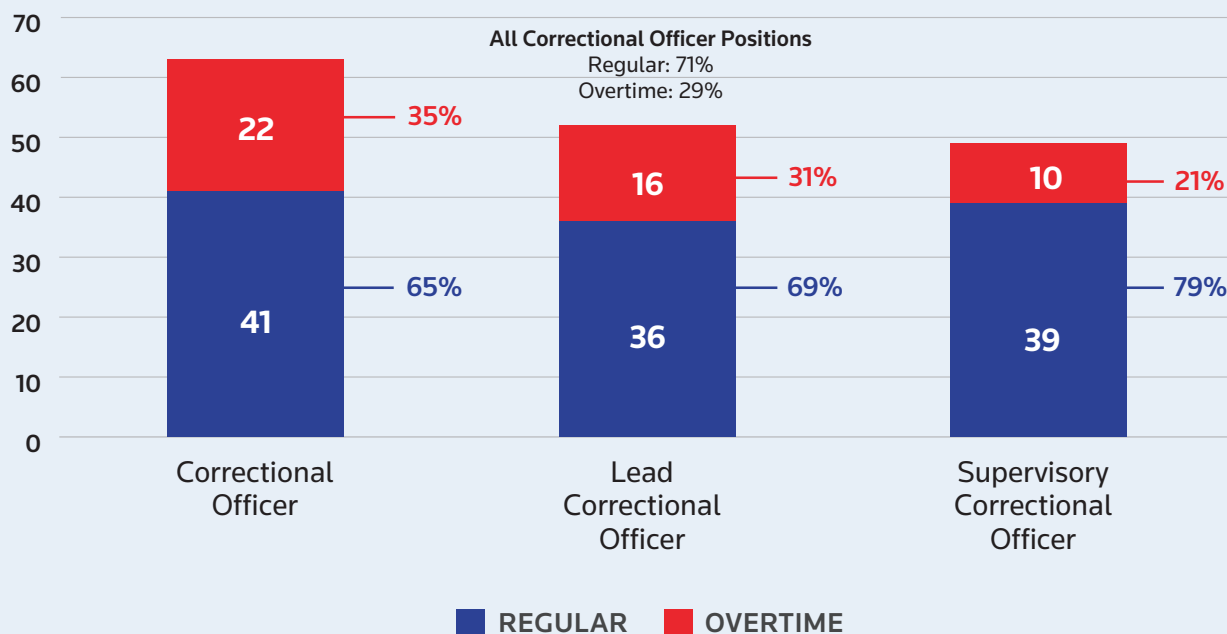


D.C. Public Safety: Too Much Overtime, Too Few Staff?

July 22, 2026

A data brief by the Office of the D.C. Auditor

Average Regular and Overtime 40-hour Weeks Worked by Correctional Officers in FY25



D.C. Public Safety: Too Much Overtime, Too Few Staff?

In the District of Columbia overtime has been and continues to be a costly and chronic phenomenon among the District's public safety agencies. Structural overtime may be understood as a symptom of workforces that are not sized appropriately for baseline operations given the combination of the number of staff employed and the number of hours the staff work. Additional hiring is one strategy to reduce overtime. Reducing excessive time employees spend away from work can be another critical strategy to address overtime without the added costs of additional hiring. This analysis looks at staffing relief factors as an essential metric of workforce efficiency and documents that different public safety agencies have different relief factors driven by different leave use patterns among employees.

July 22, 2026

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Almost \$220M

Amount spent on overtime in
FY25 four public safety agencies
— MPD, FireEMS, OUC, and DOC

704 employed

1,058 vacant



2.5 x

The amount DOC's workforce must
increase to fill all 24/7 operational
posts from its current level (704) to
the number needed (1,762)

One full week

Average time OUC emergency
dispatchers were absent
without leave in FY25

8 to 10 weeks

Amount of leave sworn
officers at MPD took last year



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Background

Substantial unbudgeted overtime spending is chronic among District of Columbia public safety agencies. In Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 2025), the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Department of Corrections (DOC), Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FireEMS), and the Office of Unified Communications (OUC) collectively spent nearly \$220 million in overtime.

Overtime spending occurs when staff work beyond their regular tour of duty on a shift or their contractually agreed-upon number of hours. In public safety agencies some amount of incidental overtime is to be expected to compensate for unforeseeable events, employee absences, or large, non-routine events. In contrast, structural overtime occurs when there are not enough staff working sufficient regular (i.e., non-overtime) hours to cover all routinely scheduled duties required by an agency.

When organizations incur significant overtime, analyses frequently focus solely on the most salient variable: total workforce size, an emphasis seen most persistently in the District with regard to the Metropolitan Police Department. Less frequently examined across the government is the number of employees actually required to perform each job.

To rightsize and budget for an agency workforce without having to resort to use of structural overtime for routine operations, two variables must be considered: (1) the number of work positions or “posts” that must be filled on each shift; and (2) the number of staff needed to fill each post (often around the clock for public safety posts), factoring in how many *non-overtime* and *non-compensatory time (non-comp time)* hours those staff work over the course of the year. As the number of regular (non-overtime/non-comp-time) hours staff work each year increases, fewer staff are required to cover a post. Conversely, when staff work fewer regular hours, more staff are needed to fill that same post.

In public safety agencies, there is often a defined number of work assignments that must be filled around the clock, including firefighters and paramedics on fire apparatus, correctional officers in secure facilities,

and 911 call takers. A “relief factor” is the calculation of how many staff are needed to fill each post. It is an important measure of the cost efficiency of staffing coverage. A higher relief factor indicates a greater number of staff, and greater cost, to fill a post than a lower relief factor.

Mathematically, a relief factor is the ratio of the number of hours a post must be filled to the average number of regular hours worked by staff who fill that post. Thus, for a 24-hour post filled 365 days per year, the relief factor is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Relief Factor} = \frac{8 \text{ hours} \times 3 \text{ shifts} \times 365 \text{ days}}{\text{Average regular hours worked}} = \frac{8,760}{\text{Average regular hours worked}}$$

For illustrative purposes, it is possible to model relief factors using assumptions. For example, assume standard 40-hour work weeks and that staff members *on average* are not available to work for the following number of days:

- 11 federal holidays.¹
- 10 days of annual leave.
- 10 days of sick leave.
- 5 other days of leave (any type).
- 5 training days.

For this situation, the relief factor would be 5.0, meaning five employees would be required to cover a single post, around the clock, 365 days per year without overtime.² Furthermore, for every additional five workdays staff members are not available to work on average, the relief factor would increase by approximately 0.12.

Because personal services costs account for a majority of public safety agency budgets, and relief factors are measures of staffing needs, they should be routinely reviewed to assess workforce size, leave usage trends, and to inform budget formulation and execution.

1 The District of Columbia Government recognizes D.C. Emancipation Day, a 12th, non-federal holiday. While this example uses the 11 federal holidays, relief factor calculations can be modified to account for any number of holidays or other days off.

2 This illustration uses a simplified calculation. It begins by assuming 52 workweeks per year, each consisting of five, 8-hour workdays for a total of 260 workdays or 2,080 hours. From these totals, time not available for work is subtracted. In the provided example, 41 workdays (328 hours) were subtracted, resulting in 219 available workdays, or 1,752 available work hours per employee on average. Posts that must be staffed around the clock require 8,760 work hours per year (365 days X 24 hours). Dividing 8,760 hours by the average available hours per employee (1,752) yields a relief factor of five. Relief factor calculations need not assume 5-day workweeks nor 8-hour workdays, but they must be based on total hours worked. For the analyses in this report, relief factors were not calculated by subtracting unavailable hours. Instead, they were calculated directly using actual reported hours worked from payroll records.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Objective

The objective of this review was to calculate relief factors based on FY 2025 data for staff filling 24-hour posts at OUC, DOC, FireEMS, and MPD, which could be used as a basis of workforce planning and overtime management.

Scope

We reviewed all reported hours, by individual, position, week, and earnings code, from OUC, DOC, FireEMS, and MPD as recorded in the District of Columbia's official time and attendance system of record, PeopleSoft, for FY 2025.

Methodology

To conduct this review, we:

- Obtained custom data reports of all hours worked by every agency employee of MPD, FireEMS, DOC, and OUC in FY 2025.
- Obtained each agency's Schedule A (a list of all employees) as of October 1, 2024, and October 1, 2025.
- Obtained a custom report of all MPD sworn members on training, limited duty, or non-contact status during FY 2025.³
- Obtained a custom report of DOC annual staff training.
- Obtained a custom report of all DOC and OUC staff on workers compensation during FY 2025.⁴
- Reviewed collective bargaining agreements from all four agencies subject to this review.
- Isolated employees at each agency with reported work hours for 26 consecutive pay periods (i.e., the entire fiscal year).
- Calculated relief factors for employees who work in 24-hour posts.
- Ascertained the number of posts in each agency, as determined by the agency and to the extent applicable.⁵
- Interviewed employees familiar with time and attendance reporting practices from the four agencies under review as well as employees of DCHR and OCFO to ensure all non-overtime hours were included in the analysis.
- Interviewed relevant command and/or civilian executive staff from each agency.

3 This report was necessary because, although MPD tracks each of these categories in their internal time management system, those categories of hours are reported as "regular" hours in PeopleSoft. To account for those hours, we needed to reduce regular hours by the number of hours during which staff could not fill posts.

4 Firefighters and MPD sworn staff are not eligible for workers compensation. Rather, sworn members injured in the line of duty are compensated on "Performance of Duty" leave status. Officers at DOC and OUC call takers and dispatchers are eligible for workers compensation. Staff on workers compensation are removed from agency payrolls and are unable to fill posts during the duration of their workers compensation status.

5 As described in more detail in the section on MPD, not every agency has established posts.

Results

Office of Unified Communications

OUC is the District of Columbia's 911 and 311 call centers, operating around the clock. The agency's performance goal is to answer at least 90% of 911 calls in under 20 seconds. OUC uses the industry-standard calculation to estimate the number of call takers necessary to achieve this standard based on historical call volume data.⁶ As of February 2026, OUC projects that it needs the number of call takers and dispatchers on each shift in Figure 1 to meet its performance goals.

