

Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office

Reclassification Request: TCO II to TCO (2 part time positions)

The Communications Section is experiencing a very high turnover rate and currently cannot maintain minimum staffing levels to meet the workload demands. In 2021, 29 Tele-Communicators resigned or retired from the Sheriff's Office. On February 2, 2022, the number of vacancies reached 31. The turnover rate over the past year reached 32.2% of the authorized division staffing. Because TCOs require training and certification, a substantial investment is made into these human resources, only to lose any potential return on investment when such a large number of new employees leave.

The current staffing is only at 71.5% of capacity. Of the 105 tele-communicator positions, 31 remain vacant. Tele-communicator applicants undergo a lengthy background investigation before they are hired. Once onboard, they receive intensive training, but in many instances, they resign a few weeks after receiving certification. In most instances, these TCOs are hired by another law enforcement agency in our region and the attraction is a higher beginning salary and a wider range of benefits, such as education and certification pay.

The emergency calls received by the Sheriff's Office require that a sufficient number of TCOs are on-duty to dispatch police, fire, and EMS in a timely manner and to manage radio requests by field operations personnel. With the current staffing shortage, there are time periods where an insufficient number of TCOs are available to handle the call volume. This is significant because there are substantial increases in the number and types of emergency calls received by the Communications Center.

For example, the Center experienced the following increases in 2021:

	2020	2021	Change
Total Calls for Service	434,951	512,668	18.0% increase
Total emergency transmissions	2,648,165	3,175,331	19.9% increase

The hiring of two part-time TCOs will fill the time gaps and enable the Communications Center to maintain standards and best practices. Part-time positions widen the opportunity for workers who do not seek full-time employment or who seek only to work for 5 – 6 hours each day.

Part-time employees are a viable option to fill the high call volume times throughout the day. Part-time positions also enable coverage of a sufficient number of TCOs to manage bursts of emergency calls without the need to fill an entire 10 or 12-hour shift.

This request is to reclassify TCO II position 5601-0867 to 2 part-time positions earning up to \$24.00 per hour. The estimated cost of the part-time positions for the remainder of this fiscal year is shown below.

Part Time TCO Positions					
TCO	Hourly wage	Hours per week	Weeks	Pay Periods	Total
1	24.00	29	36	18	25,056.00
2	24.00	29	36	18	25,056.00
Total					50,112.00