

Office of the County Auditor

Auditor's Analysis

Council Bill No. 33-2025

Introduced: May 5, 2025

Auditor: Diane Zagorski-Kelly

Fiscal Impact:

The fiscal impact of this legislation is estimated to be an additional \$20,000 of forgone revenue in Tax Year 2025 (Fiscal Year 2026) if all eight currently eligible properties were to receive the maximum credit. The fiscal impact of this legislation cannot be determined for future tax years as we are unable to determine the number of taxpayers who may become eligible for the property tax credit.

Purpose:

The proposed legislation extends the definition of a qualified Public Safety officer to include Auxiliary Officers for the purposes of real property tax credit eligibility.

Other Comments:

As part of the eligibility verification process, the Public Safety Officer applicant must provide the Department of Finance with a copy of a state-issued identification, six months of utility bills, and the first page of their property deed. The applicant is then verified against an annual memo from the Police department that lists volunteers who meet the criteria specific to the County Code section 20.129F(d). According to the Police Department (Police), an annual letter to verify compliance for Auxiliary Officers has not been confirmed. However, Police advised a verification of compliance will be established to follow the same requirements as those sworn members and volunteer firefighters.

According to the Department of Police, per OPS-29, Auxiliary Officers are volunteers serving at the pleasure of the Chief of Police without any form of compensation. Section 20.129E(3) of the County code requires that an Auxiliary Officer has performed the number of hours required by duty requirements provision in the Auxiliary police manual for five consecutive years. The Auxiliary Officer Program Administrator and Coordinator are responsible for the management of the program. The Department of Finance advised that a recipient is unlikely to become ineligible during a tax year; however, a recapture of a tax credit for ineligible recipients would be identified if or when a property transfers.

According to the Department of Finance, if this legislation is approved, it will go into effect beginning July 1, 2026, following its passage and will not be applied retroactively. This tax credit is applied after any applicable homestead credit has been deducted from the County tax amount.

The chart below shows the number of eligible properties and the total tax credits that were awarded the Public Safety Officer tax credit over the last five tax years:

Tax Year	Number of Eligible Properties	Total Tax Credits Awarded
2020	171	\$423,860
2021	156	384,756
2022	150	371,703
2023	149	361,324
2024	143	354,087
Total	769	\$1,895,731

Source: Department of Finance