Figure 1: OUC Call Taker and Dispatcher Post Analysis

	Monday–Saturday		Sunday			Equivalent Number of 24-Hour Posts
	6 a.m.–6 p.m.	6 p.m.–6 a.m.	6 a.m.–2 p.m.	2 p.m.–10 p.m.	10 p.m.–6 a.m.	
Call Takers	22	17	12	15	12	18.6
Dispatchers ⁷	18	18	18	18	18	18

Source: ODCA analysis of Office of Budget and Performance Management report and OUC interview data

In FY 2025, the agency spent \$3.8 million on overtime, routinely relying on staff working overtime to fill these posts.⁸

Figure 2 provides a snapshot of one week from each month of FY 2025, illustrating the number of regular (non-overtime) hours and overtime hours worked by OUC call takers and dispatchers.⁹

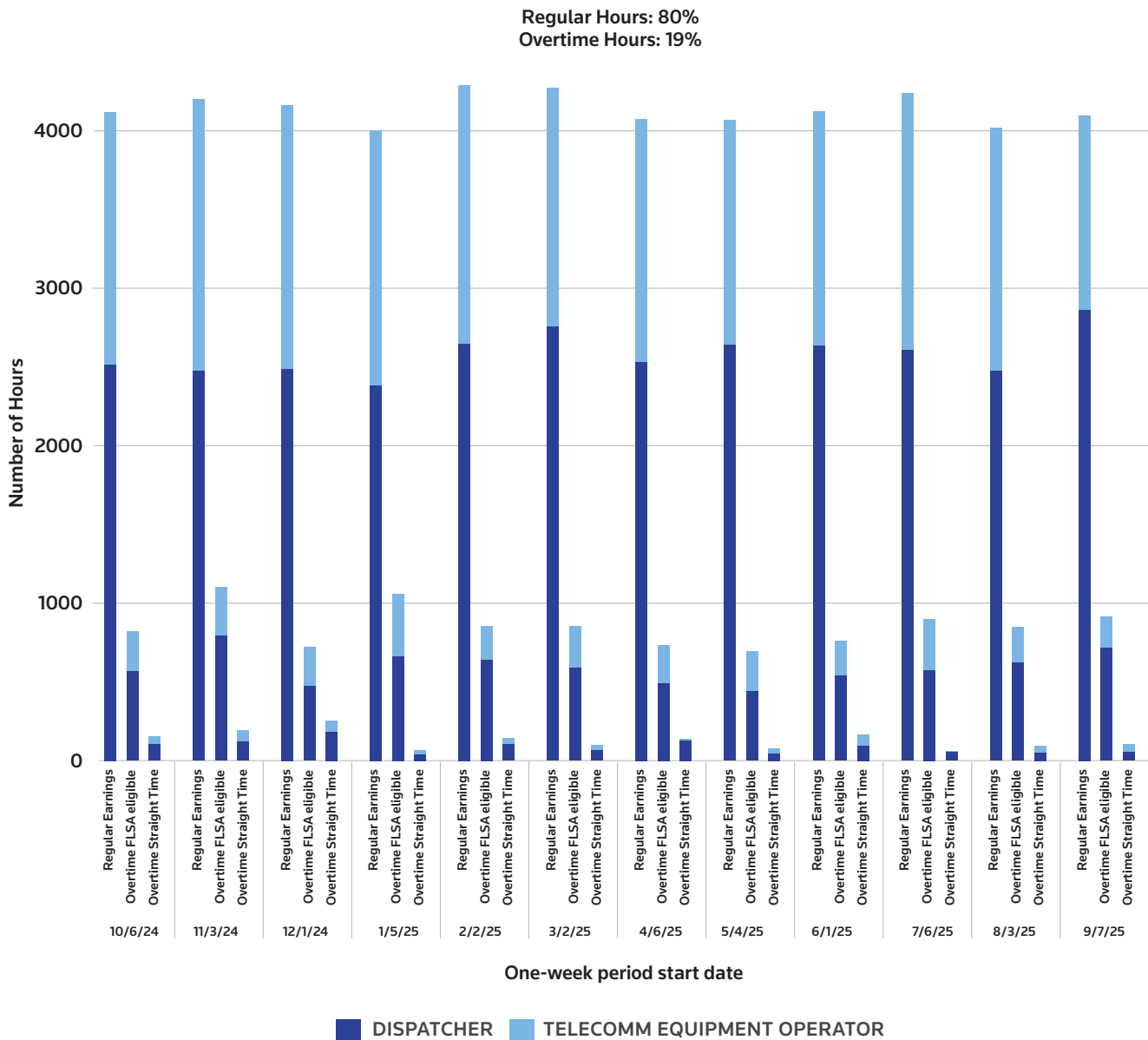
⁶ The formula is known as the Erlang C Formula.

⁷ OUC fills twelve MPD dispatcher posts and six Fire and EMS dispatcher posts on each shift.

⁸ This total is based on data from the District Integrated Financial System (DIFS).

⁹ Totals hours in the chart sum to 99%. An additional .8% of hours were comp time hours worked but were excluded from the chart for clarity of presentation.

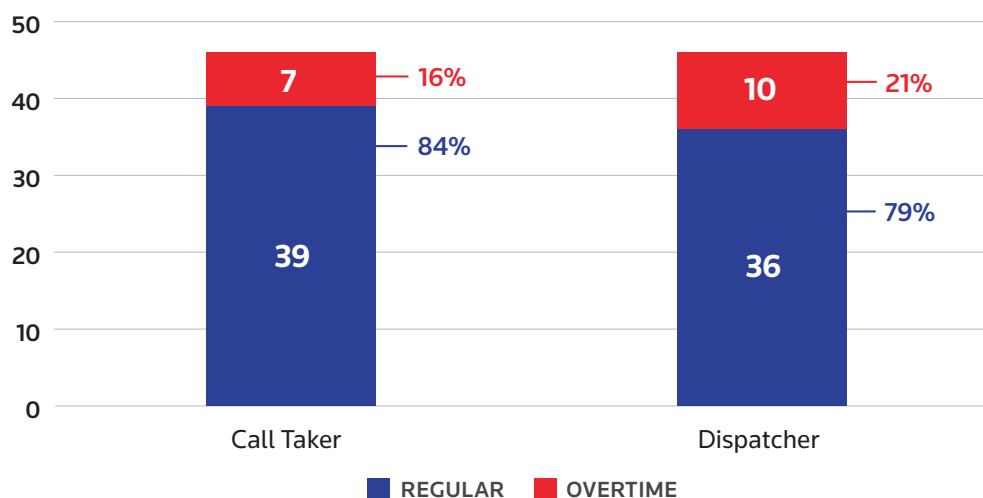
Figure 2: Regular and Overtime Hours by 911 Call Takers and Dispatchers in 12 One-Week Samples from FY25



Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft data provided by DCHR

As Figure 2 shows, overtime accounted for approximately one of every five hours worked by call takers and dispatchers. In the aggregate, both cohorts worked substantial overtime during the fiscal year: dispatchers worked an average of 10, 40-hour weeks of overtime and call takers worked an average of seven, 40-hour weeks of overtime. Figure 3 illustrates the relative proportion of average regular hours and overtime hours the average dispatcher and call taker worked during FY 2025, expressed as 40-hour weeks.

Figure 3: Average Regular and Overtime 40-Hour Weeks Worked by Call Takers and Dispatchers in FY25



Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft data provided by DCHR

Driving this phenomenon is, in part, staff availability to work regular hours. An analysis of leave usage in FY 2025 reveals that dispatchers were on some form of leave for an average of 11 work weeks and call takers approximately 10 weeks. The top categories of leave usage are listed in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Top Leave Categories Among OUC Dispatchers and Call Takers, FY25

Dispatcher			Call Taker		
	Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks		Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks
Annual Leave Taken	165.82	4.1	Annual Leave Taken	112.93	2.8
Sick Leave	101.66	2.5	Sick Leave	88.52	2.2
Leave Without Pay	42.85	1.1	Leave Without Pay	50.00	1.3
Away Without Leave	42.65	1.1	Paid Family Leave	47.95	1.2
Paid Family Leave	32.72	0.8	Away Without Leave	33.84	0.9
Admin Leave	20.15	0.5	Bereavement Pay	24.39	0.6
Bereavement Pay	18.02	0.5	Admin Leave	12.66	0.3

Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Assuming this baseline level of staff availability, we calculated the minimum number of employees that would be needed to fill these positions routinely without overtime, using data from FY 2025 for staff who

worked all 26 pay periods in the fiscal year.¹⁰ The analysis found the 94 dispatchers worked an average of 1,443 hours of regular time, and the 56 call takers worked an average of 1,543 hours of regular time. Based on this data, we calculated the relief factors in Figure 5.¹¹

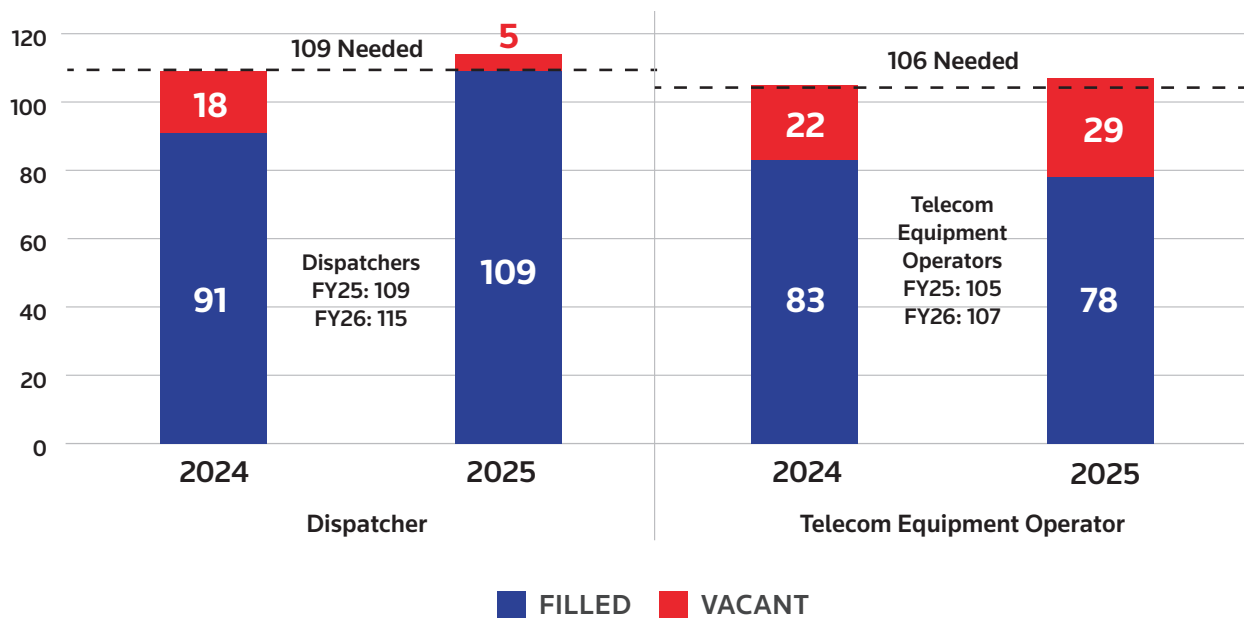
Figure 5: Relief Factors for Dispatchers and Call Takers Based on FY25 Data

