

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Metropolitan Police Department



Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Oversight Hearing

Testimony of
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Before the
Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety
Councilmember Charles Allen, Chair
Council of the District of Columbia

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Council Chambers
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004



Good afternoon, Chairperson Allen, members and staff of the Committee, other members of the Council, and guests. Last week, Mayor Bowser presented “A Fair Shot,” the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY2019) Budget and Financial Plan, the District’s 23rd consecutive balanced budget. This budget does more to make the District of Columbia a place where people of all backgrounds and in all stages of life are able to live and thrive by making key investments in infrastructure, education, affordable housing, health and human services, economic opportunity, seniors, and public safety. These investments reflect the key priorities identified by District residents at Budget Engagement Forums and telephone town halls held during the budget formulation process. I am pleased to provide testimony today on Mayor Bowser’s FY2019 budget for the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

The Mayor’s investments in the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) will allow us to continue to build upon our success last year, when we finished 2017 with a 23 percent reduction in violent crime, with substantial reductions in every police district in the city. This was on top of 2016’s 10 percent reduction in violent crime, and is followed by a 13 percent reduction so far in 2018.¹ Although we still have work to do together to make each resident in every neighborhood feel safe, our city is becoming safer every day.

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Briefly, the Mayor’s FY19 budget for MPD provides local funding of approximately \$510.2 million. Most of MPD’s local budget, 90 percent, is for personal services (PS). The remaining 10 percent of the total budget, approximately \$52.8 million, covers a variety of Nonpersonal Services (NPS), including specialized law enforcement purchases, such as uniforms, firearms, ammunition, and contracts for the Police and Fire Clinic, fleet maintenance, and information technology. Of the local budget, only \$1.2 million, or less than a quarter of one percent, is not tied up in salaries, benefits, and major contracts and programmatic spending. This \$1.2 million covers a wide variety of small but necessary operating expenditures, such as stenographers, subscriptions to legal databases, and mandatory language access interpretation and translation services.

¹ January 1 – March 28, 2018, compared to the same period in 2017.



Throughout her term, Mayor Bowser has strongly supported investments in public safety, which is highlighted in the FY19 budget's support for MPD staffing. I am optimistic that with the Mayor's support, the Department has weathered the worst of the retirement bubble. FY17 was the first year that we have had net positive hiring since FY13. We currently have 3,856 sworn members, 119 more sworn members now than we did at the end of FY16. The Mayor's investments in recruitment and retention incentives and civilianization over the past three years have helped to ensure that we have sufficient officers on the street. The proposed FY19 budget for MPD provides \$7.8 million to continue this support.

- The budget expands the Police Cadet program by 30, from 70 to 100 cadets, with a new recurring investment of \$1.7 million. In FY14, MPD had 16 cadets. In FY17, MPD reached the full staffing of 35 cadets for the first time in at least two decades. In FY18, we expanded the program from 35 to 70, by expanding the maximum age of eligibility from 20 to 24. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with MPD already filling all of the new positions.

The Police Cadet Corps helps to ensure a steady stream of DC residents have a viable pathway to the middle class through employment as an MPD officer. The program also allows for District residents to obtain up to 60 college credits through the University of the District of Columbia Community College. Our current 72 Cadets come from neighborhoods around the city. Furthermore, more than half of our cadets are women, which is a great asset to MPD. Currently, 22 percent of MPD's sworn officers are women, significantly higher than the national average of 13 percent. But I believe we can continue to recruit strong female candidates to serve their community in law enforcement. Our cadets will help us to get there.

This is an important step in the overall strategy of providing access to careers in public safety to District youth. The structured program to build interest in a career in law enforcement among our high school students begins with the Public Safety Academy at Anacostia High School. Under Mayor Bowser's leadership, MPD partnered with the Washington, DC Police Foundation and DC Public Schools to launch the Academy in August 2016. The Academy will allow students to pursue a career path in law enforcement and criminal justice. Today, 35 students are enrolled in the Academy.



Once these students graduate, they can apply for the MPD Cadet Program. The Mayor's budget puts funding behind the implicit promise that if our students successfully graduate from the Academy and meet all other qualifications, they can continue on the path to becoming an MPD officer through the Cadet Program. It also means that even more District young adults will benefit from access to employment opportunities, secondary education, and a pathway to the middle class.

- The Mayor's FY19 budget continues the District's effort to invest in our officers as an incentive to remain with the Department. Since FY15, more than 130 officers have taken advantage of MPD's student loan forgiveness program, in exchange for a commitment to stay with the Department for three or four more years. Mayor Bowser's FY19 budget invests \$1 million in this program, which provides up to \$12,500 in student loan forgiveness to eligible MPD officers.
- The FY18 budget also provided funding for eligible new recruits to receive a housing allowance of \$1,000 per month for six months so they can live in the District and deepen their knowledge and experience with the communities they serve. The FY19 budget includes \$500,000 in funding for this program.
- In addition, the FY18 budget included one-time funding to launch a professional public relations campaign to recruit, hire, and retain high quality officers and civilians. We will be receiving the recommendations for this initiative from the selected contractor next week.

The Mayor's FY19 budget also invests in tools that are force multipliers. The FY19 budget makes a one-time investment of \$575,000 for 10 mobile CCTV cameras and five mobile light towers. This equipment can help to deter serious crimes on public space in areas that face persistent challenges.

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In closing, I recognize that building a budget to meet the complex needs of the District, now and in the future, requires difficult choices. However, a safe city makes all our other achievements possible. In order for people in the District to continue to thrive, they must be and feel safe. The Mayor's investments in the Cadet Program, officer incentives, mobile CCTV cameras, and light



towers will contribute to a strong Department and safer city. The Council and this Committee are critical allies in this effort, and I appreciate your work to ensure we operate efficiently and effectively. I look forward to our continued work together to achieve our shared goals and give all residents a fair shot to benefit from Washington, DC's continued prosperity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My staff and I look forward to answering your questions at this time.

