

AGENCY NAME:	South Carolina Department of Public Safety		
AGENCY CODE:	K050	SECTION:	063

AGENCY'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Recruitment and Retention

Law Enforcement recruiting and retention continues to be an emphasis for the South Carolina Department of Public Safety (SCDPS). The agency's average law enforcement vacancy percentage rate for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 was approximately eleven percent (11%). This directly correlates with the national average, which stands at approximately ten percent (10%). To combat shortfalls in areas of the state that have traditionally experienced workforce shortages, the agency implemented critical market sign-on bonuses for South Carolina Highway Patrol (SCHP) applicants. This initiative has produced positive results in areas where applicant competition is greatest and areas where social and economic influences hamper recruitment efforts.

To improve retention efforts, Director Woods, initiated and conducted a series of meetings with law enforcement personnel from each division. Almost nine hundred (900) department law enforcement officers participated in over fifty (50) meetings statewide. Troopers and officers listened to agency accomplishments, improvements and future goals provided by the Director while also being able to directly ask questions about matters which meant the most to them. A number of items resulting from these meetings have already been addressed to provide field personnel effective and efficient methods of completing their mission or simply having a voice in the decision process. The process by which SCHP vacancies are announced, determined and filled has been significantly expedited. Grooming standards have been revised, most specifically guidance for female troopers/officers. Changes to discipline and grievance procedures were implemented and the SCHP Training Unit will conduct regional training courses closer to field personnel to reduce commute times.

Technology Enhancements

The agency is continuing to implement technological advancements aimed at improving employee efficiency. Through generous funding by the general assembly, the agency began rolling out Microsoft Teams and Office 365 in early 2025.

Microsoft Teams and OneDrive were deployed to agency computers as part of an agency-wide rollout of Office 365 tools and will help streamline how employees communicate, collaborate, and manage files across SCDPS. This is part of a larger endeavor to modernize infrastructure and improve services agency wide. Some of the products of this effort are:

- Email service now uses the same password as your computer.
- Single sign-on services have been set up for Axon allowing sign in with the same password as your computer.
- Self-Service password resets and unlocks.
- 24/7 Department Technology Operations (DTO) service desk support for SCDPS accounts and passwords.
- Chat, calling, file sharing and video conferencing through Teams.
- File storage, backup, version history, and document sharing/collaboration in OneDrive.
- Microsoft managed iPhone 16s.
- Contact information in Teams and Outlook.

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The SCDPS Office of Information and Technology (OIT) is diligently working to utilize a modernized hybrid cloud infrastructure and partner with DTO to bring more improvements and features as quickly as possible.

Planned updates include:

- An improved computer image for a better and faster windows desktop and laptop environment.
- Windows Autopilot for effortless computer health repair.
- Managed Print to make connecting to printers easier.
- A Company Application portal to easily install needed SCDPS approved applications with automatic updates.
- IT Webinars for Teams and OneDrive training on features and functions.

OIT is also working to improve in-place services to improve their use.

- Increasing Teams groups and channels
- Making Schedules available from any device.
- Increasing the number of applications that use single sign-on

These changes not only benefit the organization functionally, but also increase data reliability and the agency's cyber security posture.

Virtual Weigh Stations

The South Carolina State Transport Police (STP) is tasked with enforcing commercial vehicle weight limitations to ensure safer roadways and bridges. In effort to leverage technology and to make weighing large vehicles more efficient, STP initiated the Virtual Weigh Station Program along with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT).

In April 2025, the first "Virtual Weigh Station" in the country began as a pilot with four (4) STP Officers on Interstate 77 in Fairfield County. This site was selected based on sensors currently installed, the high commercial vehicle traffic volume, and the ability of officers to conduct traffic stops in a safe location. Officers log into the web-based application on either their laptop or cell phone. When a weight sensor is triggered, the application takes a picture of the specific vehicle and notifies the officer within 30 seconds. Once notified, the officer is able to inspect the information, observe the vehicle before it passes their location, and then conduct a traffic stop. The officer then weighs the vehicle with certified scales and issue a citation if warranted. The weight of each vehicle is being captured at highway speeds without the need to exit for an existing brick and mortar weigh station. This process improvement, allows officers to focus their efforts and time on potential violators verses random selections and data collected from the application allows STP to assign resources in a more efficient manner.

This project exemplifies the importance of state agencies working together toward a common goal of making roadways safer in South Carolina.

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SCHP - Safety Trailers

In 2025, SCDPS entered into an agreement with the SCDOT relating to work zone safety. SCDPS and SCDOT share goals of ensuring safe and efficient transportation on the roads and highways of this state. SCDPS has previously proven the effectiveness of positioning officers and vehicles with activated blue lights in construction zones however; even with the enhanced law enforcement presence there is insufficient personnel to meet the increasing and sustained need. As a result, SCDOT purchased Safety Trailers with Message Boards to be placed in agreed upon work zones across the state, which collect data pertaining to the numbers and speeds of vehicles passing through these zones. The trailers activate mounted blue lights to warn drivers to slow down. The collected data is reviewed monthly by law enforcement officers to determine traffic trends and compliance with the warnings and whether officers should be deployed to the area.

In addition to their use in work zones, the safety trailers will be utilized for events such as Hurricane Evacuations, Speed Enforcement Initiatives, and Temporary Detour Notifications to the public.

POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMPACT IF AGENCY GOALS ARE NOT MET

GOAL 1: ENHANCE PUBLIC/OFFICER SAFETY

The inability of the department to provide a safe environment in which to travel throughout the state could result in increased numbers of traffic collisions and fatalities. These tragic events can lead to environmental impact, property damage, increased insurance premiums, and other economic losses. A reduction in officer safety places the officers in greater danger and induces financial inefficiencies through turnover.

GOAL 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

Failing to attract, recruit, and retain a professional workforce may compromise the department's mission to provide professional services, enforce traffic laws, and save lives. If officer turnover is not reduced, more state and taxpayer funds would be spent in an attempt to attract, hire, and retain officers. Failure to train the workforce would have a negative effect on work performance and could result in employee turnover and ineffective customer service.

GOAL 3: APPROPRIATE USE OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Inappropriate use of technology could result in poor customer service and higher costs to conduct business. SCDPS relies on computerized information systems to carry out its operations; report essential information; transmit sensitive information; conduct operations; and process business transactions. In addition, social media through the internet has grown increasingly important, developing into an extended information and communications infrastructure that supports the agency's service to the public.

Ineffective protection of these information systems and networks can result in a failure to deliver these vital services and disclosure of sensitive information. The department could also experience disruption of essential operations and emergency services.

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GOAL 4: QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY

If SCDPS fails to adequately educate, inform, or respond to information needs of the public, the public's awareness of important traffic safety messages would be compromised.

OUTSIDE HELP NECESSARY FOR MITIGATION

The overwhelming majority of possible incidents discussed above could be mitigated with additional funding appropriated to the agency through recurring and core budget funds.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPTIONS

Possible options for the General Assembly to consider would be to:

1. Continue to evaluate funding for salary increases to assist with recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers as local agencies become more competitive.
2. Continue to provide the department with recurring funding for body armor and law enforcement vehicles.
3. Continue to provide the department with additional funding for information technology systems.

FUTURE ISSUES THAT MAY IMPACT THE AGENCY

- Officer safety continues to be a primary concern of the agency. The ongoing struggle to remain competitive with salaries offered by private sector employers and local law enforcement agencies results in reduced staffing levels, a diminishing pool of qualified applicants, decreased retention, and non-competitive law enforcement salaries; and
- Cost of leadership and employee development training.