Position	Average Non-Overtime Hours	Relief Factor (24-Hour/365)
Dispatchers	1,443	6.07
Call Takers	1,543	5.68

Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Based on the number of posts and the relief factor using FY 2025 time and attendance data, OUC would require 109 dispatchers and 106 call takers, or 215 positions between the two roles.¹² Figure 6 illustrates the number of budgeted and filled call takers on October 1, 2024, and October 1, 2025, respectively.

**Figure 6: Funded OUC Positions
October 1, 2024 (FY25) and October 1, 2025 (FY26)**



Source: ODCA Analysis of Schedule A data provided by DCHR

¹⁰ As described in the background section, relief factors were derived by dividing the total number of hours each post needed to be filled over the fiscal year (i.e., 8760) by the average reported number of regular (i.e., non-overtime and non-comp time) hours worked by employees.

¹¹ Annual training data were not made available for OUC staff included in this analysis. While staff attend training, they are not able to work in posts and thus training hours increase the relief factor.

¹² Because dispatchers are first trained as call takers, individuals in that position are able to provide call taking services.

On October 1, 2024, OUC had a deficit of both dispatchers and call takers, but by October 1, 2025, the agency had hired sufficient dispatchers but had slightly fewer call takers than the prior year. But the number of dispatchers and call takers who actually worked the entire year (i.e., all 26 pay periods rather than on the snapshot dates) was substantially lower: 94 dispatchers and 56 call takers, a total of 150 individuals, well below the 215 total positions needed.

This gap between the number of individuals needed to fill posts given the number of hours staff must be on duty and the number of staff available creates a structural gap: There are not enough staff working regular hours to fill all of the hours required by the posts. Thus, if all posts are filled, they must be filled using overtime (or comp time). Reducing overtime requires either hiring more staff, increasing staff availability, or some combination of the two strategies.

The Office of the City Administrator (OCA) analyzed the relief factor in January 2025 and reached a similar conclusion about the size of the call taker relief factor based on available data at that time.¹³ The analysis recognized a need for more OUC staff, but also acknowledged that to reduce the number of full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) a strategy to “improve call taker attendance and efficiency” could be adopted, especially focusing on reducing absences without leave, unscheduled comp time, and leave without pay.¹⁴ In August 2024, in recognition of the attendance and staffing issues, OUC instituted a program of paying bonuses to employees who worked all of their scheduled shifts.

Department of Corrections

The Department of Corrections operates two secure facilities, the Central Detention Facility (CDF) and the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF), staffed 24 hours per day. Additionally, DOC operates the Central Cell Block (CCB) as a short-term holding facility for arrestees, also staffed around the clock. Finally, DOC is responsible for transporting individuals in its custody to court, medical facilities, or other locations, and uses correctional officers for that function.

Unlike OUC, DOC correctional officers work eight-hour shifts.¹⁵ In secure facilities, some posts must be filled seven days per week, while others may be filled for fewer days depending on facility operations. Furthermore, some posts must be filled around the clock, while others need only be filled for portions of the day. As of February 2024, DOC operates using the following post analysis shown in Figure 7.

13 See “911 Staffing Model – Update,” January 2, 2025, Office of Budget and Performance Management (OBPM) at slide 8. The analysis calculated a shift relief factor of 1.86, the equivalent of a 24-hour relief factor of 5.58.

14 Id. at slides 10 and 15-18.

15 Figure 1 presents OUC dispatcher and call taker schedules, which include 12-hour shifts Monday through Friday and eight-hour shifts on Sundays.

Figure 7: DOC Post Analysis for CDF, CTF, Transportation, and CCB

CDF Posts					
	Shift 1	Shift 2	Shift 3	Total 8-Hour Posts	Equivalent Number of 24-Hour Posts
7-Day Posts	168	175	153	496	165.3
5-Day Posts	1	63	22	86	20.5
CTF Posts					
	Shift 1	Shift 2	Shift 3	Total 8-Hour Posts	Equivalent Number of 24-Hour Posts
7-Day Posts	109	141	110	360	120.0
5-Day Posts	0	27	8	35	8.3
Transportation Posts					
	Shift 1	Shift 2	Shift 3	Total 8-Hour Posts	Equivalent Number of 24-Hour Posts
7-Day Posts	0	0	0	0	0.0
5-Day Posts	15	15	0	30	7.1
Central Cell Block Posts					
	Shift 1	Shift 2	Shift 3	Total 8-Hour Posts	Equivalent Number of 24-Hour Posts
7-Day Posts	15	16	15	46	15.3
5-Day Posts	0	0	0	0	0.0
Total Posts—All Locations and Functions					
	Shift 1	Shift 2	Shift 3	Total 8-Hour Posts	Equivalent Number of 24-Hour Posts
7-Day Posts	292	332	278	902	300.7
5-Day Posts	16	105	30	151	36.0

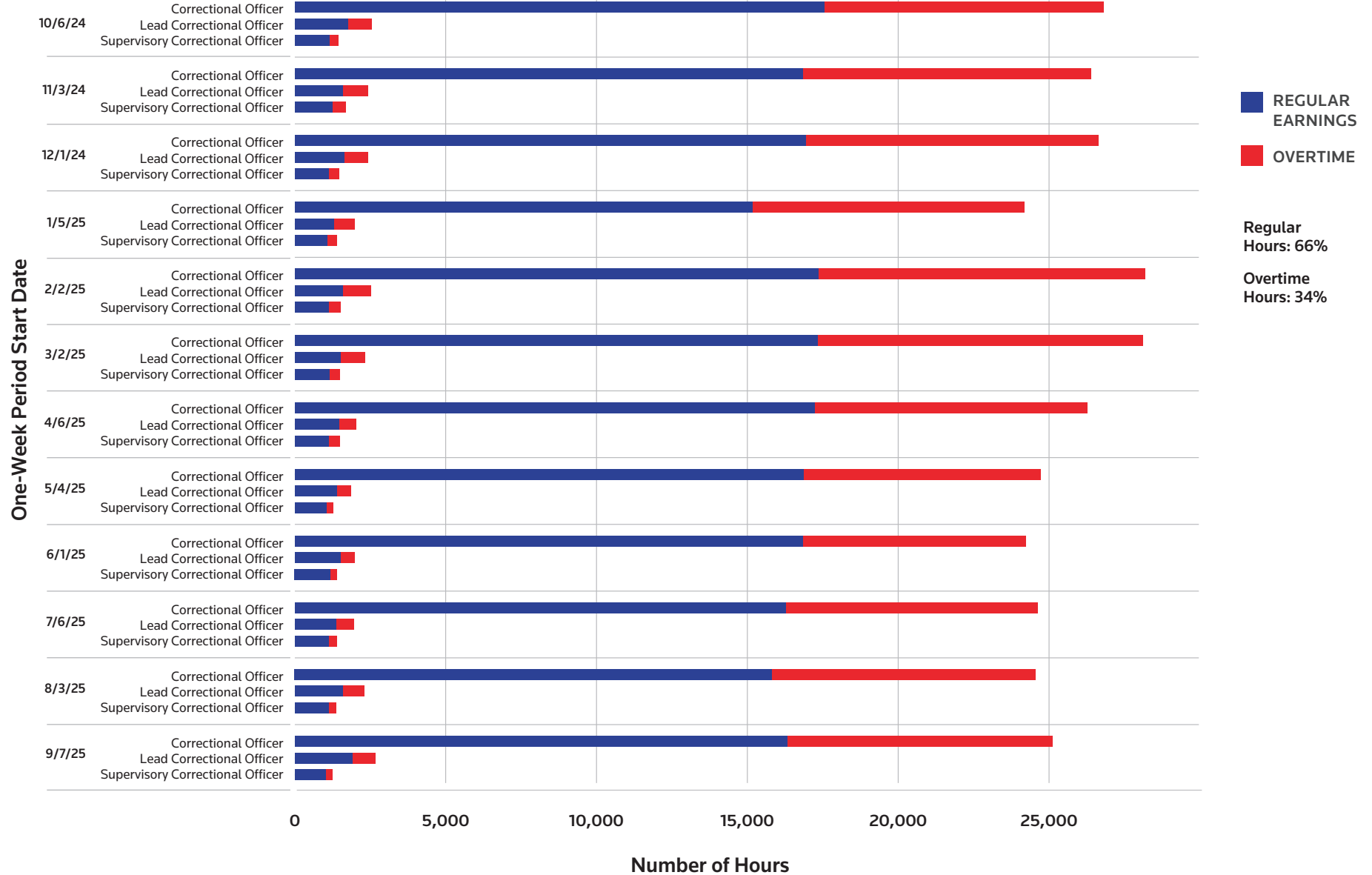
Source: ODCA analysis of post analysis provided by DOC

As at OUC, in FY 2025, DOC spent significant overtime funds — over \$30 million — routinely relying on correctional officers working overtime to fill required operational posts.¹⁶ Figure 8 provides a snapshot of one week from each month of FY 2025, illustrating the number of regular (non-overtime) hours and overtime hours worked by correctional officers.¹⁷

¹⁶ This total is based on District Integrated Financial System (DIFS) data.

