

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Initiative Ordinance - Administrative Code - First Responder Student Loan Forgiveness Fund]

Motion ordering submitted to the voters at an election to be held on November 5, 2024, an Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to establish a First Responder Student Loan Forgiveness Fund for the purpose of paying outstanding student loans, and job-related educational and training expenses incurred while employed by the City, for employees who are sworn members of the Police Department, Fire Department, or Sheriff's Department; paramedics; registered nurses; or 911 dispatchers, supervisors, or coordinators.

Existing Law

The City currently does not have a specific fund into which the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor can appropriate money, or receive donations, to support the costs of a program to provide payments to cover City employees' student loans or job-related educational and training expenses, except where those expenses are reimbursable under labor agreements with employee unions or under existing City reimbursement policies. Current labor agreements between the City and employee labor organizations, which govern City employee benefits, do not require the operation of such a program.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed initiative ordinance would establish a new fund. The Board of Supervisors and the Mayor could appropriate money into the fund in the future, or the City could receive donations to the fund in the future. Once the fund contains \$1,000,000, and after any necessary amendments to the City's labor agreements with employee unions, the Department of Human Resources could make payments from the fund to cover outstanding student loans or reimburse the costs of job-related education and training for the following City employees: sworn members of the Police Department, Fire Department, or Sheriff's Department; paramedics; registered nurses; and 911 dispatchers, supervisors, or coordinators. The Department of Human Resources could adopt rules and procedures for the program, but payments would be limited to a maximum of \$25,000 per employee.

The initiative ordinance does not create or require a loan forgiveness program or an education and training payment program, and it does not appropriate money for such a program. Any such program would need to be consistent with the terms of any labor agreements between the City and employee unions.