

# The Workforce Crisis, and What Police Agencies Are Doing About It



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# The Workforce Crisis, and What Police Agencies Are Doing About It

SEPTEMBER 2019



POLICE EXECUTIVE  
RESEARCH FORUM

The points of view expressed herein are the authors' and do not necessarily represent the views of all Police Executive Research Forum members.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**Most law enforcement agencies are sensing a crisis** in their ability to recruit new officers, and to hold on to the ones they have. For more than a year, we have been reading news stories about police and sheriffs' departments that simply can't find enough qualified applicants to hire and train, no matter how hard they try.

And it is not simply a matter of police salaries being too low, or other problems that can be addressed fairly easily. There seem to be fewer young people today who have any interest in policing. So when PERF decided to hold a conference on the police recruiting crisis, we knew we needed to hear the perspectives of officers at various stages in their policing careers, not just police chiefs. We asked police executives to bring to the meeting an officer who was just at the start of his or her career.

Of the 250 participants at the meeting, approximately 20 were officers and deputies. These officers provided first-hand information about their motivations for joining law enforcement, what they hoped to get out of the job, and what would encourage them to stay in the profession. These are the essential questions that police and sheriffs' departments across the country are asking as they try to address issues of recruitment and retention. PERF would like to thank these officers, and all of the participants, for sharing their experiences and promising practices at our meeting, *The Changing Dynamics of Policing and the Police Workforce*, which was held in Washington, D.C. on December 4, 2018.

PERF relies on its members for guidance and information on the most pressing issues

in policing, and we often gather baseline data through surveys. For this project, PERF fielded an extensive survey on recruitment and retention. I want to thank all of the agencies that participated in our police workforce survey. The information that PERF received provided a solid basis for our conference and this publication. Your responses shed light on the difficulties that police are having nationwide in recruitment and retention, as well as innovative steps that are being taken to address those issues.

Special thanks to the agencies that helped pilot the survey: the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, DC; the Portland, OR Police Bureau; the Punta Gorda, FL Police Department; and the San Diego, CA Sheriff's Office. Each of these agencies provided PERF with feedback that helped shape the final draft of the survey. Additional thanks to Ben Haiman, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Police Department's Professional Development Bureau, for helping to organize a focus group of recently hired officers and recruits who aided PERF's research for this meeting.

Without the generous support of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, this project would not have been possible. Howard Buffett, who served as Sheriff in Macon County, IL, saw this issue firsthand and considers it a national problem. His support has been invaluable. PERF would like to thank the Foundation for its support of this initiative and the advancement of law enforcement across the United States.

I would also like to thank the PERF staff members who designed and carried out this initiative. Kevin Morison, PERF's Chief Operations

Officer, led the project team and ensured its success. Sarah Mostyn, PERF Research Associate, was the lead author of this report. Research Associates Jeremy Barnum and Allison Heider and Senior Research Assistant Amanda Barber contributed sidebars to the report. Sarah and Project Assistant Nora Coyne oversaw meeting planning and logistics. Research Associate Rachael Arietti led the design of the survey and conducted the analysis, with assistance from Deputy Director of Research Sean Goodison and Project Assistant Coyne. Senior Research Assistant Nate Ballard provided support throughout the implementation of the survey and in the data collection. Several staff members conducted pre-meeting interviews and provided support at the meeting: Senior Associate Dan Alioto; Project Assistant Coyne; and Research Associates Mostyn, Heider, and Matt Harman. Other staff members who assisted at the meeting included Director of the Center for Applied Research and Management Tom Wilson, Assistant Director of Communications James McGinty, Research Associates Barnum and Madeline Sloan, Senior Research Assistant Lauren Anderson, and Research Assistant Hyla Jacobson. Communications Director Craig Fischer edited this report and oversaw production. PERF's graphic designer, Dave



Williams, designed and laid out the report, which includes photos taken by Greg Dohler. Executive Assistant Soline Simenauer helped to keep me organized and on track for this meeting.

We hope that this report will serve as a wake-up call to local and state government leaders, educators, the news media, and the public about the workforce crisis facing policing. Our report will help agencies that are struggling with recruitment and retention by providing fresh ideas and promising practices. The policing profession must adapt to a 21st century workforce, which differs in many ways from previous generations, in order to respond to the needs of their communities.

Chuck Wexler  
Executive Director  
Police Executive Research Forum  
Washington, D.C.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE WORKFORCE CRISIS, AND WHAT POLICE AGENCIES ARE DOING ABOUT IT

## The policing profession is facing a workforce crisis.<sup>1</sup>

Fewer people are applying to become police officers, and more people are leaving the profession, often after only a few years on the job. These trends are occurring even as many police and sheriffs' offices are already short-staffed and facing challenges in developing a diverse workforce.

The workforce crisis is affecting law enforcement agencies of all sizes and types—large, medium, and small; local, state, and federal. And it is hitting departments in all parts of the country.

There are ominous signs that the workforce crisis in policing may be getting worse. Traditional sources of job applicants—the military and family members of current officers—are diminishing. A robust economy and strong job growth are creating more options for people entering the labor market, so police agencies are facing more competition in hiring. And the often-rigid, quasi-military organizational structure of most police agencies does not align with the preferences of many of today's job applicants.

**RAISING THE BAR IN THE MIDST OF A CRISIS:** An important factor complicating the situation is the fact that the work of policing itself is changing. The work of police officers is becoming more challenging. Criminal offenders are committing new types of cyber-crime, and are using computers to commit old types of crime in new ways, so officers must understand and be comfortable with new technologies. Furthermore, today's police officers increasingly are being asked to deal with social problems, such as untreated mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness. As a result, the skills, temperament, and life experiences needed to succeed as an officer are becoming more complex.

**So even as police departments are struggling to get enough applicants in the door, they need to be raising the bar and looking for applicants with a wider array of talents and skills.**

Those are the conclusions from the Police Executive Research Forum's research into the changing dynamics of policing and the police workforce. PERF explored these issues at a national conference on December 4, 2018 in Washington, DC. The meeting was attended by approximately 250 law enforcement leaders, recently hired police officers, researchers, and other subject matter experts.

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1. The term "workforce crisis" was coined by author Ken Dychtwald and his colleagues in their 2006 book that warned of a coming shortage of talent and skills in the private sector. The concept readily applies to policing today. Dychtwald, Ken, Erickson, Tamara J., Morison, Robert. (2006) *Workforce Crisis: How to Beat the Coming Shortage of Skills and Talent*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press.

**THERE ARE NEW APPROACHES AND SOLUTIONS:** It's not an exaggeration to say that the workforce crisis in policing is dire. But PERF's research and the national conference produced interesting ideas and promising practices for moving forward.

Agencies are experimenting with new ways to expand their applicant pools, especially by attracting non-traditional candidates who might not otherwise have considered police work. Agencies are also looking at ways to retain more of the officers they have, through professional development and skill-building programs, greater attention to work-life balance issues, and by offering more incentives that resonate with the new generation of officers.

**The workforce challenges and opportunities facing police agencies today are detailed in this report. The report begins with 12 key takeaways that police agencies should consider as they confront the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead (see page 12).**

## PERF Survey Reveals a Triple Threat

In recent years, PERF has been hearing anecdotally from police chiefs and sheriffs of growing concerns over their staffing levels. To assess the situation, PERF fielded a survey of its members inquiring about trends in officer recruitment and retention. Our survey revealed three separate problems:

### 1 **Fewer people are applying to become police officers.**

Sixty-three percent of agencies that responded to PERF's survey said the number of applicants for police officer positions had decreased, either significantly (36%) or slightly (27%), over the past five years. In the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, for example, the number of applications arriving through the department's online portal has declined nearly 60 percent since 2010. Agencies also reported special challenges recruiting minority, female, and bilingual officers.

### 2 **More officers are leaving their departments—and, in many cases, leaving the policing profession—well before they reach retirement age.**

Among agencies that conduct exit interviews, the most common reason officers gave for resigning was to accept a job at another local law enforcement agency, but a close second reason for leaving was to *pursue a career outside of law enforcement*. The majority of these voluntary resignations are occurring within the first five years that officers are on the force.

### 3 **A growing number of current officers are becoming eligible for retirement.**

PERF's survey found that about 8.5 percent of current officers are eligible for retirement, and 15.5 percent will become eligible within five years. A growing number of officers who entered policing during the federally funded hiring programs of the 1990s are now reaching retirement age. Their departures not only reduce the number of sworn personnel, but also the overall level of experience in many agencies.

This triple threat—fewer applicants, more resignations, and a looming retirement bubble—comes at a time when many agencies are already short-staffed. For example, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department recently announced that it is looking to fill 1,000 vacancies, the vast majority of them sworn deputies.<sup>2</sup>

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number of full-time sworn officers in U.S. law enforcement agencies declined by more than 3 percent between 2013 and 2016. The number of officers per capita is down 10 percent since 1997.

2. "Los Angeles Sheriff's Department is hiring for over 1,000 jobs" (May 24, 2019). Gabriela Milian, KABC-TV. <https://abc7.com/careers/la-sheriffs-department-is-hiring-for-over-1000-jobs/5315723/>

## It's Not Just a Question of Finding More Recruits

PERF's survey confirmed that the concerns of police chiefs and sheriffs about their staffing numbers are not isolated or anecdotal; the workforce crisis is a national phenomenon. And the workforce crisis in policing involves more than the number of officers. A major concern is whether today's recruits have the skills sets and temperament to meet the challenges of policing today.

There is no doubt that the job of police officer is becoming more complex in a number of ways:

### TODAY'S OFFICERS MUST BE FLUENT IN TECHNOLOGY:

Technology has created new types of crimes—online identify theft, cyber stalking, sextortion and human trafficking over the “dark web,” to name a few. In addition, many traditional crimes, including drug trafficking, are now conducted online.

As a result, investigations of many offenses now have a digital evidence component.<sup>3</sup> While patrol officers do not need to be experts in cyber-crime or sophisticated digital forensics, they do need to be able to recognize these new types of crime and provide an initial response that supports victims and advances criminal investigations.

Officers also must be comfortable with new technologies used in the policing profession, such as body-worn cameras and applications made possible by new broadband communication systems such as Next Generation 911 and FirstNet.

**TODAY'S OFFICERS HANDLE A GROWING ARRAY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS:** Today's police officers increasingly are being called upon to address a range of complex social issues, such as the opioids epidemic. Officers are expected to save lives by administering naloxone to people overdosing on opioids, and in many cities, officers have significant roles in helping persons with addictions to get drug treatment and other services. Officers also are expected to de-escalate tense situations involving persons with mental illness, particularly incidents in which a mentally ill person is behaving erratically or

dangerously. And in many communities, officers are being called upon to intervene and provide help to persons experiencing homelessness.

These and other changes require new, more extensive skill sets than officers have needed in the past. Police agencies need a more diverse set of officers who possess key skills such as interpersonal communications, problem-solving, basic technological expertise, critical thinking, empathy, and “community-mindedness,” along with the traditional law enforcement skills required of all officers.

## Relaxing Some Standards, While Raising Others

Finding enough candidates who have these skills—and who can succeed and grow in the profession—remains a challenge for many agencies.

In response to declining numbers, some agencies have relaxed their hiring standards, especially with respect to educational levels, prior drug use, tattoos, and facial hair. Some of these changes, such as eliminating prohibitions on most tattoos, are reflections of broader changes in societal norms that agencies must adapt to.

Other changes, however, such as relaxing educational requirements, may be problematic if they result in recruits being held to lower standards, when the policing profession needs to be hiring new recruits with *more* skills and abilities than in the past.

## Finding the Officers of the Future

So where are agencies going to find the officers of the future, and find them in sufficient numbers to address their staffing needs? Those were two of the key questions explored at the PERF conference. A major focus of the discussion was on how to identify and attract non-traditional candidates who might not have otherwise considered a career in policing.

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3. These and related trends are documented in “The Changing Nature of Crime and Criminal Investigations.” Police Executive Research Forum (2018). <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/ChangingNatureofCrime.pdf>

Meeting participants offered a number of interesting and innovative approaches that are summarized in this report. Some of the best suggestions came from the 20 police officers and deputies who accompanied their chiefs and sheriffs to the PERF meeting. All were still in the early stages of their policing careers and had recently been through the recruitment and hiring process. They provided valuable insights into how agencies should be viewing the workforce crisis and what steps they should be taking.

Among the themes to emerge from this discussion were the following:

**EMPHASIZE SERVICE OVER EXCITEMENT:** For years, police agencies highlighted specialized units and assignments in their recruiting videos and materials. Fast-paced images of officers making forced entries into buildings, rappelling down walls, firing high-powered weapons on the range, speeding in a power boat, or riding a horse were common in recruiting materials. But the officers at the PERF conference said that those images do not resonate with wide swaths of the population entering the labor market. They said that agencies will be more successful in attracting candidates if they emphasize the service aspect of policing. This is especially important when trying to reach non-traditional candidates.

**PROVIDE AN AUTHENTIC PORTRAYAL OF WHAT POLICING IS ABOUT:** Action-packed images of police SWAT teams or marine units also do not accurately reflect the reality of what the vast majority of police officers do every day. Police agencies are better off presenting realistic portraits of what service-oriented policing actually is. Some agencies are using novel approaches, such as unfiltered video blogs (or vlogs), to show the day-to-day work of policing in their communities.<sup>4</sup>

#### **STREAMLINE THE APPLICATION AND HIRING PROCESS:**

Many job applicants cannot wait many months to find employment. Some police officer candidates apply to multiple agencies and go with the first one to make an offer. That is why it is critical for agencies to make their application and hiring process as efficient as possible, while still being thorough. Many agencies are increasingly using technology to streamline the process and ensure accuracy of records.

**ADOPT A “HIGH-TOUCH APPROACH” TO RECRUITING:** Gone are the days when agencies can announce a single testing date and expect to get sufficient numbers of qualified candidates to respond. Agencies must be prepared to invest in more intensive and personalized approaches to recruiting. For example, the Arlington County, VA Police Department asks its officers to contact the colleges and universities they attended and establish long-term relationships with faculty, administrators, and students.

The officers who participated in PERF’s conference also said it is essential for potential job candidates to be able to “see themselves” in the organizations that are recruiting them. For female candidates, in particular, that means seeing and hearing from women who are succeeding in the department.

#### **ALIGN INCENTIVES WITH WHAT TODAY’S OFFICERS WANT:**

Often, police agencies mistakenly believe that the traditional incentives that resonated with officers hired decades ago, such as a take-home vehicle or the ability to work overtime, will be attractive to people entering the profession today. But officers at PERF’s meeting said that often is not the case.

Many of today’s officers are interested in a different set of incentives, such as a diversity of assignments; opportunities to learn and develop new skills; more flexible scheduling to support a desirable work-life balance, including time for family responsibilities; regular and more frequent promotional exams; and having mentors they can turn to.

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4. Clearwater, FL Police Department vlog: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oqk0yw6lcAM>; Miami, FL Police Department vlog: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTg1055iHDc>

5. “High-touch” businesses or organizations are known for having close relationships with their customers, clients, or employees.

#### RETHINK THE TRADITIONAL TRAJECTORY OF POLICING

**CAREERS:** Today's police forces are built on a model in which officers work at least 20 or 25 years in the same agency, then retire and receive a pension. While that approach has served the profession for decades, changes in the workforce are forcing police agencies to rethink this basic model.

Fewer employees today are inclined to spend their entire careers in the same industry or profession, much less in a single organization. The idea of a pension holds little appeal for young people who cannot imagine working for the same employer for a lifetime. Police agencies may need to adjust their staffing models to account for this shift.<sup>6</sup>

Many agencies have already begun to “civilianize” functions that do not require a sworn police officer. This can widen options for potential job candidates. In the United Kingdom, agencies are experimenting with short-term, specialty assignments or are specifically recruiting officers who plan to stay in the policing profession for only a few years.

### Embracing the Future

These and other themes from the PERF conference are summarized in the 12 takeaways presented in the next section of this report.

**Together, the 12 takeaways provide a blueprint for law enforcement agencies that are looking beyond the workforce crisis of today and are thinking creatively**

### **about building the police agencies of tomorrow.**

As they look to the future, police leaders need to avoid a common trap that many organizations seem to fall into: stereotyping the individuals entering the workforce today. It is not uncommon to hear experienced employees, in policing and other professions, complain about so-called Millennials and members of Generation Z. The primary complaints seem to be that these younger employees don't do things the same way that the experienced employees do, or that they are more demanding.

However, like the generations of officers before them, these younger officers have a lot in common with their predecessors. They share the core value of being in policing because they want to help others. These newer officers also bring new and different perspectives and priorities to their work.

Trying to recruit and hire only candidates who have the same life experiences and outlooks as those currently in the profession is a recipe for failure. Agencies that take this path won't reach their numeric staffing goals, and more importantly, they will fail to attract the highly skilled and diverse officers they need to be successful.

**The most effective law enforcement agencies of the future will be those that seek out and embrace the next generations of officers, and will adjust their organizational models and practices to adapt to the changing dynamics of policing.**

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6. According to a 2018 survey by the personnel staffing firm Robert Half, 64% of professionals polled think changing roles every few years can be beneficial; that marks a 22% increase from a similar survey conducted four years earlier. “Does Job Hopping Help or Hurt Your Career?” Robert Half International Inc. (2018) <http://rh-us.mediaroom.com/2018-04-05-Does-Job-Hopping-Help-Or-Hurt-Your-Career>

# 12 TAKEAWAYS TO IMPROVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

**There is no simple formula for improving police recruitment and retention efforts.** The problem goes beyond the current difficulties that many departments are having with recruiting enough candidates to fill vacancies. The nation's workforce is changing. In many ways, today's young people entering the job market differ from past generations. For example, many in the new generation assign a greater value to finding a balance between their work life and their personal lives. Past generations of police officers were glad to get opportunities to work many hours of overtime, in order to enlarge their paychecks. Today, many young people are more interested in having free time to devote to their families or other responsibilities and interests.