¹⁷ The analysis is limited to correctional officers who worked the entire fiscal year.

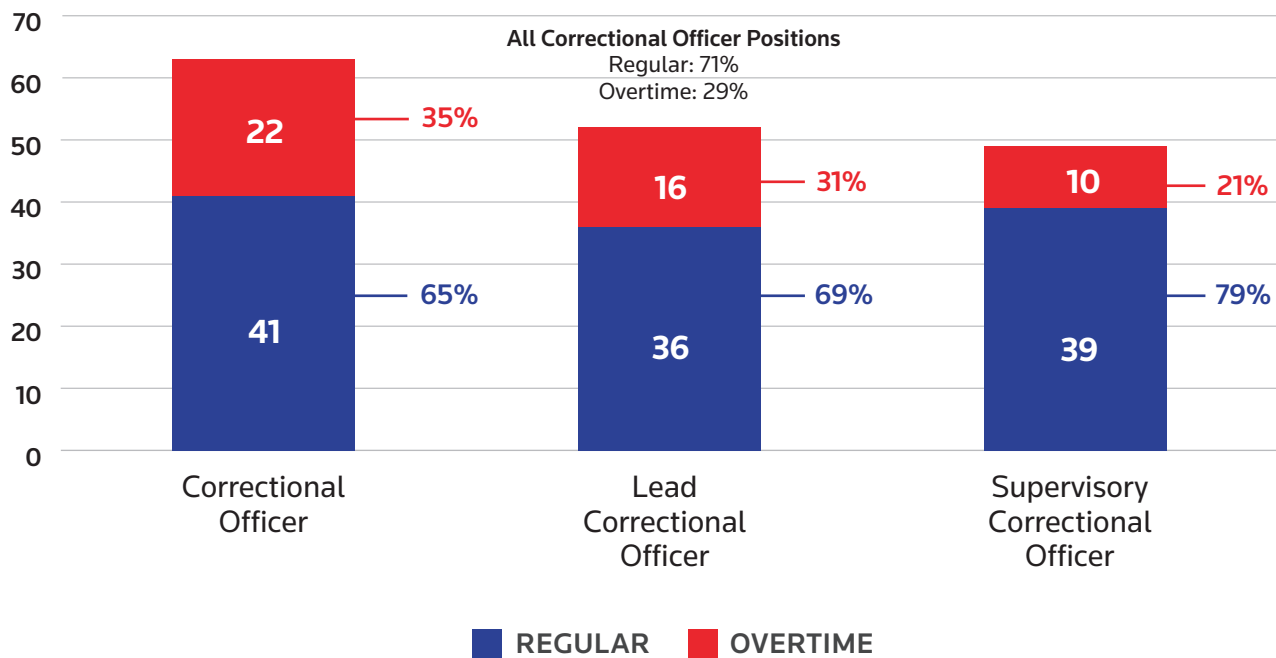
Figure 8: Regular and Overtime Hours by Correctional Officers in 12 One-Week Samples from FY25



Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Just over one-third of hours worked by correctional officers in FY 2025 were overtime hours. As presented in Figure 9, in FY 2025, correctional officers and lead correctional officers worked an average of 22 and 16 40-hour weeks of overtime, respectively, while supervisory correctional officers worked an average of 10, 40-hour weeks of overtime.

Figure 9: Average Regular and Overtime 40-Hour Weeks Worked by Correctional Officers in FY25



Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Because overtime is influenced by the number of regular hours worked, we analyzed leave trends among correctional officers. In FY 2025, correctional officers were on some form of leave for an average of between 10 to 12 weeks per year. The top categories of leave usage for each position, which account for approximately 90% of total leave for each, are listed in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Top Leave Categories Among DOC Correctional Officers in FY25

Correctional Officer			Lead Correctional Officer		
	Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks		Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks
Annual Leave	142.1	3.6	Annual Leave	147.4	3.7
Sick Leave	95.2	2.4	Sick Leave	111.3	2.8
Away Without Leave	95.2	2.4	Admin Leave	61.1	1.5
Paid Family Leave	49.7	1.2	Away Without Leave	26.4	0.7
Leave Without Pay	21.1	0.5	Paid Family Leave	26.1	0.7

Supervisory Correctional Officer		
	Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks
Annual Leave	152.6	3.8
Leave Without Pay	117.4	2.9
Sick Leave	87.5	2.2
Paid Family Leave	47.6	1.2
Away Without Leave	22.8	0.6

Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Assuming this baseline level of staff availability, we again calculated the number of employees that would be needed to fill correctional officer positions routinely without overtime using the relief factor data from FY 2025 for staff who worked all 26 pay periods during the fiscal year. For this portion of the analysis, we incorporated data regarding time employees spent in training. Although training hours are regular working hours, staff in training are not able to deploy in security posts.¹⁸ Based on this data, we calculated relief factors for each position, noting that correctional officers account for 86% of the staff in the analysis.¹⁹

¹⁸ Correctional officers in the analysis spent an average of 27 hours in training during the fiscal year.

¹⁹ This would equate to a 1.74 relief factor for an eight-hour shift. DOC staff stated that they use 1.98 as a relief factor for their planning purposes

Figure 11: Relief Factors for Correctional Offices Based on FY25 Data

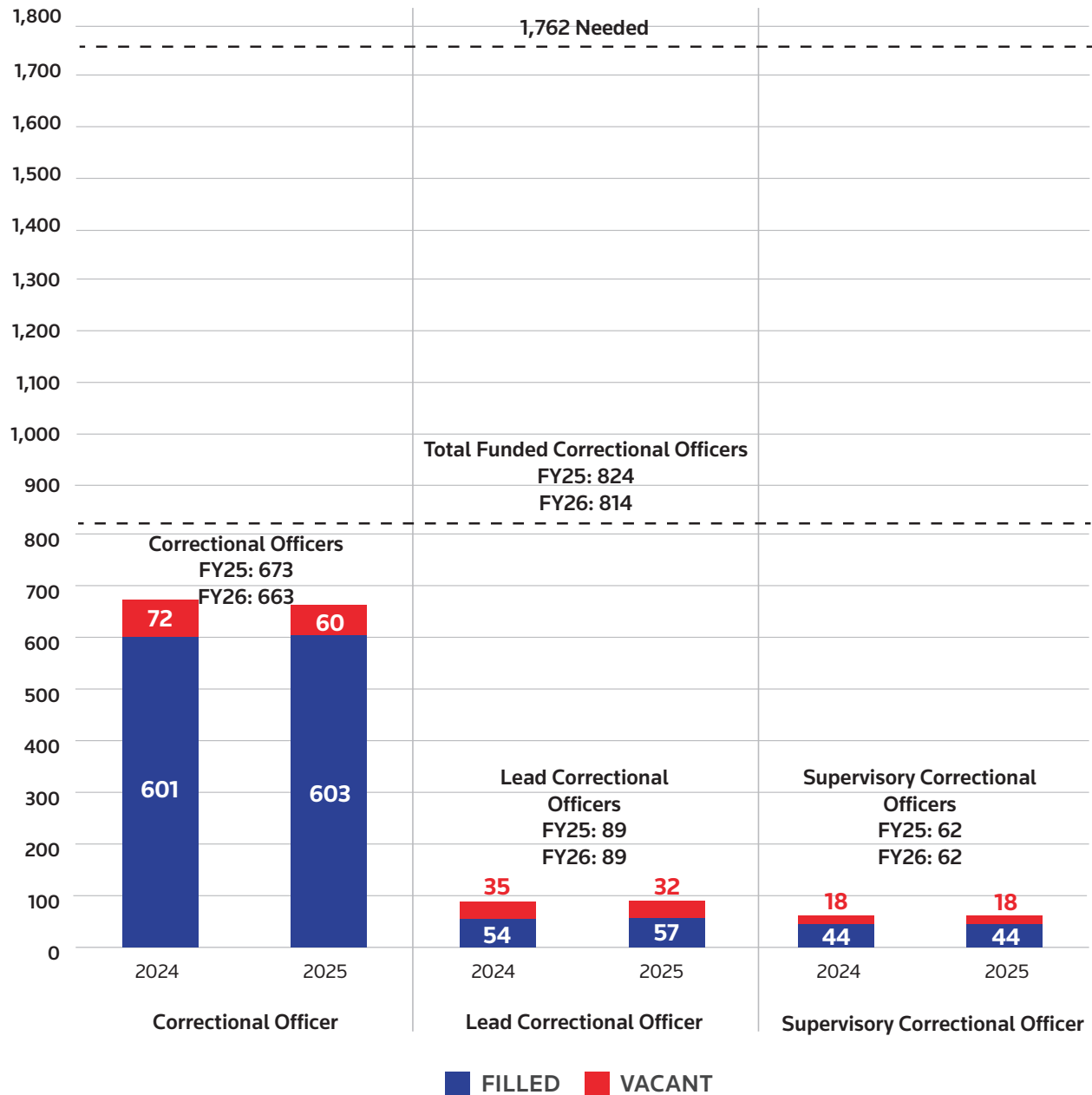
Position	Average Non-OT Hours	Relief Factor (24-Hour/365)
Correctional Officers	1,677	5.22
Lead Correctional Officers	1,461	6.00
Supervisory Correctional Officers	1,590	5.51
All Correctional Officer Staff	1,674	5.23 ²⁰

Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Based on the number of posts that need to be filled and the relief factor using FY 2025 time and attendance data, DOC would require 1,762 correctional officers to fill all posts in its facilities and to perform ancillary security functions. Figure 12 illustrates the number of budgeted and filled correctional officer positions on October 1, 2024, and October 1, 2025, respectively.

²⁰ This would equate to a 1.74 relief factor for an eight-hour shift. DOC staff stated that they use 1.98 as a relief factor for their planning purposes.

