

Stoneham Police Department Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Budget

Why does the department need more officers?

Currently, the department has 40 full-time officers on staff. Based on the national standard, it is required that there are 2-3 officers per 1,000 residents (adjusted for community needs). Currently, the population of Stoneham is 23,244, meaning the police department should have a minimum of 46 full-time officers on staff.

The department is seeking to hire 6 additional full-time patrol officers. (Restoring 3 unfunded positions, adding 2 patrol officers and 1 SRO position.)

Additionally, due to current staffing levels, Overtime Costs are extremely high.

What other non-sworn positions are covered under the police department?

The department oversees dispatchers and Traffic Directors. At this time, there is only 1 overnight dispatcher who is responsible for maintaining the calls for service for Police and Fire (emergency 911 calls, officer radio traffic, and station walk-in requests) for the entire community during the midnight shift.

Oftentimes, some officers are assigned to dispatch to field a high call volume. Having 2 dispatchers during the overnight shift will ensure coverage during critical incidents.

The department also oversees Traffic Directors and is looking to restore funding for 4 positions. Traffic Directors are responsible for students and children traveling to school safely.

Calls for service are up, why?

In any growing community, the need for assistance and services will also go up. Due to the ongoing growth within Stoneham, the police department needs to be prepared for every type of emergency situation. More people mean more potential incidents.

What is the importance of training or attending the academy?

Continuous training allows officers to advance and practice their skills in an effort to maintain and understand the best policing practices to meet the needs of the community.

Massachusetts Police Officers are required to attend annual training, such as mental health response, de-escalation, use of force, defensive tactics, and biased policing awareness. The cost and funding for these trainings, which must be completed by each member of the department, are the responsibility of the department.

Looking forward, as technology continues to advance, there will be an even greater need for ongoing training. Modern policing now requires officers to master a wide range of complex systems, including body-worn cameras and digital evidence platforms, upgraded CAD/RMS and next-generation 911 systems. Officers must also stay current on emerging challenges such as

cybercrime, digital fraud, and the increasing use of drones for search-and-rescue, crash reconstruction, and critical-incident response. Each of these advancements requires continuous, high-quality training to ensure effectiveness, accountability, and community safety.

Why can't the department apply for more grants?

While the department actively applies for and benefits from multiple grants each year, grant funding is never guaranteed and cannot be relied upon to support core staffing needs or long-term operational expenses. Stoneham Police consistently pursues state and federal opportunities, including grants for traffic safety enforcement, mental and behavioral health training, technology upgrades, and 911/dispatch improvements. These grants have supported important initiatives such as Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, mental-health follow-up services, and equipment and software enhancements that improve efficiency and safety.

However, grant programs are competitive, limited in scope, and often restricted for very specific purposes rather than general policing needs. Even when awarded, grants typically fund short-term projects or narrowly defined activities. For these reasons, grants provide valuable support but cannot replace a stable and predictable funding structure for public safety.