Furthermore, changes in the nature of police work are impacting police recruiting. Today's police officers and sheriffs' deputies spend a significant amount of time doing work that is more akin to social work than to law enforcement. Because police and sheriffs' departments must respond to calls for service every hour of every day, they are often on the front lines of social problems such as homelessness, the opioid epidemic and other drug abuse issues, and mental illness. Many of today's police chiefs and sheriffs say they have no

choice but to take leadership roles on these issues, in some cases because no one else is doing so.<sup>7</sup> These changes in the nature of police work require recruitment of new officers with different skill sets and attitudes about policing than were sought out in the past.

And when officers are hired, police and sheriffs' departments need to find ways to give their new employees fulfilling careers, so they will stay with the department for more than a few years. Many of today's employees are more willing to change jobs, or even change their careers, if they are frustrated or feel that their work is not important and worthwhile.

Based on PERF's research, the results of a PERF survey of police and sheriffs' department officials, and the discussions at PERF's December 2018 conference on changes in the workforce, PERF identified 12 key takeaways to guide agencies as they look to improve their recruitment and retention efforts:

- 1 MONITOR YOUR WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS: To stay ahead of current and future changes, agencies need to monitor workforce trends, collect and analyze data on their staffing needs, and adjust their recruiting and retention strategies accordingly.**

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7. See, for example, the following PERF reports: *The Police Response to Homelessness* (2018), *The Unprecedented Opioid Epidemic: As Overdoses Become a Leading Cause of Death, Police, Sheriffs, and Health Agencies Must Step Up Their Response* (2017), and *Guiding Principles on Use of Force* (2016). <https://www.policeforum.org/free-online-documents>

In order to properly address the issue of recruitment and retention, police agencies need to understand how these issues look in their own departments. Thorough monitoring of staffing levels, with details about the experience, skills, and expertise of each employee, is an important tool for forecasting and meeting future needs. This information is important in helping departments adjust recruitment and retention strategies as necessary to ensure the agency remains fully staffed.

**2 BUILD TRUST IN YOUR COMMUNITIES: The policing profession has seen a period of dramatic, relentless change. Five years after the events in Ferguson, MO, the profession is still undergoing soul-searching. This may have had an impact on recruiting.**

In recent years, policing in the United States has become a subject of heated public debate following high-profile incidents, including many involving the use of lethal force. These events have resulted in what some have referred to as the “post-Ferguson effect,” in which members of the public lose trust in the police. Negative news stories about policing may be creating new challenges for recruiting, hiring, and retaining well-qualified police officers, causing individuals who might otherwise consider a career in policing to seek other options.

Participants at PERF’s meeting said the solution to this issue is simply to work closely with community groups—and not merely as a short-term recruiting effort, but as a constant, broad-based effort to build strong relationships of trust. In that way, community members will get to know and respect the police department, and some will choose to join the department as officers.

**3 SEEK RECRUITS WHO ARE COMFORTABLE WITH 21ST CENTURY POLICING, AND HAVE THE SKILLS FOR IT: Today’s police agencies are taking leadership roles on a wider range of social issues than ever before. And today’s policing requires officers who enjoy technology and know how to use it.**

Police officers increasingly respond to issues outside of their traditional role of law enforcement. They are called to respond to incidents involving persons experiencing mental illness or a behavioral health crisis, homelessness, and those suffering from a drug overdose. Addressing these issues requires additional skills such as communicating with an individual in crisis, problem-solving, critical thinking, showing empathy, and connecting persons in need with social service agencies or other sources of assistance.

In addition to expanding social issues, police also need to be able to keep pace with evolving technologies that impact how crimes are committed, and how they are investigated. Officers need to know how to secure digital evidence, respond to cybercrime, and use police technologies, such as new public safety broadband networks that make it possible for police to send and receive documents, videos, and other information that can be critically important in responding to a call for service.

At the same time, today’s officers must be skilled in the traditional functions of law enforcement agencies—investigating crimes, making arrests, getting serious criminal offenders off the streets, and working with communities to identify and resolve problems that contribute to crime.

As police agencies address issues of recruitment and retention, they need to ensure that their workforce is prepared to succeed in this new environment. This may require additional training for officers, or changing recruiting strategies in order to attract people with the new types of skills that are desired, as well as the traditional crime-fighting skills of police officers.

**4 MORE TRAINING MAY BE NEEDED IF YOUR WORKFORCE’S OVERALL LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE DECLINES: Many police agencies are feeling pressure from both sides of the workforce equation. Fewer people are applying to become police officers, and more officers are leaving before they reach retirement age. This is creating a crisis in both numbers and talent.**

Agencies report that they are seeing more officers leave before reaching retirement, and are experiencing declining numbers of applicants.

As senior officers leave before retirement age, the average amount of experience in the workforce is declining. The younger workforce does not always have the benefit of learning from and being trained by officers with a wealth of experience. Police executives should track and be aware of their agencies' staffing issues and the overall composition of their workforce. A young workforce may require more on-the-job training than one that has a more balanced mix of young and experienced officers.

- 5 DEVELOP NEW STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING OFFICERS WITH NEEDED SKILLS: Traditional approaches to recruiting and retaining police officers are insufficient to meet the need for officers who possess the skills and temperament needed for modern policing. In addition to looking at the traditional sources of officer candidates, such as the military, departments also need to seek non-traditional candidates.**

The declining number of police applicants indicates that traditional recruiting and retention methods are becoming less reliable. Traditional "pipelines" to policing, such as applicants coming from "police families" or leaving the military, are declining. Therefore, agencies must look to update their recruiting methods and look outside traditional candidate pools. Updated methods include offering cadet programs and internships to encourage interest in policing at a younger age, forming partnerships with local colleges and universities, and relaxing requirements regarding previous disqualifiers, such as tattoos and past drug use.

- 6 FIND NEW WAYS TO RECRUIT A DIVERSE WORKFORCE: Agencies continue to struggle with recruiting women and members of minority groups. The first step toward improvement is to recognize and address barriers to recruitment among minority communities and women. Police and sheriffs' departments should establish**

**partnerships with religious institutions, organizations of minority groups, and women's groups that may be able to help develop pathways for members of minority groups and women to join police agencies.**

Some agencies have taken innovative approaches to recruiting a diverse workforce and have seen promising results. Partnering with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to create internships with the police department has produced results in Newton, MA and Nashville. The Miami Beach, FL Police Department and the Tucson Police Department have held recruiting events specifically inviting women to meet female members of the department and to learn more about careers in law enforcement.

- 7 ENSURE THAT YOUR RECRUITING MESSAGES REFLECT THE REALITY OF POLICE WORK: Recruitment videos, webpages, social media, and brochures must reflect the philosophy and values of the agency and provide a realistic view of what police work involves.**

As seen in the Fayetteville, NC Police Department's recruitment videos, agencies are moving beyond a recruitment model that focused on dramatic or "exciting" parts of the job. Instead, agencies are presenting a more realistic, service-oriented message. A video blog (vlog) by an officer in Clearwater, FL provides a real view of policing that involves mediating disputes between individuals and requires communication skills in addition to physical skills. This type of shift in messaging can attract individuals who might otherwise be intimidated or uninterested in the traditional portrayal of policing, but who are attracted to the community service aspects of the job.

- 8 ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN THE JOB APPLICATION PROCESS: In today's competitive job market, a faster, more efficient application and hiring process is critical for success. Many potential job applicants who need to find employment are unable to wait for a police recruiting process that takes many months to complete. Tech-savvy applicants will be turned off by an online application system**



**that is clumsy, illogical, or difficult to navigate because of a poor design or technical problems. Agencies also should invest in personal outreach to help potential recruits through the process.**

Entering a career in law enforcement is a more involved process than most other jobs, requiring physical fitness tests, polygraphs, background checks, and other vetting processes. In many agencies, this process can be slow-moving, taking months to complete. Individuals who are midway through the process sometimes drop out when they are offered another job that they can start immediately. Police agencies should review their application process and look for ways to make it faster and more efficient. In many cases, this will involve consolidating steps in the application process and using technology to process information more quickly and efficiently.

Even in an efficient process, it is possible to lose applicants who don't feel engaged with a police department. Some agencies address this by adopting a "high-touch" approach, in which recruiters remain in contact with the applicant throughout the process, keep them apprised of where they stand, and address any concerns or questions the recruit may have.

At PERF's conference, many participants compared this approach to that of college sports coaches recruiting high schools' star athletes. By demonstrating an interest and investment in recruits, police agencies can help ensure that candidates won't drop out because of relatively small issues that could be addressed.

- 9 RETENTION OF OFFICERS IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT. USE EXIT INTERVIEWS TO LEARN WHY OFFICERS LEAVE YOUR DEPARTMENT: Because most voluntary resignations happen within the first five years of an officer's career, agencies need to better understand why employees leave, so they can develop strategies to address the issues that result in early resignations.**

Retaining officers is essential for police agencies, not only to maintain staffing levels, but also to have experienced officers to guide newer personnel. PERF's survey found that most officers who voluntarily leave policing

prior to retirement do so in the first five years of their career. Agencies should attempt to understand why officers who leave during this time period do so. Conducting exit interviews with officers is essential to pinpointing why officers are leaving, and to guide strategies to boost retention.

In some cases, officers leave the policing profession after a few years. But in many other cases, officers move to a different police agency that offers better benefits. So police and sheriffs' departments need to be competitive with benefits like tuition reimbursement, flexible schedules that help employees meet their personal needs, and comprehensive benefit packages.

- 10 OFFER EMPLOYEES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES: Agencies need to assess what their officers want in a career and explore ways to broaden officers' experiences and career planning opportunities.**

One way to increase retention is to offer professional development opportunities, especially opportunities to gain experience in other areas within an agency. For example, the Phoenix Police Department supports this type of growth by encouraging employees to work in a different assignment for up to 80 hours annually. Opportunities like this can help officers feel valued and see themselves staying with the department long-term.

- 11 AIM TO MEET EMPLOYEES' NEEDS FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WELLNESS: Work-life balance and officer wellness are keys to retaining and developing employees at all ranks and experience levels. Agencies should consider more flexible scheduling systems and wellness programming to meet employees' needs.**

As the nation's workforce changes, many professions have adopted flexible schedules and focused on greater work-life balance.

In policing, flexibility in schedules can be difficult, because patrol shifts need to be covered every hour of every day. In agencies with labor union contracts, scheduling can be even more challenging, because the contracts often dictate that veteran officers can select the

most desirable shifts. Despite the challenges, some agencies have found ways to offer scheduling options that give officers more days off in a month, some weekends off regardless of seniority, and the ability to have a say in setting their own schedule—all while maintaining the needed coverage across all shifts. Agencies should explore ways to provide more flexibility in their scheduling systems.

Officer wellness programs also can help with retention, because healthy officers are more likely to be happy in their work and stay on the job.

**12 BE WILLING TO RETHINK OLD WAYS OF DOING THINGS:**

**Changes in technology and the nature of police work should cause police agencies to rethink long-held assumptions about their organizational structures and how police work gets done. Agencies need to be open**

**to new ideas on police organization and staffing.**

As the workforce and the nature of police work evolve, largely driven by new technologies, police agencies need to be forward-thinking in how these changes will impact policing. Some organizations are projecting significant structural changes in how police agencies will be organized and function in the future.

For example, police agencies in the future may rely more heavily on civilian staff, contract services, and community partnerships than on full-time sworn staff. And the skill sets that all police employees need will continue to become more complex. It is important for the policing profession to be flexible and open-minded about changes that will help police agencies to serve their communities in new ways, while ensuring that officers feel valued and respected.

# HOW PERF SURVEYED POLICE AGENCIES ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ISSUES

To understand the challenges that police agencies face in recruiting and retaining the next generation of officers, PERF surveyed its members to identify specific issues and potential best practices.

**Findings from PERF’s survey will be presented throughout this report. This section provides an overview of how the survey was conducted.**

## Survey Methodology

To develop the survey questions, PERF conducted preliminary research on the challenges that police agencies face in recruiting and retaining candidates. PERF also held a focus group with officers from the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, DC. Seven officers participated, with experience ranging from 2 months in the academy to 21 years with the department. The purpose of the focus group was to gain insight into why these individuals began a career in policing and what expectations they held for the job.

Using information gleaned from background

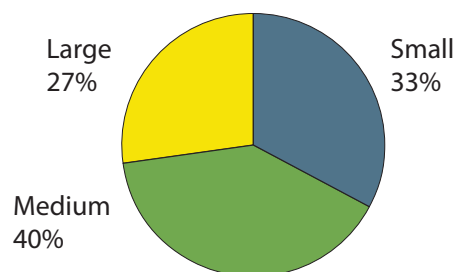
research and the focus group, PERF developed an initial draft of the survey, and pilot-tested the draft with Washington’s Metropolitan Police Department; the Portland, OR Police Bureau; the Punta Gorda, FL Police Department; and the San Diego County, CA Sheriff’s Office. Cognitive interviews were conducted with representatives of each of the pilot agencies to identify any needed changes to the survey questions.

When the questions were finalized, the survey was disseminated via email to police chiefs and other PERF members who are the head of their agency, for a total of 775 potential respondents. The survey received a response rate of 53.2 percent, with 412 completed surveys.

## Overview of Survey Respondents

Survey respondents represented agencies from 45 states, Washington, DC, and Canada. Small, medium, and large agencies were all represented in the survey. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the number of respondents by size. Agencies ranged in size from 5 to 44,470 sworn personnel.

**Figure 1: PERF Survey Respondents by Agency Size**



Size	Responses (n)
Small <sup>8</sup>	134
Medium <sup>9</sup>	165
Large <sup>10</sup>	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>411</b>

8. Defined as agencies with between 1 and 49 full-time sworn personnel

9. Defined as agencies with between 50 and 249 full-time sworn personnel

10. Defined as agencies with 250 or more full-time sworn personnel

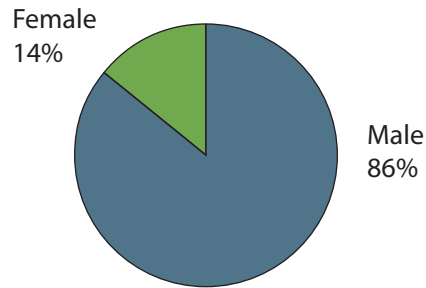
## Demographics of Responding Agencies

PERF asked respondents to include demographic information about their employees. Respondents were asked to report the number of full-time sworn employees by gender, race/ethnicity, and

age. In taking the average of these responses, the following information shows the typical demographic profiles of the responding agencies. Approximately 41 percent of employees were between the ages of 21 and 35, and 43 percent were between the ages of 36 and 50.

**Figure 2: Average Percentage of Full-Time Sworn Employees by Gender**

*n* = 409

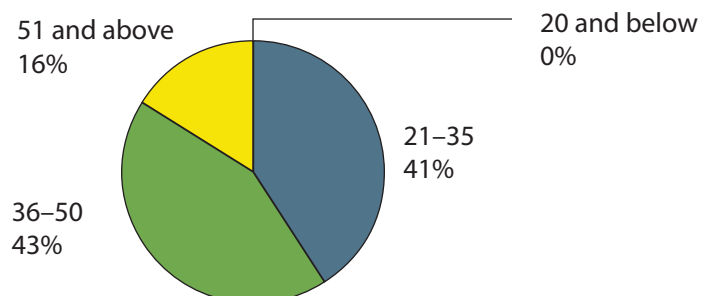


**Figure 3: Average Percentage of Full-Time Sworn Employees by Race**

Average Percentage of Full-Time Sworn Employees by Race <i>n</i> = 361	
White, not of Hispanic origin	76%
Black or African American, not of Hispanic origin	9%
Hispanic or Latino	11%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian	2%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.4%
Two or more races	0.7%
Not known	0.7%

**Figure 4: Average Percentage of Full-Time Sworn Employees by Age**

*n* = 258



# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION: TRENDS AND STATISTICS

**There are indications that the current crisis in police recruiting is part of a long-term trend.** Across the country,

- Police agencies are facing reduced staffing,
- Fewer applicants are coming in the door,
- More officers are leaving before they reach retirement age, and
- Large numbers of personnel are eligible to retire now, or will be in a few years.

**REDUCED STAFFING:** Nationally, according to an August 2018 report from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the number of full-time employees in law enforcement is declining. Between 2013 and 2016, the number

of full-time sworn officers dropped 3.2 percent, from approximately 725,000 officers to 701,000, ending a period of steady increases from 1997 to 2013.<sup>11</sup>

The picture looks even worse when increases in the U.S. population are factored into the analysis. The number of full-time sworn officers *per 1,000 U.S. residents* has been declining almost continuously for two decades, from 2.42 officers per 1,000 residents in 1997 to 2.17 officers per 1,000 in 2016, according to the BJS report. That is a 10.3-percent reduction in police officer staffing.<sup>12</sup>

These national trends were echoed in PERF’s 2019 survey. A plurality of 41 percent said they have a shortage of officers that has worsened when compared to five years ago.

