrol: 0

Civilian Employees: 0

Total number of Open Positions: 11 (the online form only accepts whole numbers)

Command: 2

Reserve: 0

Patrol: 2

Civilian Employees: 7 (the online form only accepts whole numbers)

Budget Information

Please list information regarding your department's budget and the total municipal budget as of the dates indicated.

Fiscal Year	Total City/Town Budget	Total Department Operating Budget	Total Department Salaries	Overtime Budget
FY2023	\$307,560,849	\$17,502,937	\$12,554,304	\$1,148,500
FY2024	\$337,331,595	\$17,742,882	\$12,600,683	\$1,292,800
FY2025	\$360,048,316	\$18,125,890	\$12,820,922	\$1,318,656
Authorized in FY2026	\$380,076,147	\$21,004,977	\$14,706,760	\$2,020,950

Service and Arrest Data

Please provide data for the time periods indicated.

Fiscal Year	Total Calls for Service	Total Arrests	Total Calls for Mutual Aid/ Assistance from Other Departments
FY2023	73,403	210	48
FY2024	77,458	239	26
FY2025	79,620	351	35

Narrative Questions

- A. Describe if and how changes in staffing have affected specific department functions (e.g., sexual assault, crime analysis, school resources, and investigations). Are any units disproportionately affected? Be specific. Limit your response to a maximum of 2,000 characters. (At 1,892 characters)**

The Somerville Police Department (SPD) is authorized to have 123 sworn police officers, and our budget also includes 51 civilian positions, excluding Animal Control and E911 (our Department Staffing table has been updated to reflect this). Currently, there are 11.5 open positions; two of these vacancies are in command, two in patrol, and 7.5 in civilian positions. Additionally, two of the SPD's officers are out on long-term leave, and two are on light duty. Continual vacancies and officers' illnesses, injuries, leaves, and light duty create critical staffing shortages for the SPD, particularly at the patrol officer rank.

In the absence of overtime, such shortages will significantly reduce the SPD's ability to carry out key departmental functions, especially in Patrol but also in its essential role of ensuring public safety at Somerville's numerous special events (e.g., Porchfest, Riverfest, ArtBeat, SomerStreets, etc.) and at polling stations during early voting and elections. Staffing shortages also adversely impact the SPD's capacity to provide coverage for traffic management, criminal investigations and follow-ups, motor vehicle crash and hit-and-run follow-ups, and community outreach and engagement (e.g., teen empowerment, Pop Warner youth football, and farmers' markets).

Additionally, staffing shortages are likely to impede the SPD's achievement of important FY26 public safety goals. For example, we have identified the reinstitution of Community Policing as a critical departmental objective to address public safety concerns, deter crime, and encourage positive relationships with law enforcement. Year-round proactive engagement with the community is crucial to prevention, problem-solving, and partnerships. However, its successful implementation depends upon adequate staffing, underscoring the SPD's need for overtime to fill temporary gaps in coverage.

- B. Describe whether or not staff reductions have affected how you allocate department resources (i.e., staff distribution). Include if and how reductions in civilian staff have affected assignment of sworn personnel. Be specific. Limit your response to a maximum of 2,000 characters. (At 1,998 characters)**

The SPD's responsibilities continue to multiply as it addresses the public safety needs of a densely populated, diverse urban community. City-wide crime grew from a total of 2,267 offenses in 2020 to 2,744 in 2024 -- a 21% increase. Yet, the SPD's number of sworn officers has remained the same for several years. Moreover, our FY26 personnel costs have risen due to recent contract settlements and salary adjustments, and the City's tax revenues have decreased as the pace of commercial development

levels off. On a daily basis, therefore, the SPD finds itself challenged to meet complex and expanding needs with limited resources.

The SPD must also protect the extraordinary amount of new city infrastructure that has been constructed in the past few years as a result of Somerville's rapid commercial redevelopment. This includes, not only Assembly Square, a dynamic retail and dining hub with over 1,500 residential units and one million square feet of office space visited by over 6,000 people per day, but also Union Square where two life sciences buildings have been constructed and more new buildings are planned. On July 22nd, for example, the SPD responded to a report of shots fired in Assembly Square, illustrating the challenge of law enforcement in this busy area. Somerville's expanded infrastructure, heavily utilized Community Path, and five MBTA Green Line stations all bring a very large influx of people into the city, further stretching the SPD's capacity to ensure public safety.

In response to staffing shortfalls, the SPD puts officers on overtime as needed to provide shift coverage, but this depletes our overtime budget. To keep the percentage of overtime from increasing, the SPD assigns additional officers on straight time to areas that will require overtime. For example, officers are re-assigned on a short-term basis from Traffic Enforcement to other divisions to meet specific needs and maintain the SPD's ability to provide comprehensive public safety services.