**Figure 12: Funded DOC Correctional Officer Positions
October 1, 2024 (FY25) and October 1, 2025 (FY26)**



Source: ODCA Analysis of Schedule A data provided by DCHR

The analysis reveals an enormous gap between the number of staff needed to fill all operational posts (1,762) and the number of staff employed by the agency (704). That is, the agency would need two and a half times as many FTEs as they now employ to avoid persistent overtime. This staffing shortage is so significant that overtime alone is not sufficient to fill all posts. Agency representatives have stated that in addition to relying on overtime, posts are also being left unfilled in order to reduce the number of staff on each shift.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department

The Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FireEMS) provides an array of emergency response services around the clock, including response to medical emergencies, fire events, and rescues, and stands ready to respond to less frequent events, including hazardous material spills, and homeland security events. In recent years, FireEMS staff were deployed to the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol and the January 2025 midair collision near Reagan National Airport.

The agency staffs 33 firehouses, a special operations division with specialized apparatus, and associated command and communications staff. There are 43 ambulances,²¹ 33 fire engines,²² 15 ladder trucks, three rescue squads, two air units, a tower truck, a foam unit, a fire boat, and a hazmat unit staffed each day. Operations are divided into six battalions (geographical groupings of fire house, apparatus, and personnel) plus a seventh, special operations division. In total, including all functions, positions, and ranks, there are 365 operational posts to be filled around the clock.²³

Unlike other public safety agencies, FireEMS operations staff work 24-hour shifts, from 5 a.m. to 5 a.m. After a 24-hour shift, staff are off for three days and are scheduled to work again on the fourth day. Due to this schedule, FireEMS employees alternately work “short weeks” (72 hours, or three, 24-hour shifts over a two-week pay period) and “long weeks” (96 hours, or four, 24-hour shifts over a two-week pay period), averaging out over time to 42-hour work weeks. To cover the four-day rotation schedule (i.e., one day working followed by three days off), staff are organized into four platoons.

FireEMS additionally maintains a contract with a vendor, American Medical Response Mid-Atlantic, Inc., to provide supplemental basic life support ambulance services, which helps manage uneven demand for services and can preserve availability of the Department’s advanced life support response capacity.

Figure 13 shows a list of the 365 operational posts the agency fills around the clock daily, by rank, as of February 2026.

21 Seventeen of the ambulances are designated advanced life support “medic units” and 26 ambulances are staffed to provide basic life support.

22 Twenty-one of the 33 engines include a paramedic firefighter and thus can provide advanced life support at a medical emergency.

23 This total includes three investigator positions that are filled around the clock and an additional position in the Joint Operations Command Center, which was created in the fall of 2025. There are additional roles in the Department that are filled by firefighters and officers, but they are not 24-hour operational roles and are not included in this analysis. Examples of those roles include the Fire and EMS Training Academy, the Fire Prevention Division, and the Office of the Medical Director.

Figure 13: FireEMS Post Analysis for Citywide Operational Posts

Seven Days Per Week Operational Posts 5 a.m.–5 a.m.	
Firefighters ²⁴	275
Officer in Charge ²⁵	62
Sergeants	12
Lieutenants	2
Captains	4
Battalion Chief	9
Deputy Chief	1

Source: ODCA analysis of deployment plan provided by FireEMS

FireEMS incurred over \$50 million of overtime in FY 2025.²⁶ Figure 14 presents 12, two-week samples from FY 2025.²⁷

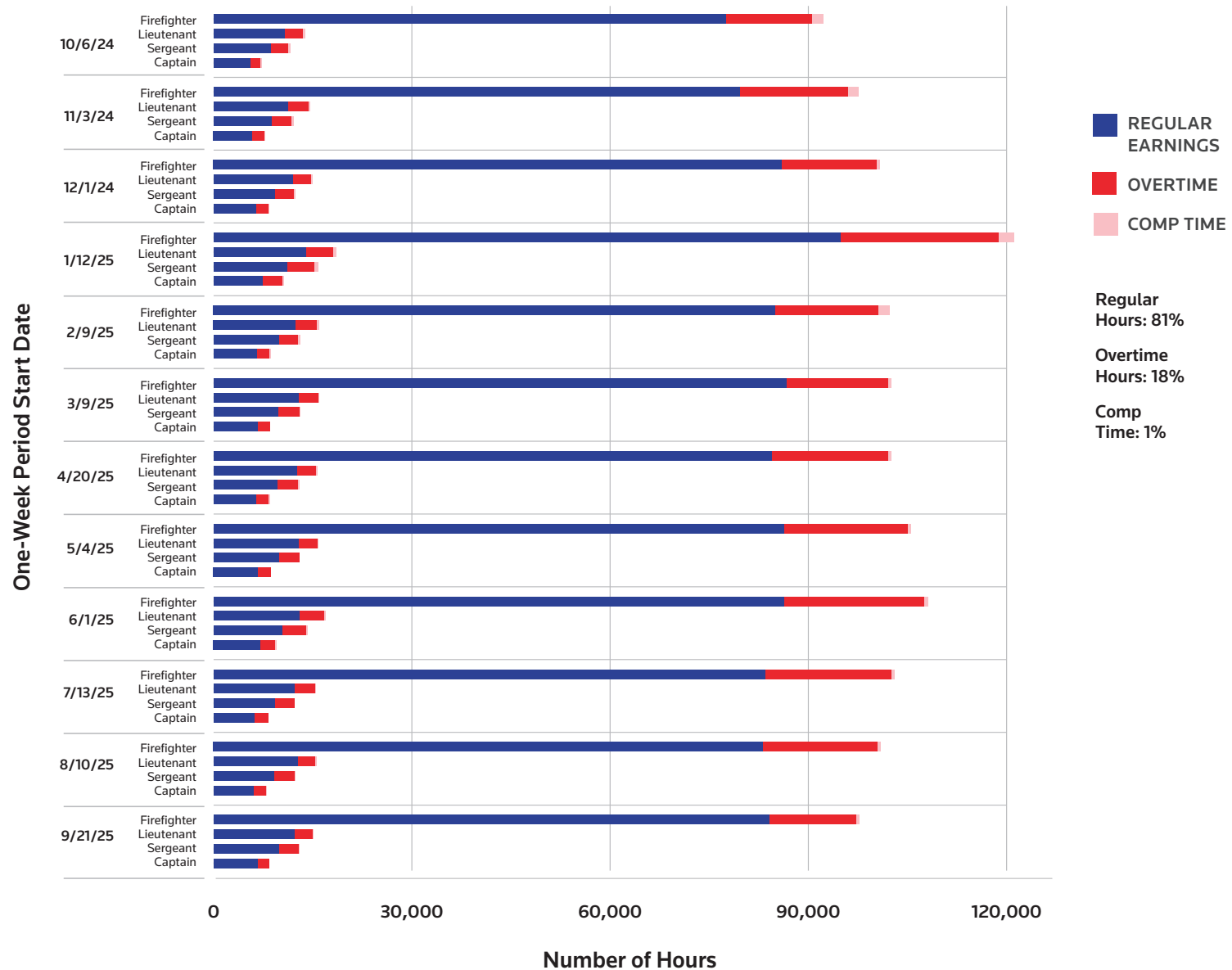
²⁴ There are different specialized skills among firefighters, and thus not all staff can perform all required roles. For example, some staff are “technicians,” qualified to drive specific apparatus. Additionally, some firefighters are certified as paramedics, a qualification that exceeds the emergency medical technician (EMT) level and enables them to deliver advanced life support services. There are a limited number of civilian (i.e., non-firefighter) EMTs and paramedics employed by the agency, but the agency no longer hires civilians for these roles and the numbers are gradually declining each year. The 275 posts in this row include posts on ambulances that may be filled by civilian EMTs or paramedics.

²⁵ “Officer in Charge” is not a rank, but rather a position that may be filled by sergeants, lieutenants, or captains on different shifts, so there is some flexibility regarding the distribution of ranks among these positions.

²⁶ This total is based on data in the District Integrated Financial System (DIFS) and confirmed by the agency’s fiscal officer.

²⁷ Unlike data from OUC and DOC, data for FireEMS was organized into two-week periods rather than one-week periods. For the analysis, “Regular” hours include hours recorded as “Regular” in PeopleSoft, plus an adjustment to hours recorded in PeopleSoft to account for long weeks (“Fire No Pay Reg Adjustment”). The analysis also included a category of non-overtime hours worked during employee shift trades (“Day Off Trade Worked”). During shift trades, firefighters can trade shifts. The employee who assumes the shift does not earn overtime during the traded shift and the employee not working (because a colleague is covering their shift) does not take leave on the traded shift.

Figure 14: Regular, Overtime, and Comp Time Hours by Firefighters, Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Captains in 12 Two-Week Samples from FY25

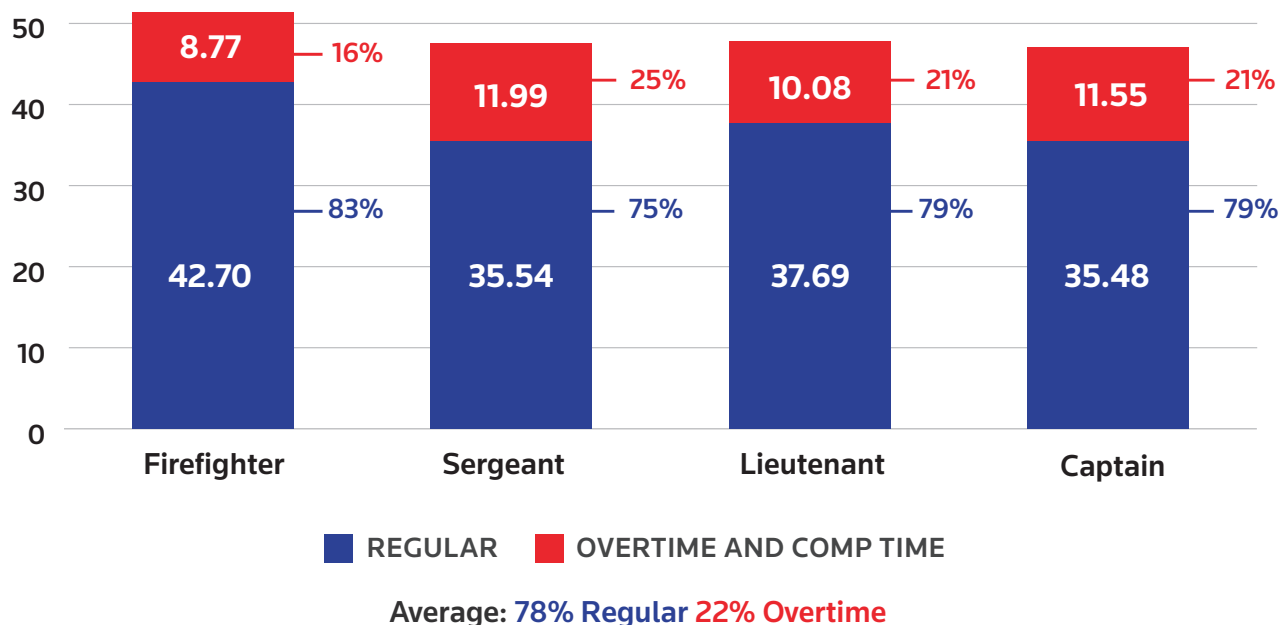


Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Approximately 20% of hours worked by employees in the ranks presented in Figure 14, or one in five hours, were overtime or, to a small extent, compensatory time hours.