**Figure 5: Personnel Shortage Compared to 5 Years Ago**

<b>PERF survey: If there is a shortage of full-time sworn personnel at your agency, how does that shortage compare to 5 years ago? <i>n</i> = 411</b>	
Increased	41%
Stayed pretty much the same	25%
Decreased	20%
N/A - my agency doesn't have a shortage of full-time sworn personnel	12%
Not sure	2%

11. Hyland, Shelley. (2018) *Full-Time Employees in Law Enforcement Agencies, 1997-2016*, (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics): pg. 1 <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ftelea9716.pdf>

12. Ibid.

**AGENCIES ARE RECEIVING FEWER APPLICANTS:** It appears that the reductions in police staffing are due in part to a drop in the number of people applying for jobs in policing. Approximately 63 percent of respondents to PERF’s survey said that the number of applicants applying for full-time sworn positions at their agency has either “decreased significantly” (36 percent) or “decreased slightly” (27 percent) compared to five years ago.

Several participants at PERF’s conference reported extreme declines in job applicants:

- Chief Steve Anderson of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department said, “Going back to 2010, we had about 4,700 online applications. That dropped down to about 1,900 last year.”
- The Seattle Police Department reported a decrease of 40 to 50 percent in applications.
- Over the past five years, the Jefferson County, CO Sheriff’s Office has seen its applicants decrease by 70 percent.

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAY POLICING JOBS ARE THE MOST DIFFICULT TO FILL:** A 2019 survey of state and local government employers by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence found that law enforcement positions are the most difficult public-sector jobs to fill. (See Figure 6.)

**When asked what positions, if any, their organization had a hard time filling, 32 percent of government employers cited policing jobs, which was the highest percentage among nearly 40 types of jobs cited by survey respondents.**



Chief Steven Anderson, Metropolitan Nashville Police Department

Emergency dispatchers ranked fifth on the list, with 22 percent of respondents citing difficulties in hiring for those positions. And corrections/jail personnel were the 14th most frequently cited positions, with 15 percent reporting difficulty filling those positions.

(By contrast, for example, only 8 percent of state and local governments reported problems hiring human and social services workers; 6 percent reported problems filling transportation jobs; and 4 percent cited recreation jobs.)<sup>13</sup>

**AVERAGE LENGTH OF SERVICE IS DECLINING:** Given the declining number of working police officers and the declining number of job applicants, many police and sheriffs’ departments cannot afford to lose current personnel. Unfortunately, responses to PERF’s survey suggest that a growing number of officers are leaving their agencies before they reach eligibility for retirement.

Survey respondents were asked to estimate the average length of service for all full-time sworn personnel in their agency, and the median length of service was 12 years.

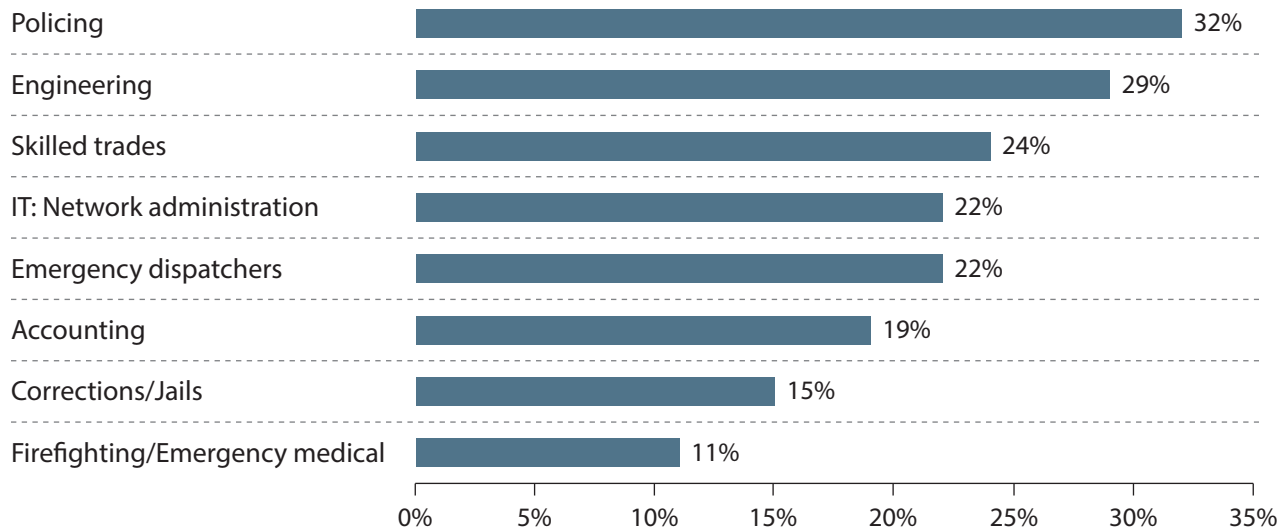
Significantly, 47 percent of respondents indicated that the average length of service among sworn personnel had decreased compared with five years ago; only 15 percent reported that the length of service had increased. (See Figure 7.) These findings suggest that the overall experience levels in many agencies is declining.

**MOST RESIGNATIONS OCCUR IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS:** In PERF’s survey, respondents were asked to report the number of voluntary resignations they had experienced in their agency during the 12-month period ending August 31, 2018, sorted by the number of years of service each resigning officer had provided. (Retirements and terminations were not included.)

13. Center for State and Local Government Excellence, (May 2018). *Survey Findings State and Local Government Workforce: 2019 Survey*, <https://www.slge.org/assets/uploads/2019/07/slge-workforce2019.pdf>

**Figure 6: State and Local Government Workforce 2019 Survey**

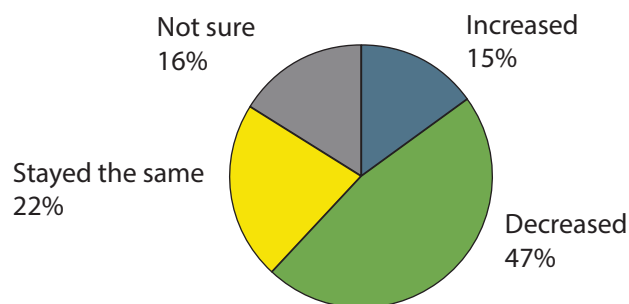
Over the past year, what positions, if any, has the organization had a hard time filling?



Source: Center for State and Local Government Excellence

**Figure 7: Compared with 5 years ago, has the average length of service in your agency changed?**

n = 403



Source: PERF Survey

Of the resignations reported, 29 percent occurred within the officer's first year of service, and another 40 percent occurred between the officer's first anniversary and fifth year of service. In other words, 69 percent of the voluntary resignations occurred quite early—within the first five years of service (see Figure 8).

**RETIREMENTS ARE POISED TO INCREASE:** Another important factor in forecasting future staffing needs is the number of officers eligible for retirement in the coming years.

PERF's survey asked respondents to estimate their percentage of full-time sworn personnel who are currently eligible for retirement at full pension. The survey also asked for an estimate of the percentage of full-time sworn personnel who will become eligible for retirement within five years.

On average, respondents reported that approximately 8 percent of current full-time sworn personnel are currently eligible for retirement, and an average of 15.5 percent will become eligible within five years.

Additionally, 40 percent of respondents said that the percentage of full-time sworn personnel eligible for retirement is greater than it was five years ago. This may reflect a large cohort of officers who were hired in the 1990s with support from federal COPS Office hiring grants; many of these officers are reaching retirement age.

As the number of retirements increases, there will be an even greater need to expand recruitment efforts in order to keep pace.

### The Current Crisis Has Deep Roots

Although policing has gone through staffing challenges in the past, there is a growing sense that recent recruitment and retention challenges are not part of a normal staffing cycle. Participants at PERF's December 2018 conference identified a number of changes in policing that may be impacting recruitment and retention efforts.

**THESE CHANGES INCLUDE A NEW WAY OF VIEWING CAREER OPTIONS.** Many of today's young people find it difficult to imagine working in the same *career* for their entire life, much less working for the same *employer* for a lifetime. So they are not attracted to the traditional model of police benefits, based on the concept of receiving a good pension after about 25 years of service, because they never expect to stay that long in a single job.

Another factor may be the increased scrutiny and criticism of the policing profession in recent

**Figure 8: Number of Voluntary Resignations**

Number of Voluntary Resignations <i>n</i> = 3,708	
	Total Resignations
Under 1 year	29%
1-5 years	40%
6-10 years	15%
11-15 years	8%
16 or more years	8%

Source: PERF Survey

years. Negative news stories about police use of force and other issues may have turned some young people away from any consideration of working in policing.

These changes within policing may also be exacerbated by changes occurring outside of policing. Over the past decade, the job market has improved significantly. In April 2019 there were 7.4 million job openings, compared to a little over 2 million job openings in July 2009.<sup>14</sup> With increased job options available, job seekers can be more discerning when pursuing a career. Therefore, policing has to be more competitive in seeking applicants than ever before while also accounting for the changes in the profession.

14. "Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey Highlights: April 2019." Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019). [https://www.bls.gov/web/jolts/jlt\\_labstatgraphs.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/web/jolts/jlt_labstatgraphs.pdf)



# THE KEY CHALLENGE: FINDING RECRUITS WHO HAVE THE SKILLS FOR POLICING TODAY

**The current crisis in recruitment and retention of police officers** is happening at a time of dramatic changes in policing. The everyday work of policing today is much different from what it was a generation or two ago.

**So it is not enough for police chiefs and sheriffs to focus on simply hiring more officers and deputies. At the same time, they must strive to find new kinds of recruits who have the skills, talents, and temperament to do the work of 21st century policing, not the policing of the past.**

Participants at the PERF conference identified several fundamental changes in policing that should be reflected in recruiting and hiring practices:

1 **AN INCREASED FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**, that goes beyond the concepts of community policing that date back 30 or 40 years. Police agencies have long understood that the success of crime-fighting strategies depends on how well they work with their communities to build trust and share information about crime patterns.

Today's law enforcement agencies understand that the public increasingly has a new, broader expectation that police will be open and transparent about what they do, and that they will be held accountable for their actions.

2 **TECHNOLOGY**: There is an increasing need for officers to understand a wide variety of new technologies. That includes technologies that police use to investigate crime, and technologies that criminal offenders use to commit crimes.

3 **THE GROWING ROLE OF POLICE IN ADDRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS**: Because police and sheriffs' departments must respond to calls for assistance every hour of the day, they tend to be on the front lines of social problems, including mental illness, drug addiction, and homelessness. Policing agencies increasingly are recognizing that they must take leadership roles in addressing these social problems.

**It should be noted that in addition to taking on these new challenges, today's police officers must continue to perform all of their traditional roles: investigating crimes; making arrests; getting serious offenders off the streets; working with communities to identify and solve problems that contribute to crime; responding to all kinds of calls for service; responding to natural disasters, terrorist or mass shooting attacks, and other critical incidents; understanding the special considerations in serving sexual assault and domestic violence victims; and many other types of work.**

## 1. Community Engagement

Community-oriented policing has become a salient feature of policing in the United States. For decades, community policing has focused on working with communities to identify crime-related problems, building connections and trust between community groups and the police, and proactively working to solve the community problems and bring crime rates down.

More recently, communities are demanding a say in how they are policed, and expect to be included on matters such as selecting top police executives, reviewing police use of force, and developing policies on sensitive issues—for example, privacy and police agencies’ use of drones.

Related to the changing public perception of policing is the growing demand for transparency from the police. The news media and the public increasingly expect to be told about a wide range of police activities and policies. And with the increased number of media outlets and social media, the way police agencies interact with media has also changed. At PERF’s conference, Deputy Director Kristen Mahoney of the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance said, “When I worked in Baltimore, MD, we had three TV news outlets and a newspaper. Today, police need a 360-degree media strategy to manage a 24-hour news cycle. You need to develop professionals within your department to do that.”



Deputy Director Kristen Mahoney,  
Bureau of Justice Assistance

As police adjust to increased scrutiny and demands for transparency, they need to also ensure that their officers and recruits are prepared to work in this environment.<sup>15</sup> **Many agencies have embraced increased community involvement, and they work to hire officers who have communication skills and who enjoy engaging the community.**

## 2. Changes in Technology

Advances in technologies are causing fundamental shifts in how criminal offenders commit crimes, and in how police agencies need to investigate crime. These changes were detailed in a 2018 PERF report, summarized below<sup>16</sup>:

- **New types of crime, based on technology, are being invented.** For example, in just the last few years, “ransomware,” a type of online attack that blocks victims’ access to their computers until they pay a ransom, has become a billion-dollar-a-year enterprise.
- **Local gang members and other criminals have noticed that they can make more money, with less risk of getting caught, and smaller penalties if they do get caught, by using technology.** Why rob a convenience store if you can get on a computer, steal someone’s identity (or create an entirely new, fictitious identity of a person who doesn’t exist), and steal money from major U.S. banks or credit card companies?
- **Crime statistics do not reflect most of these changes.**
- **The work of criminal investigators is becoming more complex.** Today, investigators must retrieve smartphones from victims and suspects and scour their social media accounts for clues; access nearby security

15. See Police Executive Research Forum, *Advice from Police Chiefs and Community Leaders on Building Trust* (2016). <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/policecommunitytrust.pdf>

16. Police Executive Research Forum. *The Changing Nature of Crime and Criminal Investigations*. See pp. 4-7. <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/ChangingNatureofCrime.pdf>

camera feeds, automated license plate readers, and traffic enforcement cameras; and try to obtain data from other devices such as Fitbits, GPS devices, and video cameras in the victims' or suspects' cars. And investigators must do all this work quickly, before the digital trail gets cold.

- **Police are not getting a lot of help from the technology sector.** Criminals are using the “dark web” to make themselves anonymous online.
- **Technology is changing the environment every day, and most police agencies are far behind the curve.** Because policing in the United States is decentralized, there are thousands of small and medium-size agencies that lack the resources to respond to the changes cited above.
- **In many cases, it's not clear how, or even if, local police are prepared to take reports and investigate offenses like identity theft and credit card fraud.**

Because law enforcement agencies are struggling to keep pace with changes in technology, they need to hire new recruits who understand technology and enjoy using computers and other technologies to prevent and investigate crimes.

**Police agencies also need to hire recruits who are comfortable with using modern technologies that are being adopted in police agencies, such as:**

- The use of body-worn cameras,<sup>17</sup> and
- The use of new applications that run on advanced broadband networks, such as FirstNet.<sup>18</sup>

The growing use of technology is a major change in policing that should be considered in all discussions about recruiting and hiring officers.

### 3. The Growing Roles of Police in Handling Social Problems

The following recent reports by PERF provide detailed analysis of the growing phenomenon of police and sheriffs' departments taking new roles in helping their communities address social issues—specifically, mental illness, homelessness, and the opioid epidemic.

- *Managing Mental Illness in Jails: Sheriffs Are Finding Promising New Approaches* (2018)<sup>19</sup>
- *The Police Response to Homelessness* (2018)<sup>20</sup>
- *The Unprecedented Opioid Epidemic: As Overdoses Become a Leading Cause of Death, Police, Sheriffs, and Health Agencies Must Step Up Their Response* (2017)<sup>21</sup>
- *Guiding Principles on Use of Force* (2016)<sup>22</sup>

Police chiefs and sheriffs did not seek out these roles. Rather, they responded to crises in their communities that were not being adequately addressed by social service agencies.

**It is not difficult to understand how social problems such as drug abuse, mental illness, and homelessness become police problems. Every day, police encounter people in crisis experiencing these problems, and unlike many social service agencies, police must respond to calls for service on a 24-hour basis.**

At PERF's conference on the workforce crisis, police chiefs and sheriffs said that because of these changes in the policing profession, the skills needed by recruits have changed as well. Participants identified the following skills as desirable

17. See Police Executive Research Forum, *Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned*. (2014) [https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free\\_Online\\_Documents/Technology/implementing%20a%20body-worn%20camera%20program.pdf](https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Technology/implementing%20a%20body-worn%20camera%20program.pdf)

18. See Police Executive Research Forum, *The Revolution in Emergency Communications* (2017). <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/EmergencyCommunications.pdf>

19. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/mentalillnessinjails.pdf>

20. <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceResponseToHomelessness.pdf>

21. <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/opioids2017.pdf>

22. <https://perf.memberclicks.net/assets/guidingprinciples1.pdf>



LEFT TO RIGHT: Chief Barry Barnard, Prince William County, VA Police Department; Sheriff Mike Chitwood, Volusia County, FL

for today's policing: communication skills, interpersonal skills/empathy, technological savviness, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and cultural awareness and sensitivity. Participants noted that traditional aspects of policing, such as investigating crimes, responding to calls, working with communities to prevent crimes, understanding defensive tactics, and managing critical incidents, remain essential.

The new skill sets can be difficult to identify and train for in the academy. Ben Haiman, Executive Director of the Professional Development Bureau for **Washington, DC's Metropolitan Police Department**, said "It's easy to screen for traditional factors. But it's hard to find someone who's going to come in with a very strong communications ability, and it's even harder to train someone on exactly what that means."

*"The skillsets required are endless. We train in so many facets of being a police officer, the definition of which changes rapidly each day throughout the year."*

— **Chief Barry Barnard, Prince William County, VA Police Department**

*"Communication is the number one thing that we do. We relate to people in 98 percent of what we do."*

— **Sheriff Mike Chitwood, Volusia County, FL**

## WHY ARE FEWER PEOPLE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN POLICING?

In recent years, policing in the United States has become a subject of heated public debate, following high-profile incidents, including many involving the use of lethal force. These cases have received widespread coverage in the media, resulting in what some have referred to as a “legitimacy crisis” in policing, in which members of the public lose trust in the police.<sup>23</sup>

The negative stories may be creating new challenges for recruiting, hiring, and retaining well-qualified police officers. Negative perceptions may cause people who might otherwise have considered a career in policing to seek other options.