- C. Describe if and how reductions in your department's budget have affected its daily operations and ability to provide public safety services putting both the law enforcement officers and community at risk. Explain how this risk will be reduced by the funds being requested. Limit your response to one page in the space below. Limit your response to a maximum of 2,000 characters. (At 1,755 characters).**

The SPD's budget is entirely funded by municipal tax dollars, but like communities across the Commonwealth, the City of Somerville is facing decreased tax revenues (in Somerville, this is due to the plateauing of new growth in the City), as well as reduced state aid and the potential restriction or ending of grant funds by the federal government. In addition, the SPD's FY26 operating budget includes a 16% increase in personnel costs due to the settlement of new contracts for the Somerville Police Employees Association (SPEA), Somerville Municipal Employees Union (SMEU-B), and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), as well as adjustments to non-union salaries based on the outcome of the City's Non-Union Salary Study. The SPD's personnel costs are expected to increase further when the new Superior Police Officers Association (SPOA) contract is settled.

These conditions and changes place a severe strain on the City's ability to increase any departmental budgets, including the SPD's FY26 overtime budget. In FY25, the SPD had a total of 26,626 hours of overtime worked, but our FY26 budget is projected to cover just 25,261 overtime hours, leaving an estimated gap of 1,365 hours. An SFY26 Municipal Public Safety Staffing grant of \$87,450, which will cover 1,121.15 overtime hours, is vital to help us close this projected gap.

The SPD maintains a minimum of one Lieutenant, one Sergeant, two station officers, and seven patrol cars per shift for officer safety. When vacancies occur, it is difficult to fully staff the patrol vehicles and station officers into the city's geographical wards. Consequently, overtime, as well as forced holdovers, are necessary to enable the SPD to ensure public safety and the safety of its officers.

- D. Inform OGR if your department has received State and/or Federal funding to support staffing needs in the last 24 months. If so, please identify the funding stream(s), funding amount,**

number of positions, and duration of the award. Limit your response to a maximum of 2,000 characters.

The Somerville Police Department has received the following funding over the last 24 months to help support staffing needs:

Funding source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, State Fiscal Year 2024, Massachusetts Municipal Public Safety Staffing Grant

Amount: \$79,500

Purpose: Overtime

Grant period: 1/1/24-12/31/24

Funding source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, State Fiscal Year 2025, Massachusetts Municipal Public Safety Staffing Grant

Amount: \$87,450

Purpose: Overtime

Grant period: 1/1/25-12/31/25

- E. Please provide any additional information that will help support your department's need for these funds. This could include any additional staffing reductions or service reductions as a result of budget cuts authorized in FY2024. Limit your response to a maximum of 2,000 characters below.**

We have no additional information to provide at this time.

Pertinent information, such as graphs or charts may be uploaded on the "Documents Upload" page under "Additional Attachments."

Budget

Dollar amount of funding requested in your application: \$87,450

Will your municipality need SFY2026 funds before January 1, 2026? No

Budget Narrative

For each cost category that has an associated funding request in the Budget Excel Worksheet (Attachment A), please provide an overall description and justification of that cost category. The budget category narratives should describe what the budget entails, why the items in that category are needed, and how the budgeted amount was determined. Please include any hires under personnel, a particular training, supplies needed, vendor information or process for selecting a vendor, where applicable. Applicants should submit a budget for *up to* approximately 12 months.

The budget narrative for each cost category should not be a copy-paste list of the budget item list from your Budget Excel Worksheet - you are expected to justify the need for those items as outlined above.

Does the budget for this project include personnel costs? No

Does the budget for this project include overtime & enforcement costs? Yes

Overtime & enforcement narrative: The requested grant funds will support 140.14 eight-hour overtime shifts (1,121.1538 hours) at an average rate of \$78.00 per hour to maintain adequate shift coverage for the SPD during calendar year 2026. The overtime rate of \$78.00 per hour reflects the average salaries for the SPD's captains, lieutenants, and patrol officers, all of whom could potentially be providing overtime coverage. This funding will support staffing due to budgeted vacancies, as well as other vacancies created by disabilities, injuries, illnesses, and leaves, allowing the SPD to carry out departmental functions and fulfill Somerville's public safety needs.

Overtime & enforcement amount requested: \$87,450

Does the budget for this project include fringe & payroll tax costs? No

Does the budget for this project include other costs? No

Cost Categories Total: \$87,450

Document Upload

Attachment A Budget Excel Worksheet Form

Authorizing Official Signature

As the Authorizing Official of

Somerville Police Department,

I am requesting funds for the SFY2026 Massachusetts Municipal Public Safety Staffing Police and Fire Grant award from the Office of Grants and Research. I have reviewed and approve the content contained in this application being submitted for consideration of funding.

Name of Applicant: Somerville Police Department

Authorizing Official Name: Katjana Ballantyne

Job Title: Mayor