As Figure 15 shows, firefighters, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains worked between 35 and 42 40-hour weeks of regular time and between eight and 12, 40-hour weeks of overtime.²⁸

Figure 15: Average Regular and Overtime/Comp Time 40-Hour Weeks Worked by Firefighters, Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Captains in FY25



Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

An analysis of leave usage in FY 2025 reveals that the staff in the ranks presented in Figure 15 were on some form of leave on average for between nine and 11 weeks per year. The top categories of leave usage for each position, which account for approximately 90% of total leave for each are presented in Figure 16.

²⁸ As noted above, FireEMS sworn members work 42-hour work weeks on average, but for comparative purposes this chart presents 40-hour work weeks.

Figure 16: Top Leave Categories Among FireEMS Staff, Select Ranks in FY25

Firefighter			Sergeant		
	Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks		Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks
Annual Leave	150.9	3.8	Annual Leave	157.7	3.9
Sick Leave	118.0	3.0	Sick Leave	84.8	2.1
Paid Family Leave	63.0	1.6	Paid Family Leave	41.0	1.0
Comp Time Used	41.2	1.0	Comp Time Used	32.4	0.8
POD/Light Duty	23.2	0.6	POD/Light Duty	26.0	0.7

Lieutenant			Captain		
	Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks		Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks
Annual Leave	175.9	4.4	Annual Leave	173.4	4.3
Sick Leave	107.1	2.7	Sick Leave	96.0	2.4
Paid Family Leave	35.8	0.9	Paid Family Leave	40.2	1.0
Comp Time Used	24.0	0.6	Comp Time Used	40.3	1.0
POD/Light Duty	25.7	0.6	POD/Light Duty	22.4	0.6

Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Using FY 2025 staff availability data, we calculated relief factors for each of the four ranks, which according to the post analysis account for 97% of the 365 daily operational posts. FireEMS employees spend a significant number of hours training, during which time they are not able to fill operational posts.²⁹ Accounting for this time spent in training, the relief factors are presented in Figure 17.³⁰

²⁹ FY25 data indicate that firefighters spent an average of 80 hours in training; sergeants, 120 hours; lieutenants, 90 hours; and captains, 70 hours. Collectively, these firefighter staff spent an average of 116 hours in training, or nearly three work weeks.

³⁰ Sergeants, lieutenants, and captains are relatively small cohorts and a sufficiently large percentage are promoted each year to impact relief factor calculations. In order to compensate for the impact of partial years in positions on relief factors among small cohorts, the relief factor calculations for all four categories of staff were done based on staff who worked all 26 pay periods in the same rank during the fiscal year.

Figure 17: Relief Factors for Select FireEMS Staff, Select Ranks, Based on FY25 Data

Position	Average Non-OT Hours	Relief Factor (24-Hour/365)
Firefighters	1,732	5.30
Sergeants	1,720	5.48
Lieutenants	1,716	5.39
Captains	1,598	5.73
All Four Ranks	1,657	5.59

Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

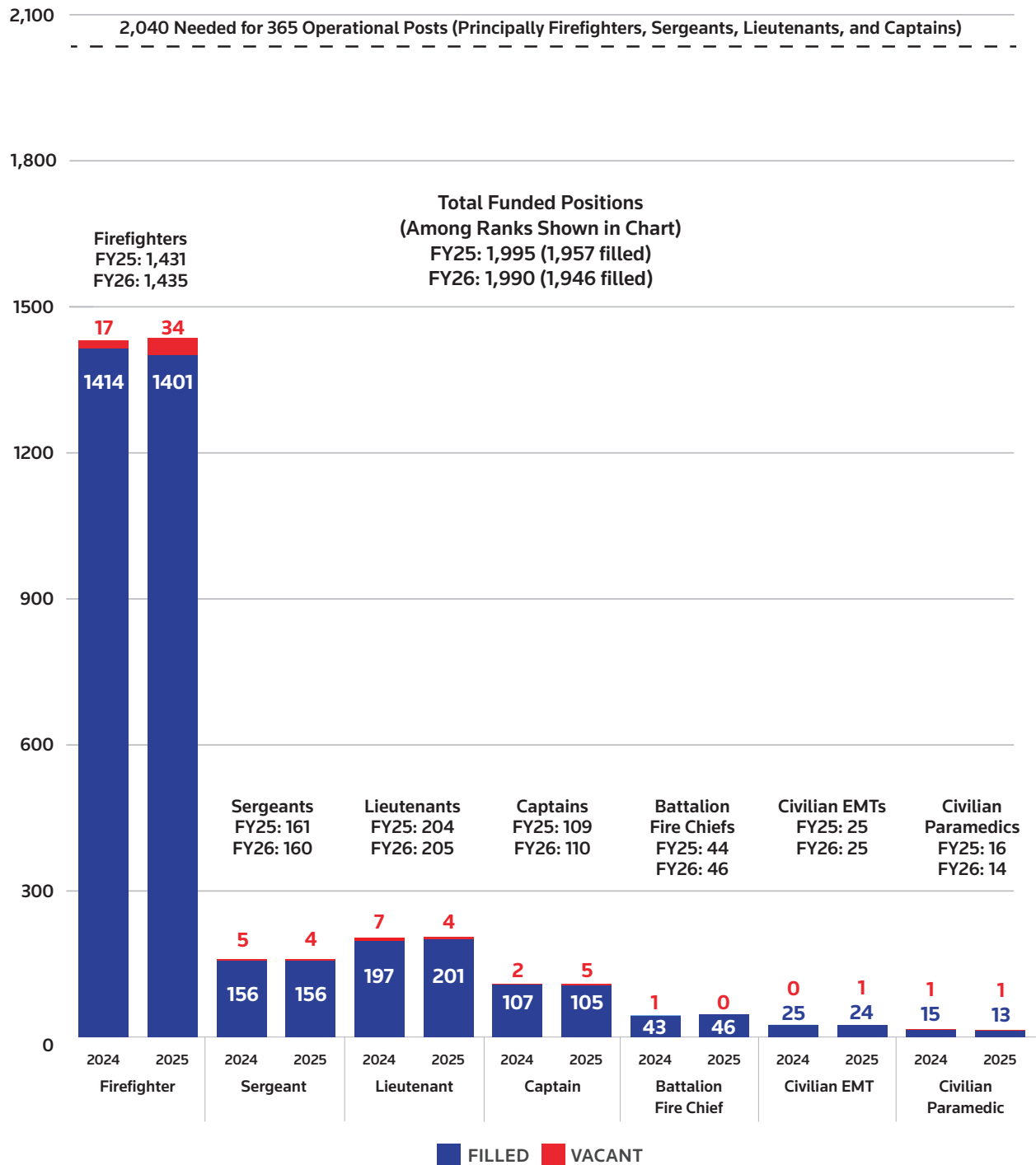
Based on the number of operational posts that must be filled and the relief factor using FY 2025 time and attendance data, FireEMS would require approximately 2,040 staff of various ranks to fill the 365 daily operational posts.³¹ The Department requires additional officers to staff the agency’s executive, operational support, and administrative functions.³²

Figure 18 illustrates the number of budgeted and filled positions for the ranks that fill the 365 daily operational posts on October 1, 2024, and October 1, 2025, respectively.

31 An exact number of each rank would require a precise accounting of each rank filled each day; however, the Department has some flexibility to use sergeants, lieutenants, and captains to staff apparatus as operations and staff availability dictate. The Department employs a small number (fewer than 40) of civilian EMTs and paramedics who staff ambulances and medic units. As a policy, the Department no longer hires civilian staff for these roles.

32 These additional officers include agency command staff, the Training Division, the Emergency Medical Services Division, the Facilities/Logistics Division, the Fire Prevention Division, the Apparatus Divisions, the Internal Affairs Division, the Risk Management Division, the Medical Services Office, the Professional Standards Division, the Information Technology Division, and the Recruiting Division. Collectively these offices are staffed by approximately 70 officers of different ranks.

Figure 18: Funded FireEMS Firefighters, Lieutenants, Sergeants, Captains, and Battalion Chiefs
October 1, 2024 (FY25) and October 1, 2025 (FY26)



Source: ODCA Analysis of Schedule A data provided by DCHR

Figure 18 illustrates that the Department had funding for over 97% of the positions necessary to fill all 24/7 posts; however, including vacancies, the Department was approximately 100 employees short as of

the start of FY 2026. Furthermore, this total does not account for the additional approximately 50 non-command officer staff needed to operate other agency functions outside of the 365 operational posts. These factors collectively could drive some degree of structural overtime in the Department.

Nevertheless, the amount of overtime incurred by the Department in FY 2025 is substantially greater than the amount one would expect in light of the post analysis and relief factor.³³ This could indicate that, on a practical level, the Department routinely fills more than 365 posts due to operational needs. For example, perhaps events requiring the agency to increase staffing levels temporarily, such as National Special Security Events, large emergencies, or weather events, could frequently drive the need for additional resources above required baseline levels, but the Department should explore these drivers more specifically over time. This indicates the need for the Department to assess how frequently over the course of the year they increase staffing above the baseline levels and determine whether the current 365-day, 24-hour positions are optimal in light of current operational realities.