Natalie Todak, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, examined the impact of public perceptions of policing on recruitment of prospective police officers.<sup>24</sup> Through interviews with a sample of 42 college students enrolled in criminal justice courses, Todak explored the thoughts of individuals who were deciding whether to enter a career in law enforcement.

The students interviewed by Todak expected the negative public perceptions of policing to create significant challenges for them on the job. The students felt that police officers are largely disliked by the public, and they expected to encounter hostility and disrespect on a daily basis.

Despite the challenges, Todak found that the students remained enthusiastic about a career in policing. When asked about their motivations, most of the students expressed a desire to help people, and they felt that proving that police officers are well-intentioned would make their work meaningful.

Participants at PERF’s meeting echoed these sentiments and said the solution is to work closely with community groups and build strong relationships of trust. In that way, community members will come to know and respect the police department, and some will choose to join it.

*“Any time there’s a community event, especially if it’s in a minority community or a community that we don’t see a lot of recruiting from, our recruitment officers ask, ‘Can we bring our recruitment officers? Can we have a recruitment booth?’*

*“And we’ve seen some success with that.*

*“If your community has a positive view of the police department, that helps with the recruiting. People see you at a community event, and it sends the message that, ‘It’s okay to be part of the police team.’ Everyone wants to be part of a winning team, and your recruiting will go better if your community members want to be on your team.”*

— **Capt. Herbert Hasenpusch, Anne Arundel County, MD Police Department**

*“I tell my cops all the time that policing is no different from a Fortune 500 company. We provide a service. Members of the public are our clients and customers.*

*“When we go out and do our jobs every day, we provide that service. We treat people with dignity and respect. And it’s not about building these relationships just because we want them to become a police officer. It’s building relationships to make the community better, and then encouraging them to be a part of our organization.”*

— **Commissioner Shawn Harris, Mount Vernon, NY Police Department**



LEFT TO RIGHT: Capt. Herbert Hasenpusch, Anne Arundel County, MD Police Department; Commissioner Shawn Harris, Mount Vernon, NY Police Department

23. Weitzer, R. (2015). American policing under fire: Misconduct and reform. *Society*, 52, 475-480.; Rosenfeld, R. (2016). *Documenting and explaining the 2015 homicide rise: Research directions*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.; Nix, J. & Pickett, J. T. (2017). Third-person perceptions, hostile media effects, and policing: Developing a theoretical framework for assessing the Ferguson effect. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 51, 24-33.
24. Todak, N. (2017). The decision to become a police officer in a legitimacy crisis. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 27, 250-270.

## A FRESH PERSPECTIVE: HEARING FROM OFFICERS NEW TO THE PROFESSION

To broaden the range of perspectives at PERF's conference, PERF asked participating police chiefs and sheriffs to bring a younger officer or deputy to the meeting.

Although they did not have the same amount of experience as the senior law enforcement officials in the room, it was clear that the officers and deputies viewed the purpose of law enforcement similarly. As Deputy Sheriff Gerard Muschette of the St. Mary's County, MD Sheriff's Office stated, "I joined the Sheriff's Office to make a positive difference in people's lives."

The younger officers provided insights on a variety of issues:

### [On the impact of body-worn cameras in community trust and accountability:](#)

*"Personally, I like having body-worn cameras. I feel that it forces officers to understand the law better, because now you have to really know what you're saying to people and make sure you're doing everything the right way."*

— **Officer Clario Sampson, Newark, NJ Police Department**

### [On education requirements for policing:](#)

*"A college education helps to teach you time management and organization, and it helps with report-writing. I also worked as a manager at a McDonald's, which helped me understand the importance of managing people and customer service. Sometimes, you just have to put that smile on your face and go to work every day."*

— **Officer Kayla Lambert, Roanoke County, VA Police Department**

*"I would welcome candidates with diverse backgrounds, including candidates without the higher education requirement. Obviously, there's value in a college education—but requiring 60 college credits or a four-year degree is not something I would rank as the top priority. To me, some of the most important qualities in a police officer are the ability to do the job with compassion, communicate with people, show empathy, and have a customer service orientation."*

— **Officer Derek Austin, University of Wisconsin-Madison Police Department**

### [On why they stay with their department:](#)

*"For me it's really the mission, that family structure that we have in our department. I drive an hour and a half to commute to work every day, and I do it happily because I love my agency. We're about 350 sworn, and we all know each other. We have an inclusive environment where people feel good about sharing what they want to do and how we can help them. That's the driver for me."*

— **Officer Lily Duran, Tempe, AZ Police Department**

*"I look at my job as long-term, as a place where I can have 25 years of service. It's a marathon for me. The health of the department, as well as the health and the financial future of the city, is very important to me."*

— **Officer Daniel Melendez, Miami Beach, FL Police Department**



**ROW 1:** St. Mary's County, MD Deputy Sheriff Gerard Muschette; Officer Clario Sampson, Newark, NJ Police Department; and Officer Kayla Lambert, Roanoke County, VA Police Department

**ROW 2:** Officer Derek Austin, University of Wisconsin-Madison Police Department; Officer Lily Duran, Tempe, AZ Police Department; and Officer Daniel Melendez, Miami Beach, FL Police Department

# IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC CHALLENGES IN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

**Not all police agencies experience the same** challenges with recruiting and retaining officers. In interviews conducted by PERF staff members, some agencies reported struggling with recruitment, but not retention. Other agencies had the opposite experience, facing a greater challenge with holding on to new officers for more than a few years. This chapter explores the issues that police and sheriffs' departments are facing.

## Recruitment Challenges

Recruitment challenges include a general decrease in the number of applicants, a lack of applicants from traditional “pipelines” to policing, and strong competition between agencies for applicants.

### *Decline in Applicants*

As seen in the responses to the PERF survey, police agencies are facing a decline in the number of applications. In 1990, for example, the **Miami Beach Police Department** held its written test of applicants in the city's enormous convention center because there were so many applicants. Today, the department uses a much smaller venue.

In small agencies, this declining number of applicants is particularly burdensome. A decade

ago, one open position in the **Liberty Lake, WA Police Department** drew as many as 70 applicants. Today, two vacancies attracted only five qualified applicants. In a department of only 11 full-time officers, even one vacant position can create a burden on the staff.<sup>25</sup>

As the overall number of applicants declines, finding qualified applicants who can pass entrance exams and meet other requirements presents a significant challenge to agencies of all sizes.

### *Breakdown in Traditional Pipelines to Policing*

Part of the decline in applicants stems from the fact that traditional pipelines to policing are not as active as they were in the past. People leaving active military service have found policing to be a natural career progression upon reentering the civilian workforce. These individuals often have more training and experience than their civilian peers, making them an appealing candidate pool. Almost 20 percent of respondents to PERF's survey said their agencies consider military service as an alternative to minimum educational requirements for sworn personnel.

However, fewer Americans are serving in the armed forces, so there is a smaller pool of candidates with prior military experience.<sup>26</sup>

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25. Howard, Craig. “LLPD Copes with Steady Decline in Applicants,” *Liberty Lake Gazette*, May 10, 2019, <https://libertylake.com/2019/05/10/llpd-cope-with-steady-decline-in-applicants/>

26. “The Military-Civilian Gap: Fewer Family Connections.” Pew Research Center (2011). <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/11/23/the-military-civilian-gap-fewer-family-connections/>



ROW 1: Chief Dan Slaughter, Clearwater, FL Police Department; Chief Anthony Holloway, St. Petersburg, FL Police Department



ROW 2: Chief Douglas Keen, Manassas City, VA Police Department; Chief Gary Gacek, Concord, NC Police Department

Another pipeline into policing has been the tradition of “police families.” In the past, it was not uncommon for families to have multiple members in the policing profession. Individuals would often follow in the footsteps of their family members and join the force. Now, however, there appears to be a decline in the number of multi-generational police families.

### Competition Between Agencies

*“The candidate pool has gotten small, so competition becomes pretty fierce.”*

— Chief Dan Slaughter, Clearwater, FL Police Department

As the applicant pool shrinks, police agencies compete with one another for well-qualified recruits. This is particularly true in areas where multiple agencies recruit from a single, regional Police Academy. Individuals who have sponsored themselves to attend the academy can select which department to apply to after completing training. Multiple agencies often compete for the same individuals. To remain competitive, agencies try to make themselves an attractive option for applicants.

At PERF’s conference, Chief Dan Slaughter of the **Clearwater, FL Police Department** and Chief Anthony Holloway of the **St. Petersburg, FL Police Department** said they often compete

against each other for candidates. Both departments are located in Pinellas County, where applicants apply to a central screening service called the Police Applicants Screening Service. Individuals then complete academy training through St. Petersburg College, and are hired by an agency.

The St. Petersburg Police Department offers incentive programs and can take over the tuition costs of selected candidates and begin paying them a salary while they are still in the academy. The Clearwater Police Department does not have the same level of resources, and relies upon the good reputation of the department as a way to draw recruits.

In some areas, competition can lead to intense wage battles, as agencies increase starting salaries or offer signing bonuses to draw applicants. Chief Michael Wilhelm of the **Waynesboro, VA Police Department** reported losing 15 officers in the past five years to other agencies that offered better pay and benefits. Chief Douglas Keen of the **Manassas City, VA Police Department** said that competitive pay is an issue for every agency in northern Virginia. “As soon as one agency changes their pay structure, it changes the water mark and we all have to make adjustments,” he said.

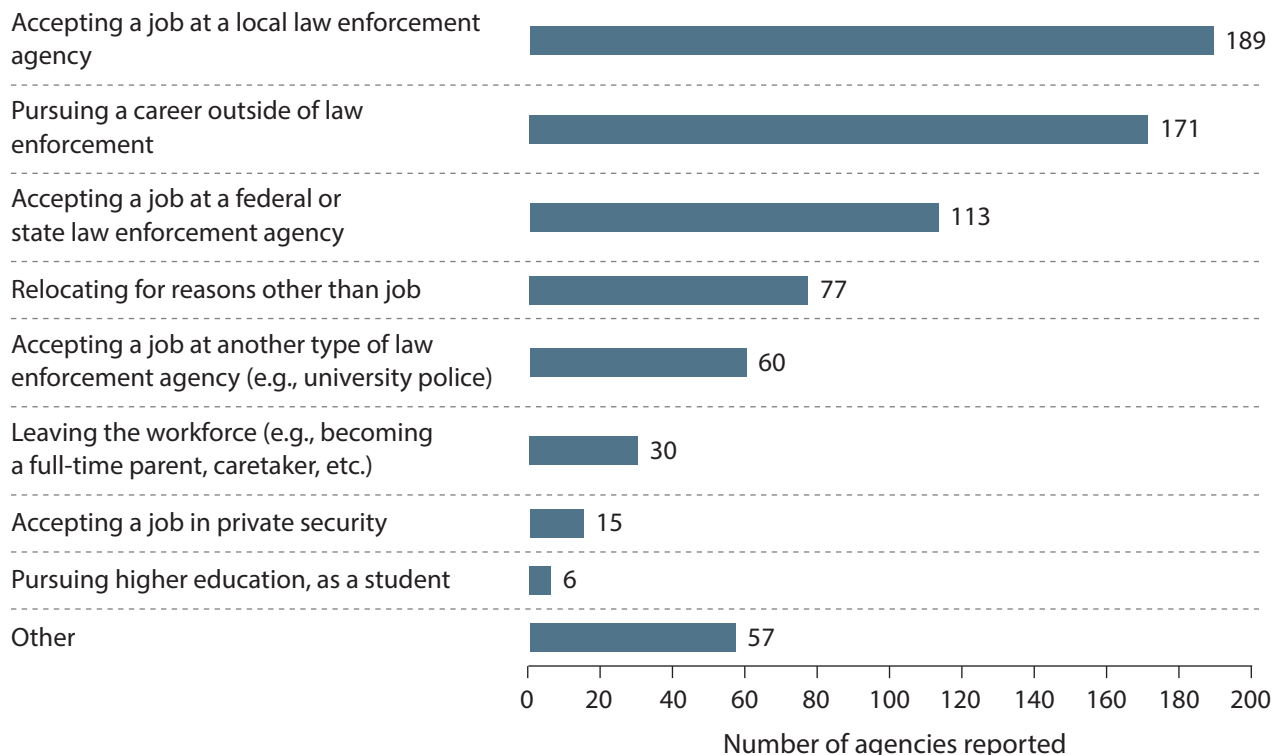
Chief Gary Gacek of the **Concord, NC Police Department** faces similar issues. “Some officers are leaving to go to another department that offers a couple thousand dollars more per year,” he said. This puts agencies with limited budgets at a disadvantage.



**Figure 9: Most Common Career/Life Changes for Individuals Who Resigned Voluntarily**

*n* = 298

Agencies were asked to name the three most common career/life changes identified during exit interviews.



Source: PERF Survey

## Retention Challenges

With declining numbers of applicants, it is important for agencies to retain their experienced officers. But a number of police departments reported that retention is also a struggle, and said they lose officers to other police agencies—or to new careers.

### Voluntary Resignations

As discussed earlier, PERF’s survey indicated that the average length of service in police agencies is decreasing. Of the officers who leave before reaching retirement age, a large percentage do so within their first five years on the job. To better understand retention challenges, it is important to know why individuals are leaving their agencies.

PERF’s survey asked agencies that conduct exit interviews to indicate what reasons officers cite most often as their reason for leaving the department. The most commonly selected response was that they had found a job at another local law

enforcement agency. (Thus, competition between agencies is a factor in retaining officers, as well as recruiting them.)

The second most popular answer was “pursuing a career outside of law enforcement,” indicating that many sworn officers are leaving the profession entirely. The third most common reason was that officers were accepting a position at a federal or state law enforcement agency. (See Figure 9 for a breakdown of the most common career and life changes that lead to voluntary resignations.)

### Competition Between Agencies – Lateral Hires

The competition between agencies does not end when officers are hired; it often continues, as officers move from one agency to another in order to obtain better pay and benefits or less stressful work.

A police department also can save money by hiring an officer from another agency, as opposed to hiring a new recruit, because an experienced



LEFT TO RIGHT: Dr. Jeremy Wilson, Michigan State University; Chief David Zibolski, Beloit, WI Police Department

officer who is already certified can begin work without lengthy and costly training periods.

Lateral hires can hurt agencies that cannot afford to provide the salaries and benefits offered by neighboring agencies. The **Baltimore, MD Police Department**, for example, often loses officers to neighboring agencies that offer comparable pay and a less stressful work experience, because suburban areas typically have lower crime rates. In 2018, the department hired 184 new officers, but lost 220 officers over the same time period, some to other agencies.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. Jeremy Wilson of Michigan State University said it is important to consider the overall skill levels of officers and the distribution of officers throughout the rank structure. Chief Dave Zibolski of the **Beloit, WI Police Department** agreed, saying, “New cops are being trained by cops with much less experience than in the past. This experience is needed to provide the new cops with mentoring and to give them a feeling of confidence when they are out there doing all the things we ask them to do.”

## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES IN FEDERAL AGENCIES

Federal law enforcement has traditionally been attractive to state and local police officers, and many local law enforcement agencies lose experienced officers to federal agencies. But federal agency officials who participated in PERF’s conference said they have their own challenges with recruitment and retention.

Historically, the application process for federal employment has been a long one. FBI officials at PERF’s conference said the Bureau has a very low attrition rate, but the FBI’s application pool has been shrinking. According to the Wall Street Journal, applications for the position of special agent dropped from 68,500 in 2009 to 11,500 in 2018.<sup>28</sup> FBI Special Agent Avatar LeFevre, from the Special Agent Recruiting program, said that the low numbers are due in part to the lengthy hiring process. He reported that from start to finish, it can take 12 to 18 months for an applicant to complete the process. Officials found that at one point,

62,000 applications had stalled in the process, apparently because many applicants were apprehensive about whether they could pass the Physical Fitness Test (PFT). The FBI made some changes to the application process, including shifting the PFT to the second half of the process and creating a new PFT training app, to help applicants improve their fitness and gain confidence that they can meet the requirements. FBI officials also have worked to remove ambiguity in the application process and make it easier to follow.

FBI officials at the PERF conference also reported finding that many people incorrectly believe that they cannot be hired by the FBI without prior military or law enforcement experience. The Bureau launched a social media campaign, reaching out to “the Unexpected Agent,” to appeal to a wider pool of applicants from a variety of professional backgrounds.<sup>29</sup>

27. Rector, Kevin. “Counties are hiring away Baltimore police officers—undercutting city efforts to boost force,” *The Baltimore Sun*, March 8, 2019. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-md-sun-investigates-regional-police-recruiting-20190207-story.html>  
28. Viswanatha, Aruna and Tau, Byron. “FBI’s Most Wanted: More Applicants for Special Agents,” *The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 24, 2019.  
29. McLaren, Samantha. “How the FBI is Beating the Skills Gap by Recruiting ‘Unexpected Agents,’” *LinkedIn.Com*. Feb. 20, 2019. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/recruiting-strategy/2019/fbi-innovative-recruiting-campaign>.

# FINDING SOLUTIONS: WHAT AGENCIES ARE DOING TO IMPROVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

**Police agencies nationwide are taking steps to** review the skills and qualities needed in their officers and the staffing shortages resulting from recruitment and retention challenges. Agencies at PERF's conference presented strategies for reevaluating hiring standards and the structure of the recruitment process, as well as new incentives to draw a new generation in the workforce toward policing.

Police departments are aiming to synchronize their recruitment programs with the needs and aspirations of people entering the workforce. Continuing to rely on processes and incentives that worked for past generations of police officers will not deliver the results that agency leaders are seeking today.

## Recruitment Incentives

To understand current efforts to improve recruitment, PERF asked survey respondents to indicate which types of recruitment offers their agency makes, and whether each incentive is a relatively new development (within the past 10 years) or is a longstanding, traditional benefit of joining a police department.

As seen in Figure 10, the most common recruitment incentive among the survey respondents was paying recruits salaries while they are in the academy, closely followed by free academy training, and

college tuition reimbursement. In each case, large majorities of agencies said they have offered these benefits for more than 10 years.

Offering new recruits assistance with childcare is a more recent development. Only 33 of 412 responding agencies offer childcare assistance, and 27 of the 33 departments implemented that incentive within the last 10 years.

Other popular recent incentives include relocation assistance, housing assistance, and student loan forgiveness.

*"I've heard that some police departments offer student loan forgiveness. That would be an attractive incentive for someone like me who has a lot of student loan debt."*

**—Officer Jessica Rogers, Rockville, MD  
Police Department**



Officer Jessica Rogers, Rockville, MD  
Police Department

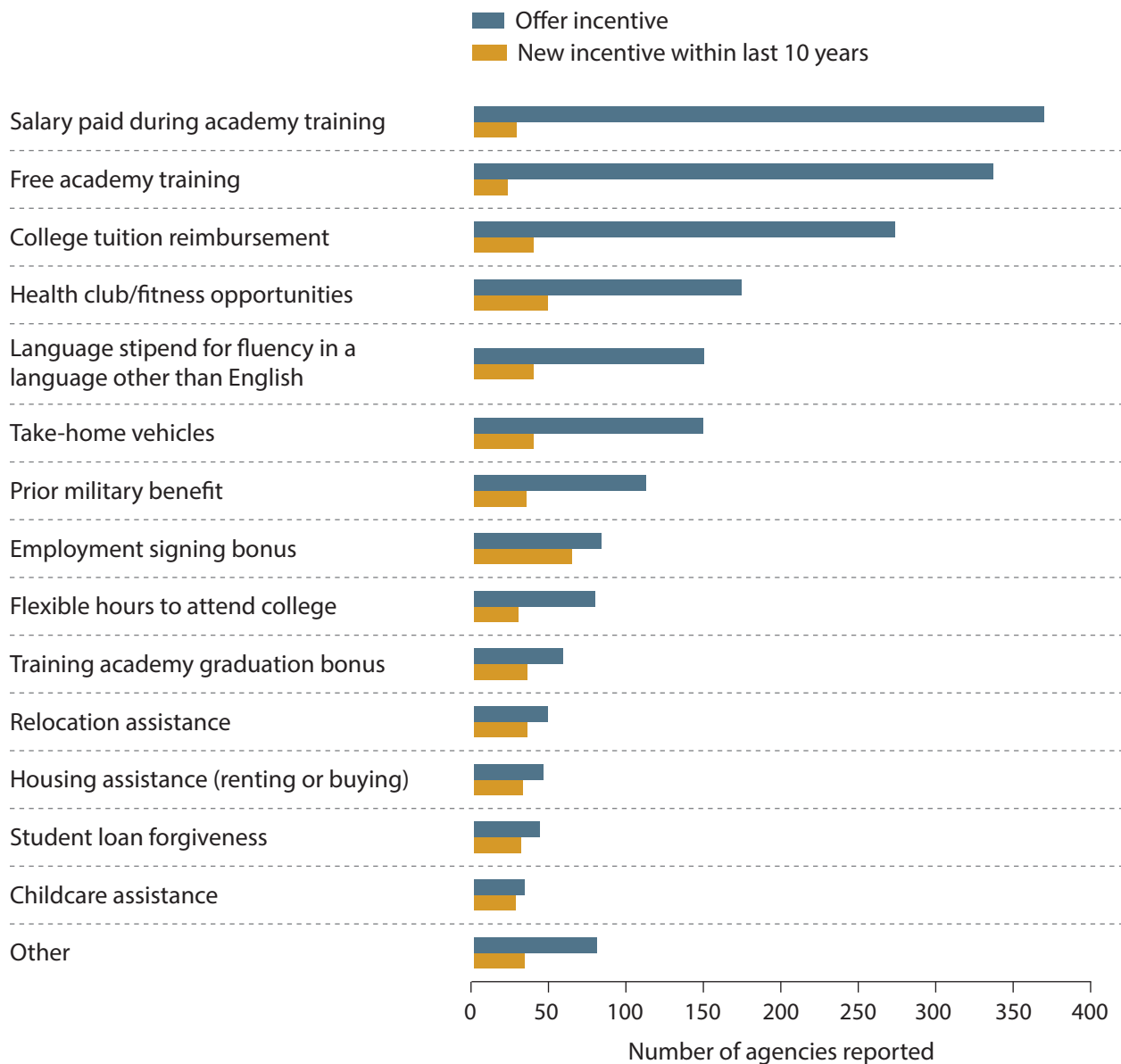
These newer incentives reflect the changes that some agencies are making to attract more recruits. Offering childcare assistance, for example, is a way to draw individuals with families into a career that can often be perceived as incompatible with raising a family. Student loan forgiveness could attract candidates who otherwise would feel a need to enter a higher-paying career to pay off student loans.

## Expanding the Pool of Candidates

Agencies are focusing on expanding the applicant pool through two types of strategies: 1) easing some of the minimum standards for officer candidates (for example, relaxing restrictions against past drug use and tattoos); and 2) pursuing non-traditional applicants, which can have the additional benefit of increasing diversity.

**Figure 10: Recruitment Incentives**

*n* = 412



Source: PERF Survey

**Adjustment of Employment Restrictions:  
Prior Drug Use and Tattoos**

Many agencies have removed hiring barriers that disqualified large numbers of applicants in the past. Among respondents to PERF’s survey, relaxing standards for prior drug use and revising tattoo policies are the two most common changes implemented within the last five years.

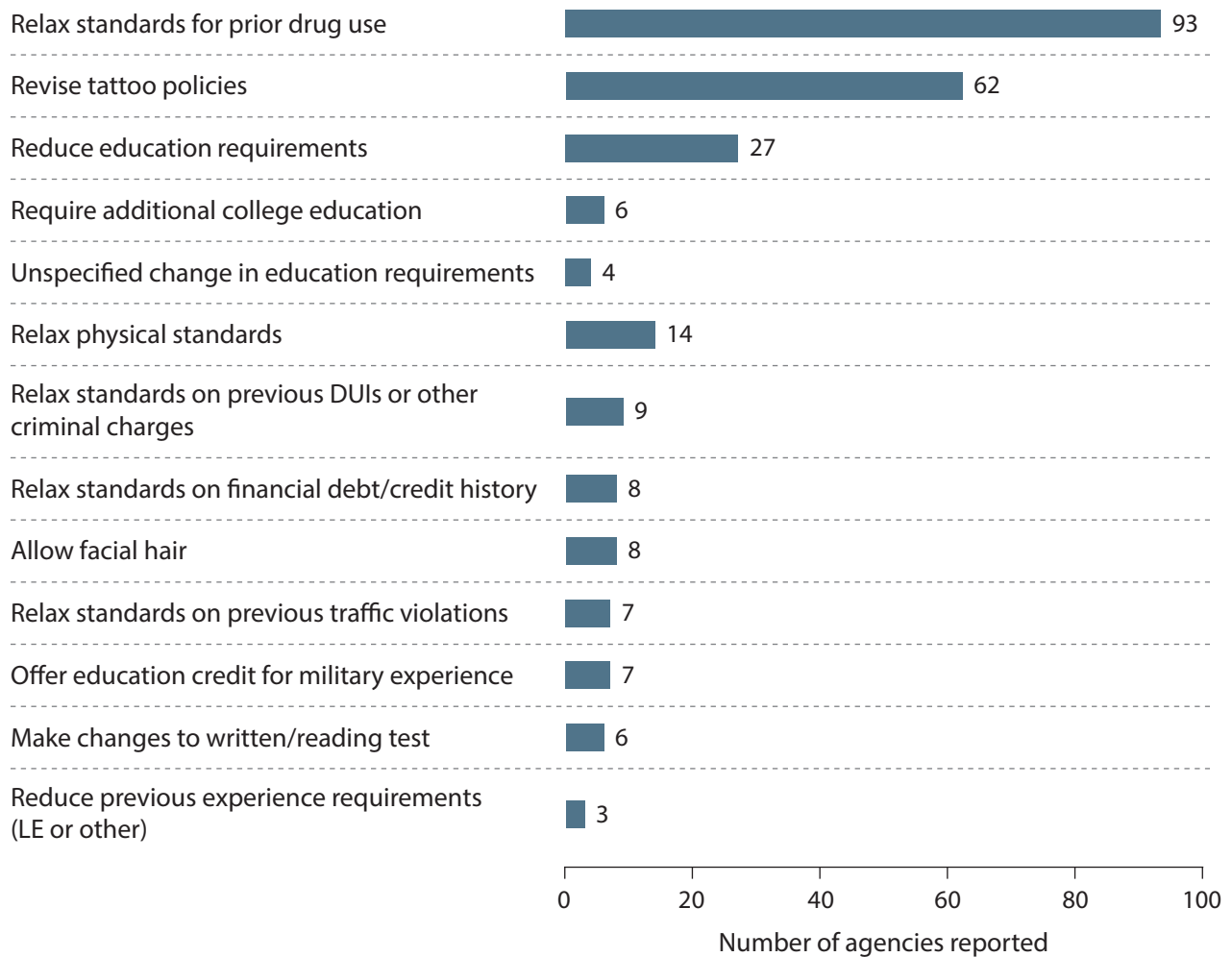
Considering the changing views in society about drug use, especially the growing tolerance of

marijuana, it is not surprising that agencies have relaxed their standards. The **Metropolitan Nashville Police Department**, for example, recently revised its standards on prior drug use. Previously, applicants were barred from any illegal drug use within two years of the date of application. The timeline was revised to disallow candidates who have used marijuana within six months of the date of application.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, agencies that once banned officers from having tattoos have started to ease the

**Figure 11: Changes Made by Agencies That Changed Minimum Requirements in the Past 5 Years**

*n* = 173



Source: PERF Survey

30. "Police Officer Employment Standards," *Nashville.Gov*, <https://www.nashville.gov/Police-Department/Get-Involved/Become-a-Police-Officer/Employment-Standards.aspx>

**Figure 12: Minimum Education Requirement for New Hires**

<b>Minimum Education Requirements for New Hires</b>	
<i>n</i> = 412	
No minimum requirement	2%
High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)	67%
Some college but no degree	6%
Associate's Degree or equivalent (e.g., 60 college credits)	15%
Bachelor's Degree	4%
Other requirement	6%

Source: PERF Survey

prohibition of body art. Some still require that tattoos be hidden under a uniform, while others have allowed officers to have visible tattoos. For example, the **Houston Police Department** (HPD) has relaxed its policy on tattoos to improve morale and to appeal to a wider range of applicants, although some restrictions remain. HPD's current employment requirements state, "Tattoos and body art will be reviewed on a case by case basis. However, no visible tattoo or body art located on the hands, on the neck, or above the neck."<sup>31</sup> And across the board, agencies continue to prohibit tattoos that are racist, obscene, or otherwise offensive.

### *Minimum Educational Requirements*

Educational requirements have been debated for decades in policing circles. Many agencies require education beyond a high school diploma, based on the premise that higher education has a positive impact on policing.<sup>32</sup> But recently, some agencies have begun to relax such requirements, as a way to expand their applicant pool.

As shown in Figure 11, easing educational requirements was the third most common

change made by agencies that have adjusted their minimum hiring requirements in the past five years. Of the 173 agencies that reported changing standards in the past five years, 27 reduced their educational requirements, but six required more college education. (Four agencies reported unspecified changes in educational requirements.)

Because the costs of a college education have skyrocketed over the last generation, many believe that the benefits of a higher education may be outweighed by the fact that a college requirement reduces the size of the applicant pool. Of the agencies that responded to PERF's survey, two-thirds (67%) stated that a high school diploma or equivalent was the current minimum educational requirement for new hires. Only 4 percent of the responding agencies require a bachelor's degree, but 15 percent require an associate's degree and 6 percent require some college coursework.

In 2016, the **Philadelphia Police Department** lowered its educational requirements for new recruits from 60 college credits to a high school diploma. At the same time, the minimum age for applicants was raised to 22 from 19.<sup>33</sup> In the year following the change, the department

31. "Requirements," *HPDCareer.Com*, <http://www.hpdcareer.com/requirements.html>

32. Stickle, Ben. (2016). "A National Examination of the Effect Education, Training, and Pre-Employment Screening on Law Enforcement Use of Force," *Justice Policy Journal*, 13(1), [http://www.cjcr.org/uploads/cjcr/documents/jpj\\_education\\_use\\_of\\_force.pdf](http://www.cjcr.org/uploads/cjcr/documents/jpj_education_use_of_force.pdf)

33. "Qualifications and Requirements," *Join Philly PD*, <https://joinphillypd.com/index.php/qualifications/overview>

saw an increase of more than 20 percent in the number of applicants.<sup>34</sup>

Chief Victor Brito, Rockville, MD  
Police Department



The **Houston Police Department** also recently added a substitution for college experience to its list of minimum qualifications. Now, recruits can substitute 36 months of full-time employment in the last 48 months for the requirement of 48 semester hours of credit from an accredited college or university.<sup>35</sup>

Even though reducing educational requirements can increase the number of applicants, a number of participants at PERF's conference advocated some college experience as a minimum qualification. They said that the benefits of a college experience, including exposure to diversity and development of critical thinking skills, are critical to the job of police officer today, but are not always taught in the police academy.

*"Most professions require a college education, so I firmly believe that if we consider policing a profession, we should require one too."*

— Chief Victor Brito, Rockville, MD  
Police Department

**One strategy for maintaining educational requirements, while not deterring applicants, is to provide incentives to obtain a college degree after joining a police department. Two-thirds of PERF's survey respondents said their agency offers this incentive. Other options include student loan forgiveness, offered by 36 percent of responding agencies, and flexible work hours to facilitate college attendance, offered by 27 percent of responding agencies.**

In June 2019, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed legislation to provide up to \$20,000 to law enforcement officers to help pay off student loans.<sup>36</sup>

## Pursuing Non-Traditional Candidates

In the past, to recruit new officers, police agencies relied in part on a steady stream of applicants from the military. And many recruits also came from families with a history of service in the policing profession—typically fathers, uncles, grandfathers, or others who had been police officers. These traditional “pipelines” into the policing profession no longer provide the same numbers of recruits.

In addition, several police leaders at the PERF conference noted that recruiting at job and college career fairs, another traditional method, is no longer as effective as it once was. This seems to be especially true during a strong jobs market, when police agencies face intense competition not only from other police departments, but from many other professions.

As police and sheriffs' departments look for new approaches to attracting recruits, they are trying to connect with possible candidates who have skills that 21st century policing needs, but who might not have considered a career in policing.

The **Arlington County, VA Police Department** (ACPD) realized that simply showing up to career fairs on college campuses was not pulling enough qualified applicants into the department.

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34. Gregg, Cheri. (January 2017). "Philly PD's Change in Hiring Requirements Beginning to Yield Results," *CBS Philly*, <https://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2017/01/25/philly-pds-change-in-hiring-requirements-beginning-to-yield-results/>

35. "Requirements," *HPDCareer.Com*, <http://www.hpdcareer.com/requirements.html>

36. "Bills to help cops pay back student loans signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott," *Dallas News*, June 11, 2019. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/texas-legislature/2019/05/16/student-loan-assistance-cops-moves-one-step-closer-becoming-law>

## CREATING A FARM SYSTEM TO “GROW YOUR OWN” POLICE OFFICER CANDIDATES

A number of police agencies have recognized that it's not enough to search for applicants who are old enough to report to the Police Academy immediately. Some departments have begun to “go upstream” by focusing on programs for teenagers, who can be encouraged to start considering a career in policing later in their lives.

**In effect, agencies have begun creating a farm system to recruit applicants, similar to efforts by colleges and universities to identify star athletes in high schools or even middle schools.**

**These programs are among the most promising long-term strategies, especially for recruiting from minority communities.**

*“We broadened our recruiting strategy to make it a long-term commitment. We recruit officers like athletes are recruited. We see it as a farm system. We start when they're young, with some of our educational programs in schools.”*

— **Chief Michael Yankowski, Lansing, MI Police Department**

Many agencies use Explorer and Cadet programs to foster an interest in policing. Through its Explorer program, the **Lansing, MI Police Department** begins teaching participants age 14 through 21 about policing topics. Participants are embedded with officers for mentoring and they see policing in action through ride-alongs, community service events, and physical fitness training.<sup>37</sup>

**Later, Lansing also sponsors recruits to attend one of the state's policing academies, if they commit to working for the department.**

The **West Palm Beach, FL Police Department** has found success with a similar,

Chief Michael Yankowski, Lansing, MI Police Department

homegrown recruiting strategy. In addition to Explorer and Cadet programs, the department offers internships to college students and recent graduates. Through these internships, participants donate 40 volunteer hours over a 10-week period. During this time, interns have the opportunity to see every part of the Police Department, which helps them decide whether policing is the right career for them.