Metropolitan Police Department

Unlike the OUC, DOC, and FireEMS, MPD does not operate with a fixed number of posts each day. According to the two assistant chiefs who oversaw citywide patrol operations as of early 2026, there is no established minimum number of patrol staff that must be deployed daily. Rather, the specific number of officers assigned to work each day is context-dependent, based on operational needs.

According to one of the two assistant chiefs, specific numbers of officers are assigned to each of the seven geographical districts, and then to the smaller “police service areas,” and scheduled to work specific shifts. However, the number of officers who are actually deployed on a given day depends on the number of regularly scheduled officers who report for duty plus any additional officers the district commander assigns to work. According to the assistant chief, commanders have some discretion in assigning officers overtime on each shift.³⁴

In addition to officers assigned to patrol, MPD deploys supplemental cohorts of officers in response to crime trends. These operations have various names including “high visibility zones” or “hot spot zones,” and are frequently staffed with officers working on overtime. According to an assistant chief, these supplemental operations are reviewed periodically (i.e., every seven or 30 days depending on the size of the operation) to assess whether they should be continued. While this significant management discretion provides police executives with maximum flexibility to respond to public safety conditions, it also limits real-time overtime spending controls. In addition, District policymakers have approved collective bargaining agreement provisions that require overtime payments when schedules are adjusted with only limited notice.

Because the daily volume of police work is unevenly distributed, varying based on the time of day, number and size of public events, crime trends, and enforcement policy initiatives, rightsizing MPD is challenging.

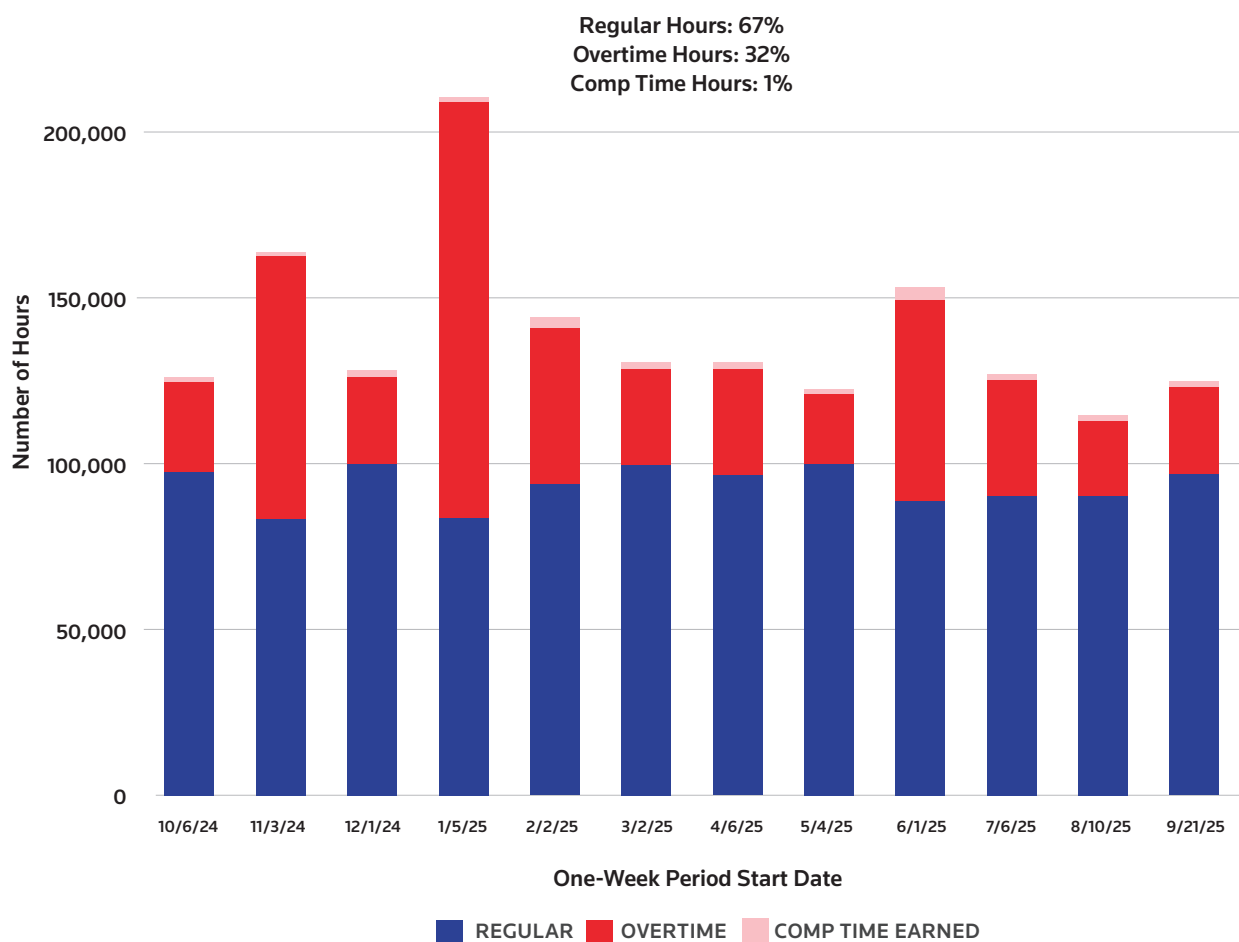
33 The analysis reveals that the Department has 95% of the positions filled that it needs for their 24/7 posts (i.e., 1946 posts filled of 2040 necessary), which is within 5% of the required number. The agency’s total personal services budget was \$262 million in FY25; however, it spent over \$50 million in overtime in FY25, or 19% more than their approved personal services budget.

34 According to the assistant chief, any officers deployed on overtime must be reported by commanders each day with reasons for the use of overtime and those deployments are reviewed routinely by their supervisors, the assistant chiefs.

A police force with more officers than needed is both expensive and inefficient. Similarly, a police force with too few officers will result in structural overtime, which also is a costly, inefficient way to staff routine operations. Optimally, a department should have sufficient staff to fund a baseline level of operations without using overtime and have the capacity to deploy staff on overtime to meet periodic episodes of higher demands for services.³⁵

In FY 2025, MPD spent nearly \$134 million on overtime.³⁶ Figure 19 shows 12, one-week samples of regular and overtime hours from FY 2025 from ranks that accounted for over 95% of overtime during FY 2025.

Figure 19: Regular and Overtime Hours by Officers, Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains, and Detectives in 12 One-Week Samples from FY25



Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

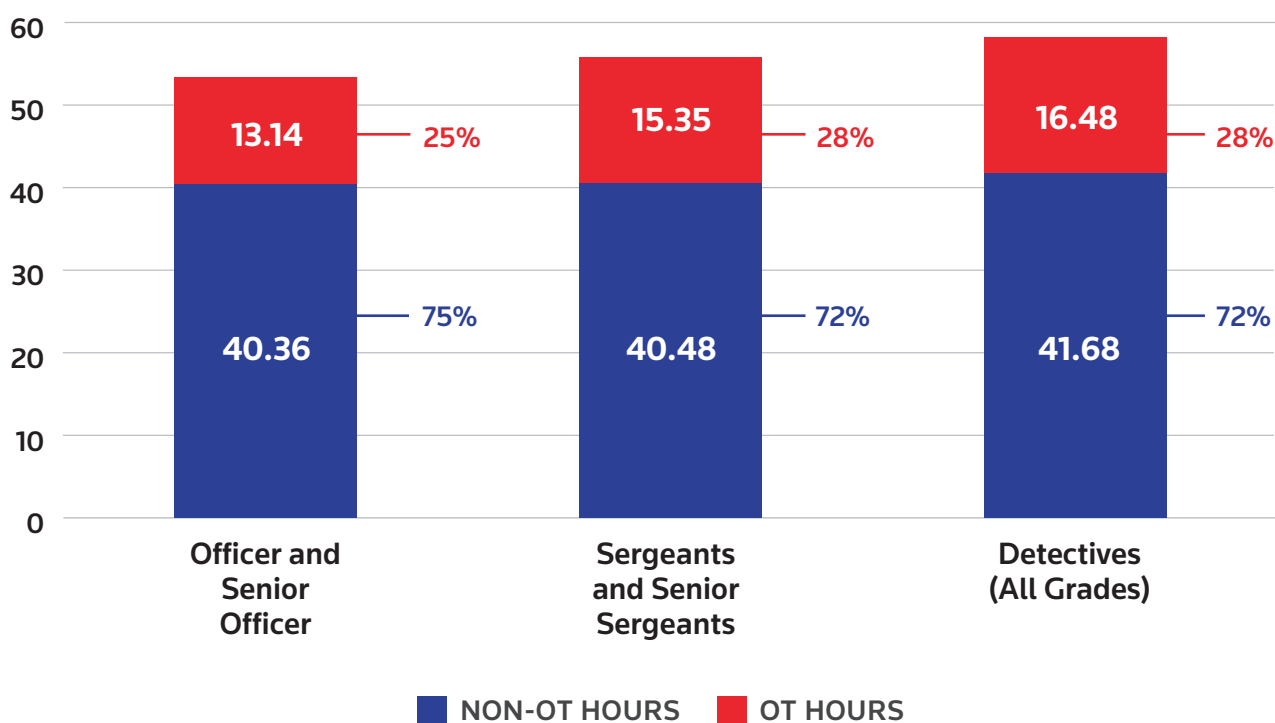
³⁵ FireEMS faces an analogous challenge of fluctuating demands for service, but with medical care benefits from flexible contractual BLS services can provide coverage during periods of high demand.

³⁶ This total is based on MPD's public overtime reporting at <https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/mpd-overtime-reports>.

Approximately one-third of hours worked by employees presented in Figure 19 were overtime or comp time.