After they complete the program, interns receive a certificate of completion, which enables them to enter the hiring process. **Individuals who complete the program can apply for hiring and sponsorship into the academy, separate from the general pool of applicants.**

The **Fairfax County, VA Police Department** has partnered with a nonprofit organization, Public Safety Cadets, that helps police departments to launch cadet units. This program is aimed at young people age 14 to 21. Participants are introduced to police culture and receive assistance in meeting the department's physical fitness requirements. Additionally, the cadets receive police training and conduct community service projects.<sup>38</sup>

**Cadets who participate in the program for two years receive first consideration among applicants and earn a starting pay commensurate with having some law enforcement experience.**



37. “Explorer Post #911,” *Lansing: Michigan's Capital City*, <https://lansingmi.gov/1746/Explorer-Post-911>

38. Jouvenal, Justin. “As interest lags for law enforcement careers, program aims to attract recruits,” *The Washington Post*, December 27, 2018. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/as-interest-lags-for-law-enforcement-careers-program-aims-to-attract-recruits/2018/12/27/3f9af2fa-ffb7-11e8-862a-b6a6f3ce8199\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.14cb8baea696](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/as-interest-lags-for-law-enforcement-careers-program-aims-to-attract-recruits/2018/12/27/3f9af2fa-ffb7-11e8-862a-b6a6f3ce8199_story.html?utm_term=.14cb8baea696)



The **Hampton, VA, Police Division** is working with local high schools to create programming for students considering a career in law enforcement, through the Next Generation Learning program. The program, which is funded by the Ford Motor Company Fund, is designed to prepare high school graduates for successful entry into the 21st century workforce.<sup>39</sup> Through the program, high school students can attend different academies, focused on different subjects and potential career paths. The Hampton Police Division helped create a Law and Public Safety Academy. The program offers high school students an introduction to criminal justice issues and careers.

**For example, students in the Law and Public Safety Academy can become certified as a 911 telecommunicator, enabling them to**

**enter the workforce upon graduation from high school.**

The Next Generation Learning program has allowed the **Metropolitan Nashville Police Department** to provide law enforcement programming directly to high school students. Offered in several Nashville high schools, the course content includes criminal law, justice system procedures, constitutional rights, critical incident management, and criminal investigations.<sup>40</sup> In one of the high school programs, a forensic laboratory stocked with old equipment from the Police Department has given students an introduction to forensic careers in law enforcement. Members of the department's crime lab staff often teach and speak with the students enrolled in the program.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

So the department decided to build stronger relationships with local colleges and universities.

The department asks officers to contact the colleges or universities that they attended, particularly their career services programs. The goal is for the Police Department to have a continuing "presence" at the school and to build relationships with faculty and staff members and students. The department has about 30 officers in this recruiting program, which is staffed by using overtime and by rotating the officers involved. These efforts have paid off, as measured by the size of their recruit

classes. Since the implementation of the program, the department put its largest recruit class ever through the academy. The department also is seeing an increase in the number of applicants who successfully complete the academy.

*"We have many young officers do recruiting outreach, because they want to do it. These are some of the most highly engaged people in the agency. So instead of me trying to 'sell' the agency, we have our young officers doing it, because they truly believe in what we do."*

—Chief Jay Farr, Arlington County, VA Police Department



Chief Jay Farr, Arlington County, VA Police Department

For the **Anne Arundel County, MD Police Department**, greater engagement with the community is the key to finding applicants. In the past, the department focused recruitment efforts at job fairs and college campuses. Now the department seeks out community events, and asks to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

39. "About", *Ford Next Generation Learning*, <https://www.fordnngl.com/about>

40. The Academies of Nashville, *2018-2019 Pathway Descriptions by School*, p. 6 <https://www.mnps.org/academies-of-nashville>; [https://docs.google.com/document/d/129DOe5637GjH8lu\\_IIWq9ahwGITtG1hdYwq1k6hDRdE/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/129DOe5637GjH8lu_IIWq9ahwGITtG1hdYwq1k6hDRdE/edit)

## POLICE NOW – A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT POLICE CAREERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

*“Challenging the notion that policing has to be a job for life, and promoting flexible career routes ... are crucial to attract high-calibre individuals who would not otherwise consider a policing career.”*

— **Police Now Impact Report**<sup>41</sup>

Police agencies in the United Kingdom, just as in the United States, are facing challenges with recruitment and retention of officers, and are exploring innovative ways to engage individuals entering the workforce. In 2015, two former Metropolitan Police Service of London inspectors came up with a novel idea to recruit university graduates to take a job in policing some of the UK’s most challenged communities: **The Police Now program requires only a two-year commitment by its participants.**<sup>42</sup>

(In this respect, Police Now is similar to the UK’s Teach First program and the United States’

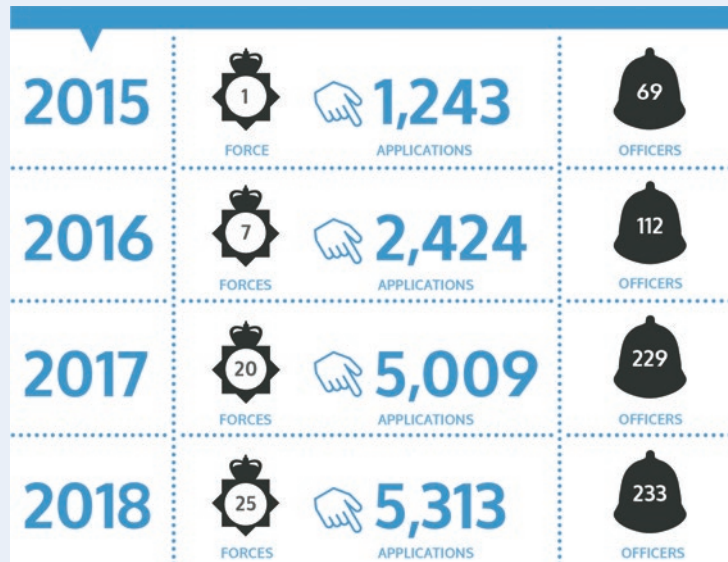
Teach for America program, which are designed to attract civic-minded young leaders to temporary or permanent careers in teaching.)

The hope is that many Police Now recruits will stay longer than two years, and perhaps make policing their long-term career, once they see the positive impact they can have in a community. Police Now has recruited, trained, and developed more than 640 police officers across the United Kingdom. It began in the Metropolitan Police Service, and has grown to work with 28 police forces in England and Wales. In 2018, the program received 5,313 applications, resulting in 233 new officers being assigned to 25 police forces.

### Eligibility

Recruitment efforts for Police Now are focused on soon-to-be and recent college graduates, but anyone can apply to be in the program. Applicants

**Figure 13: Police Now recruitment progress 2015-2018**<sup>43</sup>



41. Police Now, *Impact Report*, (2018): p. 35 <https://www.policenow.org.uk/impactreport/>

42. For additional information on the Police Now program, please see the following brochure: <https://www.policenow.org.uk/national-graduate-leadership-programme/>

43. Police Now, *Impact Report*, (2018): p. 20 <https://www.policenow.org.uk/impactreport/>

must be between 18 and 57 years of age, must have lived in the UK for three years, must be able to remain and work in the UK, and must meet education and writing fluency requirements.<sup>44</sup> People with previous experience in policing, and those currently serving as officers or in training, are not eligible for this program.

### A Two-Year Program

Once accepted into Police Now, participants commit to a two-year service term. This begins with an intensive six-week Summer Academy, where participants receive classroom and practical training, including seven shifts of field training. Participants then attend one week of training with the police service they will be assigned to, where they learn about the agency and local procedures and systems. This is followed by a 28-day immersion period, where participants are partnered with a police constable who acts as a mentor and helps officers acclimate to their new responsibilities. After this immersion period, members work in the field as regular neighborhood police officers.

**SOLVING NEIGHBORHOOD PROBLEMS:** A key element of Police Now is that participants work on a special project to solve a problem in the neighborhood they are assigned to. Participants receive coaching and guidance from their Leadership Development Officer, who helps them set realistic goals and develop a plan for achieving the goals. Participants also receive regular feedback from managers and colleagues throughout the program.

Every 100 days, the Police Now program brings participants together for an Impact Event. These events allow participants to interact with one another, hear from speakers, and either give a presentation or submit an assignment (such as a video or a blog).

Over the course of the two years, there are several other opportunities for participants to build their leadership and problem-solving skills.

These include experiences with outside policing partners and assignments with specialized units within their force.<sup>45</sup>

### Life After the Program

After the completion of the two years, participants attend a graduation ceremony. From there, Police Now graduates have several options. They can stay with their force as a neighborhood officer, or work in other areas of the force in a specialized unit or as a detective. Some participants choose to leave policing, using the leadership and problem-solving skills they developed in the program in new fields of endeavor.

To date, 80 percent of participants have stayed in policing, with many pursuing promotional opportunities.<sup>46</sup> Those who leave the police force still play an important role as advocates for the police force. Those individuals have a new perspective and appreciation for what police do on a daily basis, and they can share that information in their new professions and in their communities. Police Now keeps graduates of the program engaged with an ambassador network, creating additional opportunities for alumni to continue working with the police.

The Police Now program is building opportunities for individuals to explore the police force and build important leadership skills in the process. While only a few cohorts have passed through the program so far, initial feedback and results show promise for this innovative way of recruiting and retaining the next generation of the police workforce. Police Now continues to grow, including developing a similar program for external entry detectives.<sup>47</sup>

44. "Am I Eligible?" *Police Now: Influence for Generations*, <https://www.policenow.org.uk/eligibility/>

45. "About the Programme," *Police Now: Influence for Generations*, <https://www.policenow.org.uk/national-graduate-leadership-programme/>

46. Police Now, *Impact Report*, (2018): p. 35 <https://www.policenow.org.uk/impactreport/>

47. "Have you got what it Takes?" *Police Now: Influence for Generations*, <https://policenowdetectives.org.uk/the-programme/>



LEFT TO RIGHT: Director of Recruiting Christine Chan, Suffolk County, MA Sheriff's Department; Human Resources Division Chief Antoinette Tull, Richmond, VA Police Department; and Chief Richard Clements, Miami Beach, FL Police Department

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

bring recruitment materials and run a recruitment booth at each event. One benefit of this approach has been an increase in the diversity of the department's candidates.

*"We're struggling to recruit officers as everyone else is, but we've seen an increase in the number of minority and female applicants. We're proud of that, and I think it has to do with engaging the communities and looking for non-traditional places to recruit."*

— **Captain Herbert Hasenpusch, Anne Arundel County, MD Police Department**

A key component of these new approaches is ensuring that non-traditional applicants understand that even if they do not fit the traditional profile of a police recruit, that doesn't mean they're unqualified. The **Suffolk County, MA Sheriff's Department** emphasizes in all its recruiting materials that entry-level positions do not require prior law enforcement or military experience. Director of Recruiting Christine Chan said, "When somebody sees a flyer that says 'entry-level position' or 'no law enforcement experience necessary,' that person is going to feel a little bit more confident in applying."

### *Reaching Out to Diverse Candidates*

Increasing the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of police agencies has long been a goal within the profession. While there have been many attempts at increasing diversity, such as recruiting at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and directing outreach at women, these efforts have not always been effective. Respondents to PERF's survey reported they were seeking to hire or having

*"Diversity cannot work without inclusion. Recruiting diverse candidates is great, but what happens when they come into the department? That's where inclusion becomes critical. If you recruit for diversity only, when they get into the department as an African-American, a Latino, a female, or someone from the LGBT community and the environment is not inclusive of the ethnic or cultural experiences they bring to the table, you're going to lose them."*

— **Human Resources Division Chief Antoinette Tull, Richmond, VA Police Department**

difficulty hiring diverse candidates, particularly non-white/minority candidates, female candidates, and bilingual candidates.

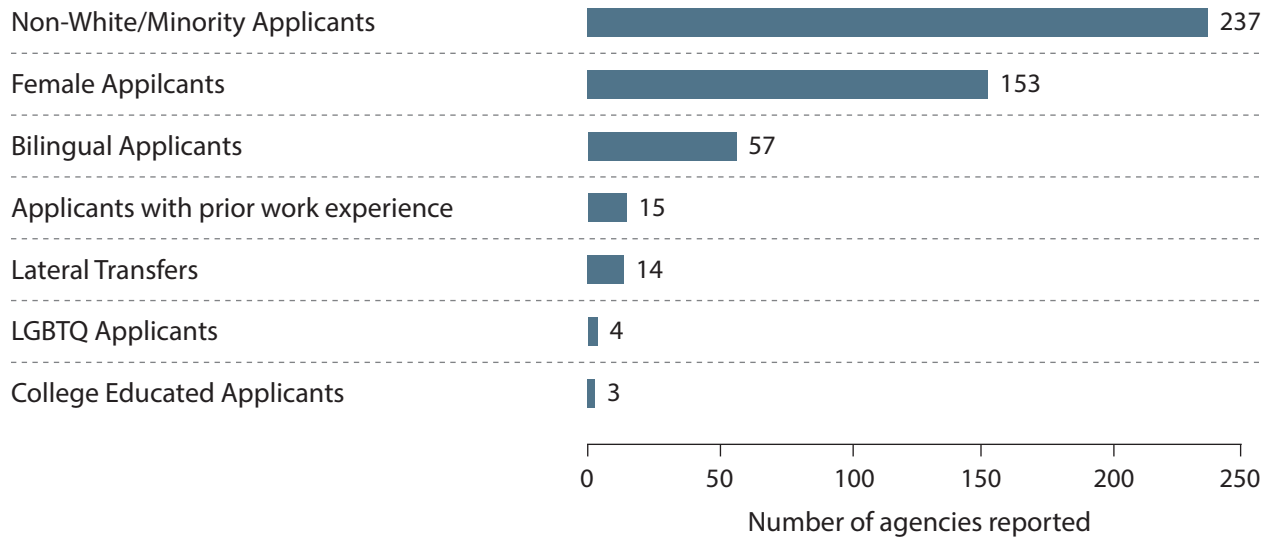
The **Richmond, VA Police Department** fosters inclusion through mentoring programs and family meet-and-greets for recruits. These efforts are intended to build the foundation of a support system for recruits while they are in the academy and emphasizes their importance to the rest of the organization.

Other agencies at the PERF conference discussed their efforts to recruit individuals from HBCUs and other majority-minority institutions of higher education that go beyond attending job fairs. One strategy is to partner with local universities to create internship opportunities for students interested in careers in law enforcement.

In **Newton, MA, the Police Department** works closely with nearby Pine Manor College, which has an enrollment that is 86 percent minority students. The department has worked with the college to establish an internship program based on the citizens police academy model, with eight students per semester participating in the program. After completing the internship program, students stated that their perceptions of policing changed dramatically. The **Metropolitan Nashville Police**

**Figure 14: Groups/Individuals Whom Agencies Are Seeking to Hire or Are Having Difficulty Hiring**

n = 345



Source: PERF Survey

**Department** also partnered with a local HBCU, Tennessee State University, to develop a paid internship program. Through this internship opportunity, university seniors are allowed to allocate their last semester to attending the police academy as part of a paid internship. The department is hoping to expand this program to other colleges.

### Welcoming “Women in Blue”

Innovative efforts to recruit women into policing also focus on creating inclusive environments and working with institutions of higher education. The **Miami Beach, FL Police Department** (MBPD) began focusing on recruiting women because the number of women in the department was not meeting expectations. As part of this outreach, female officers go into the community and to local colleges and universities to send the message that policing is a profession for everyone.

The department also hosted a “Women in Blue Symposium” for potential applicants to speak to women in the agency. MBPD has also taken several steps to ensure that women feel welcome in the department. This includes the availability of a women’s leadership program and a wellness room available for women coming back to the force from maternity leave. As Chief Rick Clements said at the PERF conference, “It’s not just getting women into the organization, it’s what you do to offer support when women join the department.”

The **Tucson Police Department** has taken a similar approach. In January 2019, the department hosted a Women in Law Enforcement Open House, inviting women to learn more about the process of becoming an officer and providing an opportunity to meet women officers in the department.

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Credit: @LtJPegnato

## SURVEY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDENTS REVEALS WAYS TO IMPROVE RECRUITING

To attract a larger candidate pool, it is important for police agencies to understand what may keep some potential applicants from pursuing a career in law enforcement. *Interest in Police Patrol Careers: An Assessment of Potential Candidates' Impressions of the Police Recruitment, Selection, and Training Process* examines generational preferences, expectations and attitudes of the current applicant pool.<sup>48</sup>

This project, led by Dr. Charlie Scheer from the University of Southern Mississippi, in collaboration with Dr. Michael Rossler from Illinois State University and Chief Leonard Papania of the Gulfport, MS Police Department, examined various “fear points,” or possible barriers to a potential applicant’s desire to be a police patrol officer.

Dr. Scheer and his team surveyed almost 800 criminal justice students at five universities. A 100-question survey explored students’ knowledge of, expectations of, and feelings toward police recruitment, selection, and training. Results of the survey were categorized into three sections: the recruitment and selection process, the training and academy process, and the nature of police work itself.

### Family Members’ Objections

The study identified specific obstacles that prevent potential recruits from applying. Notably, 28% of African-American respondents agreed when asked if their family, friends, spouse, or significant other would *not* approve of them becoming a police patrol officer. In comparison, only about 10% of white participants agreed with that statement. Without family and community support, minority applicants may be hesitant to pursue a career in policing.

On a related point, 43% of African-American respondents disagreed with the statement, “In the community where I grew up, the police are well respected,” and 42% of African-American respondents agreed with the statement that officer-involved shootings occur frequently.

The study found that some fears of entering policing may be unfounded. For example, respondents in the study were not afraid of the recruitment process or the police academy. Students also did not express fear of police scrutiny or negative impressions of police. In fact, students expected it, considering the rise of social media and increased media coverage of police actions. Respondents did not believe their past behavior, including drug use and social media posts, would impede their ability to enter policing. The study also did not find any significant results about salary expectations, a common discussion point of why people may not pursue policing as a career.

### Students Need More Information About What Police Officers and Supervisors Do

The study showed a disparity between respondents’ desire for career advancement and their knowledge of what police leaders at different levels actually do. Nearly 40 percent of respondents reported wanting to become a police supervisor, but 44 percent reported not knowing



Dr. Charles Scheer, University of Southern Mississippi

48. Scheer, Charles; Michael Rossler; and Leonard Papania, *Interest in Police Patrol Careers: An Assessment of Potential Candidates' Impressions of the Police Recruitment, Selection, and Training Processes*, [https://aquila.usm.edu/fac\\_pubs/15651/](https://aquila.usm.edu/fac_pubs/15651/)

what a police sergeant does. These results suggest that recruiters should not only inform potential applicants about the responsibilities of patrol officers, but also should discuss the roles of sergeants, lieutenants, and captains. Similar information gaps were identified in respondents' knowledge of how the promotional process works in policing.

More than half of respondents to the recruiting survey said they would only be interested in police patrol as a ladder to a different career, and nearly 80 percent viewed police patrol work as a stepping stone to a federal law enforcement career. By communicating the potential for advancement opportunities, police agencies might encourage officers to stay with the department, rather than leaving for other opportunities.

Approximately 46 percent of respondents reported having little knowledge of what actually happens in a police academy. But 68 percent said that they were not afraid of attending a police academy, and 60 percent were not intimidated by the physical fitness training portion of the police academy. Overall, it appears that recruits lack key information about the reality of beginning a career in law enforcement, so they may not be well-prepared for the process. Therefore, it would be beneficial for police departments to review the information they provide to recruits, to ensure that it fully describes what is expected of recruits.

## Providing Mentors to Guide Applicants Through the Process

One way to increase communication would be through a more personal recruitment process. Assigning mentors to recruits would provide potential applicants with a direct line of information about the process. Approximately 70 percent of respondents agreed that having a mentor would make a difference in helping them choose a career in policing. As suggested at PERF's conference, recasting the police recruiter as someone who travels to potential recruits' homes and visits with their families could be an effective model. This practice could also open conversations between family members and police, help strengthen community relations, and build support from family members who may have been hesitant to encourage a career in law enforcement.

These results also show that the role of improving recruitment does not belong solely to the recruitment unit. How a police department and policing as a whole are viewed in a community, especially minority communities, can be a barrier for potential applicants who lack support from family and friends. Therefore, improving recruitment should be a department-wide effort, involving steps to improve community relations that may not be directly related to recruitment.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Laura Goodman, Police Advisor, Education for Critical Thinking; Ben Haiman, Executive Director of the Professional Development Bureau, Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC

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### Re-evaluating Physical Fitness Requirements

Physical fitness entry requirements may present a barrier for some women seeking to enter law enforcement. At the PERF conference, Laura Goodman, a former police executive who currently works for Education for Critical Thinking, an organization that promotes gender equity in law enforcement, said that physical requirements disqualify up to 75 percent of female recruits. These requirements should be reevaluated to ensure they test for skills that are actually needed in policing, Ms. Goodman said. Participants at the PERF meeting emphasized that reevaluating these requirements should not be viewed as “lowering standards,” but rather ensuring that standards accurately measure work-related abilities.

The **Tempe, AZ Police Department** works with people who did not pass physical fitness requirements (both male and female recruits), offering trained advisors to help them meet the requirements. The **Baltimore Police Department** hosted a free boot camp to help potential recruits meet the department’s physical fitness requirements. About 35 women attended the boot camp, which took place over a period of three months.

### Refining the Recruitment Process to Attract Today’s Applicants

In addition to expanding the candidate pool, participants at PERF’s conference discussed the importance of updating recruitment processes to better fit the needs of today’s job applicants. The discussions focused on streamlining the recruitment process, developing high-tech and “high-touch” processes, and providing a realistic view of policing during the process.

#### Streamlining the Recruitment Process

Today’s job market moves at a fast pace, with positions often being filled in a matter of weeks, especially in the private sector.<sup>49</sup> As a result, police agencies with lengthy recruitment periods may lose applicants to other agencies, or other professions, during the hiring process. In response, many agencies are looking to streamline their recruitment processes to get individuals hired faster, before they are offered other job opportunities.

*“From the recruiting standpoint, when the process is efficient, people know it’s going to be moving forward, which is very beneficial.”*

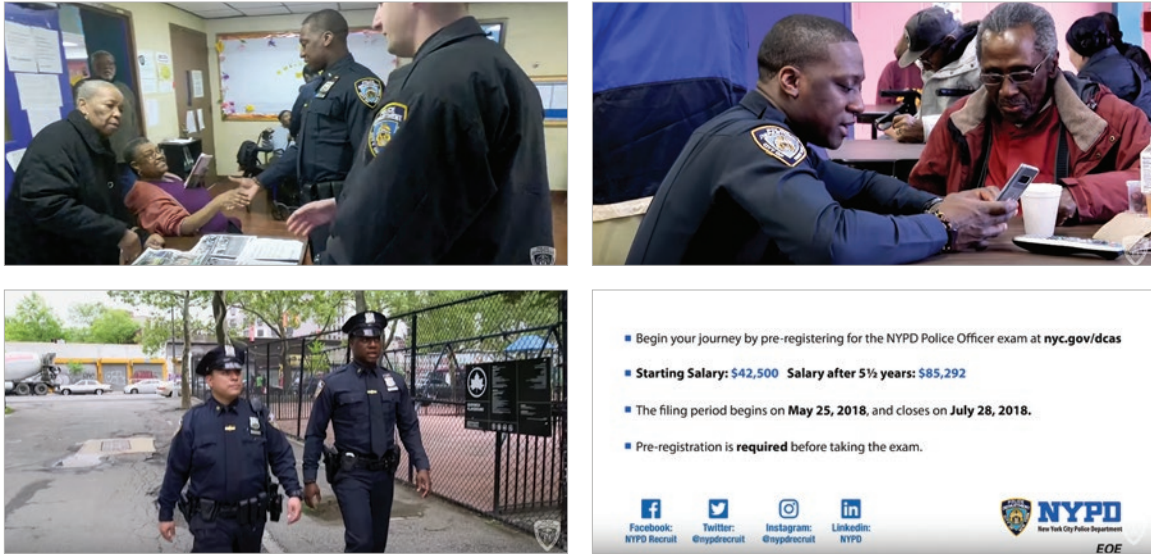
— **Ben Haiman, Executive Director of the Professional Development Bureau, Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC**

Previously, the hiring process took approximately 18 months in the **Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, DC**. The

49. According to a 2017 study by Glassdoor, the average length of the hiring process in the United States is 23.8 days; filling government jobs takes almost twice as long (53.8 days). See <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/how-long-should-interviews-take/>.



**Figure 15: NYPD Recruitment Video**



department succeeded in shortening the process to under four months. The department reviewed the entire process from start to finish, identifying the steps that took the longest amount of time and eliminating redundancies in the process. Steps that could occur simultaneously were consolidated. For example, medical reviews and background reviews now occur at the same time. Other components of the process were outsourced, including the polygraph and psychological evaluation, to keep the process moving without taxing internal resources.

### *A More “High-Tech” and “High-Touch” Recruitment Process*

Agencies are also increasingly looking to technology to improve their recruitment processes. By using high-tech solutions, agencies can streamline their processes and expand their reach to non-traditional candidates. For example, the **New York City Police Department** (NYPD) released a series of recruitment videos emphasizing the career pathways within the NYPD and highlighting officers working in the community. The videos all include

a graphic detailing important information about the recruitment process, and how to access NYPD’s social media accounts dedicated to recruitment.<sup>50</sup> (See Figure 15.)

Although integrating high-tech strategies into recruitment is important, it must be done purposefully and must be complemented with personal interactions. For example, Chief Chris Magnus of the **Tucson Police Department** discussed technical challenges his department faced at PERF’s 2018 Annual Meeting. The Tucson Police Department had an online application process for new officers, but discovered that up to 60 percent of the people who started filling out the application never finished it. The department fixed the errors that made the online application difficult or impossible to navigate.<sup>51</sup>

One way to ensure that a high-tech recruiting process does not lose applicants is by combining it with a high-touch approach. Communication is a critical component of any modern recruitment process in any industry. Job applicants expect consistent communications between themselves

50. NYPD. (2018, March 23). *NYPD Police Officer Recruitment 2018 – Video 1*. [Video File.] Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8Cp8JY27fQ>

51. Police Executive Research Forum, (June 2018). “Police Leaders Discuss Challenges in Recruiting at EPRF Town Hall Meeting in Nashville,” *Subject to Debate*, 32(1), [https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Subject\\_to\\_Debate/Debate2018/debate\\_2018\\_jun.pdf](https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Subject_to_Debate/Debate2018/debate_2018_jun.pdf)



LEFT TO RIGHT: Officer Kyle Bingham, Clearwater, FL Police Department; Assistant Chief Eric Kazmierczak, Tucson Police Department; and Special Agent Bernard Mensah, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

and members of the organization they are considering. Applicants want to know where they stand in the process, and to have their questions answered quickly and thoroughly.

This type of consistent, personalized engagement has not always been a hallmark of police recruitment practices. However, a number of agencies attending the PERF conference have shifted to a “high-touch” process that encourages consistent and open communication between applicants and recruiters. This engagement is vital to keeping potential recruits in the process.

*“I went to the academy in St. Petersburg, FL. The aspect that played a big role with me was that the Clearwater, FL Police Department’s recruiters were so personable. They had a very good relationship with me, and met my family. The personal relationship with members of the Clearwater Police Department was a big factor in my decision to work with them after graduating from the academy.”*

— **Officer Kyle Bingham, Clearwater, FL Police Department**

For the **Tucson Police Department**, this approach means having a designated recruiter committed to engaging applicants throughout the recruitment process. In describing the recruitment process, Assistant Chief Eric Kazmierczak said that the Tucson Police Department’s recruitment officer spends almost his entire day during open hiring periods talking with and engaging prospective applicants throughout the process. “He’s trying to do everything he can to talk to them and

keep them engaged and successful in the process,” Assistant Chief Kazmierczak said.

Special Agent Bernard Mensah of the U.S. Justice Department’s **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** echoed the need for communication with recruits, and added that recruits also want to talk to individuals in the field, not just recruiters. Applicants want an accurate picture of policing, including what their day-to-day job will look like, and what the quality of life is.

## Give Applicants a Realistic Picture of Policing

*“Before we recruit individuals, before we invest money, time, and effort into them, are we making sure they understand the whole picture? Are recruiters explaining to them what this job entails, and what will be required of them physically, mentally, and emotionally?”*

— **Officer Richard Gehricke, Greenville, SC Police Department**

*“I think the problem isn’t so much with recruitment, the problem is retaining the people you want to retain for a long time. Maybe the workplace is changing and that will always be different, but to some extent we know we’re losing people in part because of the disconnect between what the recruits thought the job would be and what it is.”*

— **Professor Christy Lopez, Georgetown University Law Center**



LEFT TO RIGHT: Officer Richard Gehricke, Greenville, SC Police Department; Professor Christy Lopez, Georgetown University Law Center

For years, police agencies have tried to entice potential recruits by emphasizing the more exciting aspects of the job. Recruitment videos often highlighted specialized units and the dramatic scenes and fast-paced action that these units can engage in. Although this work is a component of the job, such images do not provide a realistic portrayal of how most police officers spend most of their time. Nor do the videos offer the full picture about various career paths that exist in law enforcement.

Although being able to confidently engage with a suspect is a critical component of policing, agencies are recognizing that they must also convey the many other aspects of police work, if they hope to attract candidates who are interested in the entire job. This is especially true for non-traditional candidates who might not be inclined to consider a career in policing, but who might be attracted to community service and public engagement

opportunities that a police career provides. For these types of applicants, providing a more realistic view of the job can better support an agency's recruitment goals.

At PERF's workforce conference, two recruitment videos from the **Fayetteville, NC Police Department** were shown. An older video from 2007 was fast-paced and emphasized the enforcement aspects of law enforcement, including scenes of officers arresting individuals, and footage of training with firearms and police canines.<sup>52</sup> The newer video, from 2015, emphasized the department's community policing activities with the motto, "We Are One: Agency, Community, Family."<sup>53</sup>

After both videos were shown at the PERF conference, Officer Mary Wright of the Tucson Police Department said, "I always thought policing was an interesting profession, but it was hard to see myself personally in that profession. I didn't see a

Figure 16: Fayetteville Police Department Recruitment Videos: Left-2007, Right-2015



52. FPDPIO. (2007, September 6). *Fayetteville NC Police Recruitment Video*. [Video file.] Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VokBzsX17b8>

53. Join the Fayetteville Police Department. (2015, December 8). *FayPD*. [Video file.] Retrieved from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=0He-Nmpzxao](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=0He-Nmpzxao)

lot of people who looked like me. In the first video shown, it would have been quite difficult to see myself doing a lot of what those officers were doing. Based on the video, it would have been difficult for me to think I could have been excellent at this job.”

When police agencies do not provide applicants with a realistic picture of policing, qualified candidates may self-select out of the process. Additionally, it does a disservice to current and future officers who may be unprepared for the day-to-day activities of the job.

In addition to changing the messaging in their recruitment materials, agencies are introducing other ways for potential candidates to get a first-hand look at what policing in their communities entails. Internship opportunities, encouraging potential recruits to participate in ride-alongs, and Explorer and Cadet programs introduce potential applicants to the culture and expectations of policing.

Two Florida police departments are taking an innovative approach to providing potential recruits and the public with a realistic view of policing. The **Miami Police Department** and the **Clearwater Police Department** have officers who produce vlogs (video blogs) of their routine activities. These videos offer the public, including potential applicants, an inside view of policing that they otherwise might not have seen before joining a department.

The vlogs about the Clearwater Police Department demonstrate the typical calls that officers respond to. In one video, an officer responds to a woman who is upset that her neighbors had placed their bulk trash in front of her house for pick up. The vlog shows the officer speaking with all of the involved parties and peacefully resolving the incident.<sup>54</sup> The Miami Police Department’s vlogs focus on introducing the public to the department and giving some insight into the daily life in the department. In one video, an officer stops to talk to some recruits who just finished the academy to ask them about their first few days on the job, before doing a ride-along with another officer.<sup>55</sup>

*“I think our video blogs have a value to recruiting, because they show people what the job really is. We often used to get new people who came in without a great understanding of what the job really is.”*

—Chief Dan Slaughter, Clearwater, FL Police Department

*“The vlog’s purpose is to interact with the community. It helps to ‘personalize’ the police department.”*

—Deputy Chief Ronald Papier, Miami, FL Police Department

**Figure 17: Clearwater Police Department Vlog (left) and Miami Police Department Vlog (right)**



54. MikeyMo Vlogs. (2018, July 11). *Cop Vlogs EP 12: A Day in Patrol*, [Video File.] Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oqk0yw6lcAM>

55. Miami Police Department. (2018, September 19). *Miami Police VLOG: Patrolling with Ofc. Rodriguez*. [Video file.] Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTg1055iHDc>

**Figure 18: Strategies Employed by Agencies to Increase Retention**

<b>PERF Survey Results: Strategies Employed by Agencies to Increase Retention</b>	
<i>n = 412</i>	
	<b>% of Responding Agencies that Offer the Benefit</b>
Professional development opportunities	85%
Increased overtime opportunities	60%
Opportunities to work temporarily in a variety of units/assignments	57%
Pay increase at service milestones	56%
Pay increase for college degree	49%
Relaxed residency requirements	41%
Participation in DROP (Deferred Retirement Option Program)	26%
More flexible scheduling systems (e.g., not based strictly on seniority)	25%
Offering promotional examinations on a more frequent basis	25%
Reducing time-in-grade requirements for eligibility for promotion	18%
Flexible retirement/pension options	14%
Other	13%

## Retaining the Officers You Recruit

Once you have successfully recruited and hired candidates, the question becomes, how do you keep them? Many police agencies are discovering the traditional employment model—the promise of a steady job with good fringe benefits and a pension after 25 years—is not enough to keep today’s workers from leaving for another police department—or another profession.

Police officials at the PERF conference said that they are working to retain good officers by providing the types of benefits that today’s officers care about, such as the following:

- Professional development opportunities,
- Flexible schedules that allow employees to maintain the work-life balance they desire,
- Wellness programs such as physical fitness facilities, and
- Providing a healthy “culture” in the workplace, in which employees feel that their work is valued and they are treated fairly and with respect by their bosses and their colleagues.

**PERF’s survey of police departments included questions about what types of benefit programs agencies offer in order to retain officers. Some of the strategies employed by agencies did not match what rank-and-file officers at PERF’s meeting emphasized as being important.**

For example, 60 percent of agencies responding to PERF’s survey said they offer increased overtime opportunities as a retention incentive, but some of the officers at PERF’s conference said that overtime opportunities were not attractive to them. On the other hand, officers expressed interest in flexible scheduling systems, which help them to devote time to family responsibilities and otherwise keep a desired work-life balance. But only 25 percent of agencies responding to PERF’s survey said they offer this incentive.

**Thus, it is important that police and sheriffs’ departments ensure that their retention strategies are in line with what their employees actually want and expect from an employer.**



LEFT TO RIGHT: Deputy Chief Ronald Papier, Miami Police Department; Officer Jasmine Castillo, Greenville, SC Police Department; and Executive Assistant Chief Michael Kurtenbach, Phoenix, AZ Police Department

## Broadening Officers' Experiences through Professional Development Opportunities

*"I like variety. I don't like to feel like I'm stuck in one department or topic or category. I like to branch out and I like growth, so the opportunity to grow in the department is really important to me."*

— **Officer Jasmine Castillo, Greenville, SC Police Department**

When asked what they like about their job, many officers at PERF's conference said they appreciate the variety of the daily work; some said that "no two days are the same." However, even though the day-to-day calls may vary, the basic structure of the job does not change greatly, especially for patrol officers. Officers said they look for opportunities to develop their skill sets and be exposed to other areas of the department, outside their current assignment.