Because officers, sergeants, and detectives comprise 90% of the sworn workforce, the analysis in Figure 20 focuses on those ranks. Approximately one-quarter of all hours worked by staff in each rank were overtime hours.³⁷ Staff worked on average between 40 and 42, 40-hour work weeks of regular time and between 13 and 17 additional 40-hour weeks of overtime.³⁸ Among the ranks in the analysis, detectives worked the most overtime.

Figure 20: Average Regular and Overtime/Comp Time 40-Hour Weeks Worked by Officers, Sergeants, and Detectives in FY25



Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

In FY 2025, the staff in the ranks presented above were on some form of leave on average for approximately eight weeks per year. The top categories of leave usage for each position, which account for approximately 90% of total leave for each, are listed in Figure 21.³⁹

³⁷ The data in this chart include the entire fiscal year. The prior chart, which reflects 12 one-week samples, show a higher percentage of overtime because of three included weeks with higher-than-average overtime usage.

³⁸ MPD patrol officers work 10-hour shifts and thus a 40-hour work week is four workdays.

³⁹ The category of annual leave in Figure 21 includes both scheduled annual leave and restored leave used.

Figure 21: Top Leave Categories Among MPD Officers, Sergeants, and Detectives in FY25

Officers			Sergeants		
	Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks		Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks
Annual Leave	148.9	3.7	Annual Leave	168.2	4.2
Sick Leave	79.1	2.0	Sick Leave	59.9	1.5
Paid Family Leave	33.4	0.8	Paid Family Leave	40.0	1.0
Comp Time	28.2	0.7	Comp Time	37.0	0.9
Performance of Duty	18.6	0.5	Performance of Duty	13.0	0.3

Detectives		
	Average Annual Hours	Equivalent Work Weeks
Annual Leave	178.0	4.5
Sick Leave	54.1	1.4
Comp Time	31.5	0.8
Paid Family Leave	29.4	0.7
Performance of Duty	7.1	0.2

Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Using FY 2025 staff availability data, we calculated relief factors for each of the three ranks. The calculated relief factors accounted for non-overtime hours worked that were spent in training, on “limited duty” status, or on “non-contact” status, during which time staff are not available to be deployed.

Figure 22: Relief Factors for MPD Officers, Sergeants, and Detectives, Based on FY25 Data

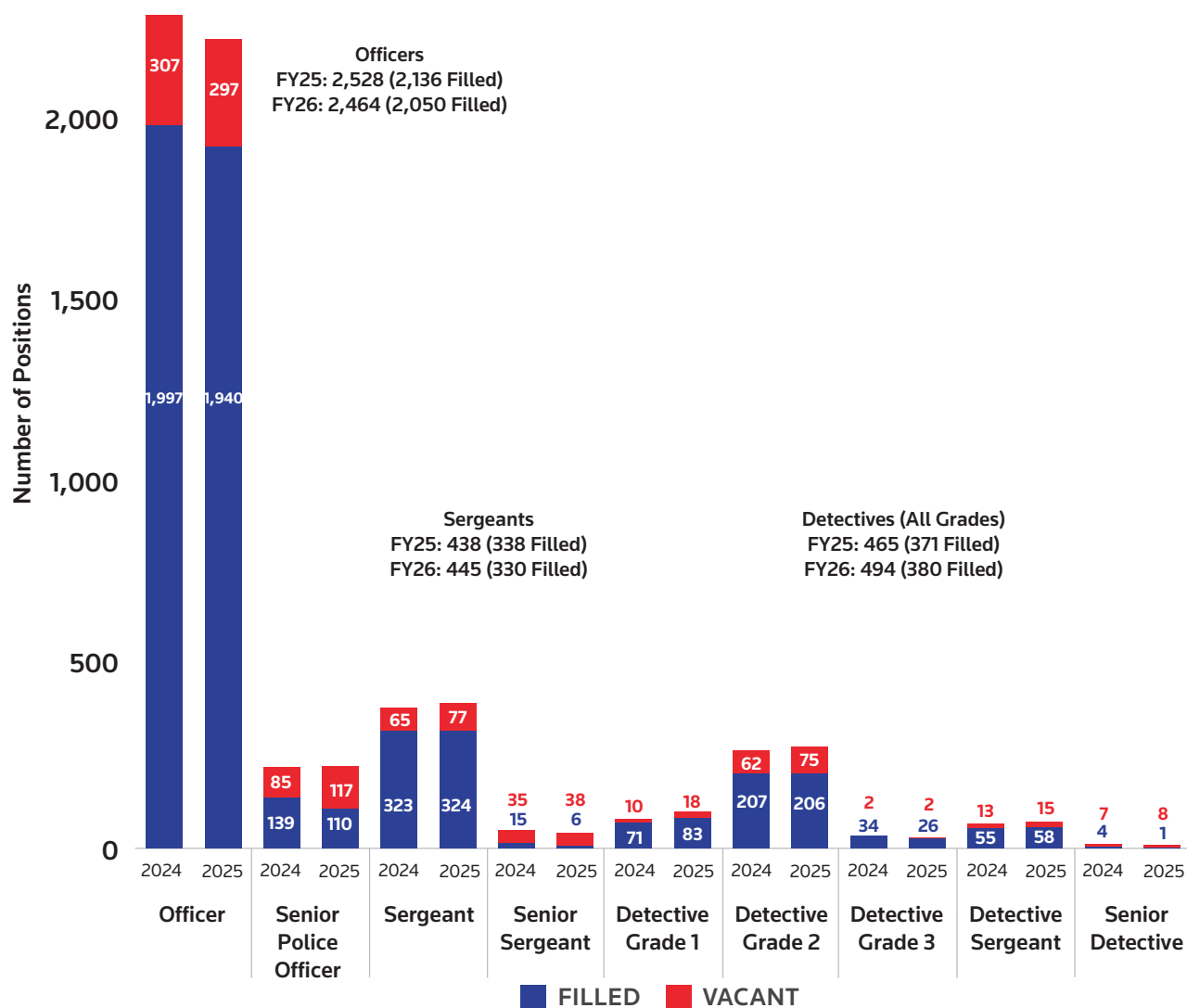
Position	Average Non-OT Hours	Relief Factor (24-Hour/365)
Officers	1,614	5.77
Sergeants	1,619	5.69
Detectives	1,667	5.42
All Three Ranks	1,622	5.71

Source: ODCA analysis of FY25 PeopleSoft time and attendance data provided by DCHR

Because MPD does not operate with a fixed number of posts, these relief factors cannot be applied to determine a baseline workforce size. They can, however, be used to determine the approximate number of staff who could be deployed given the actual size of the workforce without incurring structural overtime.

Figure 23 shows the number of budgeted and filled officer, sergeant, and detective positions at the start of FY 2025 and FY 2026.

Figure 23: Funded MPD Officers, Sergeants, and Detectives
October 1, 2024 (FY25) and October 1, 2025 (FY26)



Source: ODCA Analysis of Schedule A data provided by DCHR

If staff were evenly distributed across shifts and days, based on a relief factor of 5.77 and 2,050 officers, one could assign a maximum of 355 patrol officers on average at all times, without overtime. If numbers of officers above this total were routinely staffed, it would result in structural overtime.

The same calculations for sergeants and detectives using the respective workforce sizes and relief factors yields 58 sergeants and 70 detectives at all times over a 24-hour period.

There are methodologies that can be employed to develop rationalized numbers of police posts. The ODCA September 12, 2024, report “MPD Needs Improved Data Analysis, Targeted Deployment, and More Detectives” offered one such methodology: a data-driven, workload-based staffing model. With regard to patrol services, MPD told ODCA’s consultants that the Department aimed for 40%–50% of unobligated time. To account for this goal, the model allocated officers’ time as follows: 40% responding to calls for service, 40% for proactive policing, and 20% for administrative activities like roll call briefings and breaks. Using historic data on calls for service, the analysis concluded that an appropriate workforce size would include 1,547 Primary Patrol positions and 429 Reactive Investigative Unit positions.⁴⁰

In the absence of MPD having and using a structured methodology to establish the number of posts to fill every day, MPD could use historical deployment data as a basis of planning a workforce size. For example, an analysis of the daily distribution of the count of officers deployed on the street each day (on regular time and overtime), could serve as a useful baseline for a targeted number of posts, and thus, workforce size. The Department could then use some threshold percentage based on the historical data as a target for the workforce size, which would effectively provide sufficient staff for operational needs on the threshold number of days (for example, 90%) but would allow a margin for uneven workflows during which overtime could be used to meet daily needs.

⁴⁰ These numbers include only the ranks for Officer/Detective, Sergeant, and Lieutenant. Staffing of titles ranking higher were not included because, “[T]ypically, ranks above lieutenant are less driven by workload and more predicated on departmental leadership, operational goals, and desired structure—in short, those positions are more policy choices than workload-based decisions.”

Conclusion

Overtime has been and continues to be a costly and chronic phenomenon among the District's public safety agencies. Structural overtime may be understood as a symptom of workforces that are not sized appropriately for baseline operations given the combination of the number of staff employed and the number of hours the staff work. Additional hiring is one strategy to reduce overtime. Reducing excessive time employees spend away from work can be another critical strategy to address overtime without the added costs of additional hiring.

Staffing relief factors are an essential metric of workforce efficiency. As this report documents, different public safety agencies have different relief factors driven by different leave use patterns among employees. For some agencies, including the OUC and the DOC, which have high levels of employees on "away without leave" and/or "leave without pay," there may be opportunities to bring staff back to work or, if necessary, to separate them from employment by the District. In other cases, in agencies such as FireEMS with high average sick leave usage, there may be opportunities to assess employee wellness and consider whether there are broader organizational workload or morale issues. MPD could revisit strategies and implement additional managerial controls reportedly imposed by previous chiefs to limit discretionary overtime authorized by District commanders.

Given that personal services costs are the largest drivers of agency costs, District leaders should pay close attention to relief factor trends over time. Ideally, agencies could learn from one another about trends and share effective strategies to reduce inflated relief factors. Either the Office of the City Administrator or the Department of Human Resources could convene a standing working group to assess relief factors District wide and develop management strategies as indicated by agency trends. An interagency workgroup could bring to light needed policy changes and/or practical impediments to implementing existing human resources policies.

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