Many agencies recognize the importance of professional development opportunities to officer retention. Approximately 85 percent of respondents to PERF's survey said their agency employs professional development opportunities as a means of increasing retention (see Figure 18).

Some agencies are implementing formal, wide-ranging professional development programs designed to boost retention.

### *Phoenix Officers Can Spend 80 Hours Per Year in Temporary Assignments*

The **Phoenix Police Department** created a career development program that gives officers a block

of time each year to experience different areas of the department. Each member receives a bank of 80 hours annually that can be used to "shadow" a fellow employee or work a temporary assignment in a unit outside their regular assignment. Depending on staffing needs, the 80 hours can be used all at once or broken up throughout the year.

Phoenix Executive Assistant Chief Michael Kurtenbach said that building this program was an administrative challenge, because it adds a new layer of complication to scheduling officers' time. However, because of the difficulty the department was having with retention, officials decided it was worth the effort and ensured that those who would be impacted the most—sergeants—would be supported by their lieutenants and commanders.

*"We're facing the same thing that everybody is facing: How do we maintain the officers that we currently have in a Phoenix uniform? How do we leave them satisfied believing that there are opportunities for professional growth?"*

— **Executive Assistant Chief Michael Kurtenbach, Phoenix Police Department**

### *Individual Development Plans for Police Officers in Tempe*

The **Tempe, AZ Police Department** created a system of annual individual development plans for every employee, from patrol officers to the chief of police. The program begins with an analysis of each employee's education and training, experience in taking various roles in the department, and areas of expertise. Then, each employee answers a set of questions designed to identify their personal

**Figure 19: Tempe, AZ Police Department Development Plan Guide**

**TEMPE POLICE DEPARTMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN GUIDE**

The development plan serves as a living and guiding document for individual employees to strengthen their current performance and prepare them to strengthen their contribution in the future. The plan is created by the employee and with the input from the direct supervisor.

- Formal education
- Professional training – for broader leadership & management
- Boards, project teams & commissions – include role
- Areas of existing expertise
- Skills I must enhance with this plan
- Skills to add to my professional portfolio
- What makes me uncomfortable?
- What do I read – how frequently for periodicals?
- How have I made my peers successful?
- What is my leadership ethos?
- What is my reputation?

development goals. (See Figure 19 for a list of elements and questions included in the individual development plans.) The employee then reviews the plan with his or her direct supervisor. Not only does the plan guide employees in understanding what they want to get out of their current position, it also enables supervisors to take on the role of coach and mentor more effectively. Employees revise their plans on an annual basis.

In asking employees questions like “What is my leadership ethos?” and “What makes me uncomfortable?”, the Tempe Police Department encourages a culture that allows officers to have frank discussions with their supervisors about their current work and their career goals. Supervisors can then work to address any issues raised and help employees to achieve the kind of success that they envision. Presumably, employees who are confident and happy in their work will be less likely to search for new employment in another department or another career.

### *Partnering with a Law School to Broaden Officers’ Experiences*

The **Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, DC** (MPD) is working to broaden the experience of its members, including new hires and veteran personnel.

For new hires, the *Police for Tomorrow Fellowship* is open to recruit officers enrolled in the academy, recent academy graduates, and recent civilian personnel with less than one year of experience.<sup>56</sup> Officers attend monthly lectures organized by the Georgetown University Law Center Program on Innovative Policing, covering social issues and policing in Washington, DC. For example, topics include juvenile brain development, gentrification and its impact on communities, and implicit bias. The program allows officers to interact with guest speakers and Georgetown law faculty and students. *Police for Tomorrow* fellows also can participate in a mentoring program with senior MPD leaders, and as part of the program, they each develop a project to benefit the community.

56. See “Police for Tomorrow Fellowship,” Metropolitan Police Department. <https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/police-for-tomorrow>



LEFT TO RIGHT: Officer Emma Hicks, Metropolitan DC Police Department; Chief Michael Trail, Lansdale, PA Police Department

By targeting newly hired officers and recruits still in the academy, *Police for Tomorrow* sends an early message that exposing personnel to a variety of experiences and professional development opportunities is a priority of MPD. Early feedback suggests that the program is having a positive impact on participants’ interest in continuing a career in policing with the MPD.

*“These opportunities for professional development early in your career are not common. In a lot of departments, training and professional development opportunities tend to become available only after several years of service.”*

— Officer Emma Hicks, Metropolitan DC Police Department

MPD also is expanding its focus on professional development for experienced officers who are not eligible for the *Police for Tomorrow* program. The department is looking to launch a Professional Development Institute, which will provide officers with the opportunity to take elective classes at its academy. The goal is to convey a message to officers that they can return to the academy for purposes that go beyond routine mandatory training. By providing electives, MPD will give officers opportunities to select classes that support their career aspirations, and invest in their own future with the department.

### Strategies for Smaller Departments

Providing professional development opportunities can be difficult for law enforcement agencies because of budget and resource limitations. These difficulties are even greater in small and mid-size agencies that may not have as many specialized

units that give officers opportunities to learn new skills. For these agencies, a different approach may be necessary.

Officials of smaller police departments who spoke at PERF’s conference said that their focus is to build excellence into everything they do. “We’re a 27-officer police agency,” said Police Chief Michael Trail of Lansdale, PA. “Our goal is to create value in the work that we do every day, and encourage our officers to embrace that, so they will want to stay.”

Career progression may look different in small and medium-size agencies. For example, the **Roanoke County, VA Police Department** implemented a skill-based pay system that allows officers to progress through four police officer levels. Each level comes with a small salary increase. Although officers remain at the same rank, they are able to progress within the rank.

Departments should highlight these types of innovative career opportunities and ensure that prospective applicants are aware of them, because candidates may consider the career advancement options in agencies of various sizes.

## Supporting Employees’ Needs for Work-Life Balance

In policing and other professions, workers are looking to achieve a healthy balance between their work life and their personal life. Finding this balance can be difficult in policing, partly because of the nature of shift work. In addition, promoting work-life balance can go against some long-held traditions of policing, such as the notion that younger officers need to “put in their time” before they can be granted privileges such as weekends



off. In many cities, seniority-based contractual provisions dictate scheduling.

In an effort to balance the needs of the department with the needs of its personnel, some agencies have begun to reevaluate their shift schedules. The **Arlington County, VA Police Department**, for example, has developed a shift schedule that allows officers more control over when they work. The shift schedule is a 28-day cycle in which officers work 10.5 hours a day. Officers work five days on/four days off, five days on/four days off, and then five days on/five days off. The cycle results in officers not having the same days of the week off permanently, but rather having a rotation.

**This schedule means that officers work about 16 days each month and that every officer, regardless of seniority, gets a full weekend off twice a month.**

*“One of the things we do that helps is our unique schedule, even though it is not the most effective for deployment of resources. But we need to be mindful that a lot of people want time off and want to commute less.”*

— **Chief Jay Farr, Arlington County, VA Police Department**

The department switched to this shift schedule approximately 10 years ago. One of the key benefits of the schedule is that it addresses the difficult commute for officers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, which was one of the biggest barriers the department identified in trying to recruit officers. Chief Jay Farr acknowledged that this program might not work in every jurisdiction. Cities with higher crime, for example, may not have the same flexibility to allow this type of shift schedule.

The **Roanoke County, VA Police Department** also configures its shift schedule in a way that is designed to meet officers’ needs. Day-shift officers work shifts of 8.5 hours, five days a week; those on the evening/midnight shifts work four days for 10 hours. Younger officers tend to be assigned to the evening/midnight shifts, but the department tries to offer individuals the opportunity to change shifts about twice a year. Officers then work the same shift for six months at a time,

which provides consistency and helps officers get used to their schedules.

Additionally, the department allows officers to work together to set their own schedules within their assigned shifts for a 20-day period. Officers work as a team to determine which days they will work and have off for that 20-day period. Sergeants, however, ensure that they have the appropriate number of officers to staff each shift. Flexibility and giving officers a say in their own scheduling are proving to be popular with many officers.

*“If I want to work six days in a row and then take six days off in a row and we meet minimum staffing, I can do that. It works for me, especially since I’m on a permanent midnight shift. Therefore, it helps me stay on my sleeping schedule a little bit better and retain a better balance with my personal life, which is very important to me. This was something that drew me to the Roanoke County Police Department.”*

— **Officer Kayla Lambert, Roanoke County, VA Police Department**

Another factor in work-life balance is overtime. Overtime opportunities in policing traditionally have been highly valued as a means of making additional money on top of one’s base salary, but many of today’s younger officers do not see overtime as an appealing option, according to officers who attended PERF’s conference. As Officer Mary Wright of the Tucson Police Department explained, many officers have a variety of interests and responsibilities outside of their jobs in policing.

*“I started this job as a single mom. It’s always been a matter of time management and making time for what’s important. But I also serve on a board for a community health center in my town. And I volunteer at my daughter’s school. So that’s why I like to have some free time—to develop different skills and not just ‘be a cop.’”*

— **Officer Mary Wright, Tucson Police Department**



LEFT TO RIGHT: Officer Mary Wright, Tucson Police Department; Chief Sylvia Moir, Tempe, AZ Police Department

## Promoting and Facilitating Officer Wellness

Officer wellness is a critical consideration for policing agencies for many reasons, including job satisfaction and retention of officers. By focusing on officers' health and well-being, agencies can address some of the reasons officers may leave the profession. The stresses of policing can take a significant toll on the physical and mental health of officers. By giving officers resources to help them build their resiliency, agencies may retain officers who otherwise might leave policing due to disability or move to a different career.

The **Miami Beach, FL Police Department** recognizes the role officer wellness plays in retaining officers. Chief Rick Clements noted that it is important to address the needs of officers, especially following a critical incident. To reduce the stigma that often is attached to psychological counseling, the department changed its policy to *require* officers involved in a critical incident to meet with a psychologist in the first five days following the incident. The officer also must meet with the psychologist three months after the incident, and again 12 months after the incident. Department officials hope that this schedule of check-ins will increase the health and well-being of officers, as well as their long-term retention.

In **Tempe, AZ, the police department** recognizes the difficulty for women officers of transitioning back into the workforce after having a baby. The department created a quiet room that returning mothers can use as a lactation room or anyone can use for other wellness activities.

*"The room that we built can serve as a quiet room or lactation room. It is a calm, clean, comfortable place where our folks can care for their kids, or they can engage in meditation to build their mindfulness—these are a few of the human performance efforts that we're working on in Tempe."*

—Chief Sylvia Moir, Tempe, AZ Police Department

## Cultural Factors Impacting Retention

As in any workplace, the organizational culture in a police agency and the quality of supervision can impact retention. When agencies promote themselves as community-oriented and supportive of their workforce, their actions must mirror these sentiments. If a department's internal culture is not inclusive and welcoming to new employees, it may become difficult to retain officers.

For many officers, this internal culture is set by their immediate supervisors. In fact, some research shows that employees' dissatisfaction with their supervisors is one of the main catalysts of employee turnover.<sup>57, 58</sup> Therefore, it is important to ensure that supervisors, particularly first-line supervisors, have the proper resources and training to ensure that an agency's stated values of supporting employees are reflected in its practices. In this way, the department can create an environment in which officers want to stay for some length of time.

57. Schwantes, Marcel. (2018, December 1). "Why Do Employees Quit on Their Bosses? Because of 5 Common Reasons Still Not Addressed, Says New Research." *Inc.*, <https://www.inc.com/marcel-schwantes/why-do-people-quit-their-jobs-exactly-new-research-points-finger-at-5-common-reasons.html>

58. Lagunas, Kyle. (2012, July 17). "5 Employee Retention Strategies for a High Performance Environment." *TLNT*, <https://www.tlnt.com/5-employee-retention-strategies-for-a-high-performance-environment/>

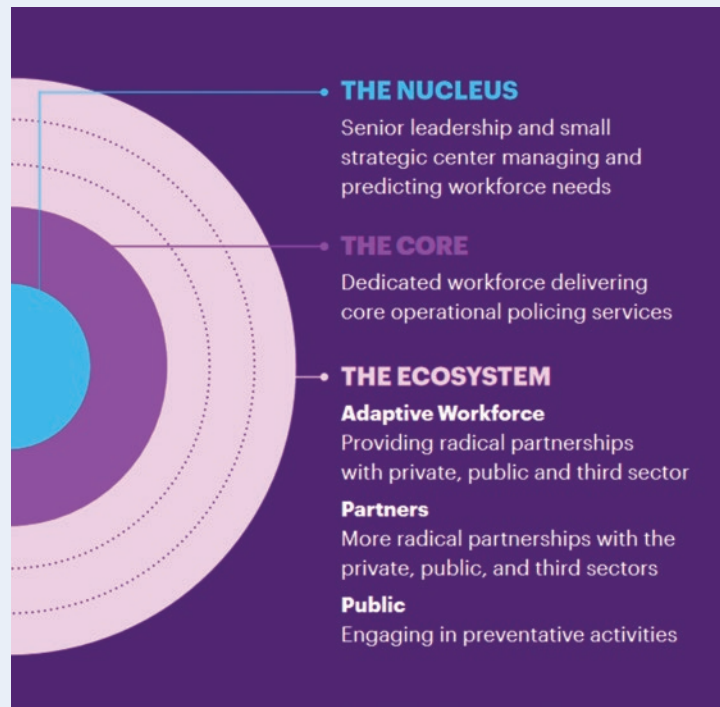
## REIMAGINING THE POLICE WORKFORCE

Policing and public safety are changing constantly and rapidly, due to new technologies, new threats, new workforce skills and desires, and new challenges from budget cuts and the political landscape. In recognition of this shift, Accenture, a global management consulting and professional services firm, sought to explore what the police workforce of the future may look like. Law enforcement professionals from six countries (Australia, France, Germany, Singapore, the United States, and the United Kingdom) were surveyed to inform this new vision.<sup>59</sup>

Through the information gained in this survey, Accenture developed a vision for the future police workforce in its report, *Reimagining the Police Workforce*.<sup>60</sup> It includes:

- A nucleus with senior leadership responsible for managing and providing strategic leadership;
- A core consisting of permanent officers and personnel, much like the police of today; and
- An ecosystem of additional workforce members, as well as partners and the public that will supplement the core force.

Overall, Accenture found that flexibility and agility are key to the future police workforce. While policing has traditionally been presented and championed as a lifelong, career commitment,



that model may no longer work with the opportunities, demands, and needs of those entering the workforce. Instead, agencies may want to focus on other methods of boosting their ecosystem of partners. For example, volunteers or individuals from the private sector may want to work for a short time in a policing environment to give back to their community. While these individuals will not be able to go into the field as officers, agencies can utilize their skills in other ways to help free up officers to focus on their jobs.

59. For more information and to read the full report, see: <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/public-service/reimagining-police-workforce-future-vision>

60. Slessor, James; Phillips, Rachel; and Cassidy, Natalie Louise. (2018). *Reimagining the Police Workforce*, Accenture, [https://www.accenture.com/\\_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/DotCom/Images/Local/us-en/43/Accenture-Workforce-for-the-Future-PoV.pdf#zoom=50](https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/DotCom/Images/Local/us-en/43/Accenture-Workforce-for-the-Future-PoV.pdf#zoom=50)

# CONCLUSION:

## THE RECRUITING CRISIS ISN'T ONLY ABOUT RECRUITING

**The policing profession is at a crossroads, looking** at major changes in the very nature of what officers do. To mention a few of these changes:

- Nearly every major type of crime, from drug trafficking to grand theft, is being committed in new ways, facilitated by computers and the Internet. Many investigative strategies from a decade ago are outdated.
- Police officers find themselves responding to thousands of calls that are not really about crime, but rather are about social problems like mental illness, drug addiction, and homelessness.
- The “Ferguson effect” continues to linger as a cloud over policing, dampening the public’s trust.

**In many police departments, there is another issue that is interrelated to these challenges: they are having trouble recruiting enough officers to replace the ones who are retiring.**

In city after city, police departments are operating below their authorized staffing levels, not for lack of funding, but because they cannot find enough qualified candidates to fill the vacant positions. Fewer people are applying to become police officers. Many officers resign after just a few years on the job. And the traditional benefits of a job in policing, such as a good pension, a take-home car, and lucrative overtime hours, are not attractive to many of today’s young people entering the workforce.

Many people entering the workforce today are more interested in flexible work schedules that allow them to find the best balance between work and their family responsibilities and private lives. But police work does not lend itself well to “working from home” or allowing employees to choose their own hours, because of the constant need to ensure that every patrol shift, every day, is covered.

If the crisis went no farther than a need to attract more applicants, there might be a relatively simple, albeit expensive, solution: Just increase officers’ pay and benefits to the point where the supply of new recruits meets the demand. But there is a deeper, more important shift occurring that complicates the situation: **Today’s police agencies must hire officers with a much wider array of skills, talents, knowledge, and experience than was required in the past. For example:**

- Today’s officers must be fluent in the language of computers and technology.
- They must be interested in and capable of performing work that often seems more like social work than law enforcement.
- At the same time, they must be ready to do all the traditional work of policing, including making arrests, investigating crimes, working with communities to prevent crime, and protecting the public when natural disasters or man-made catastrophes occur.

**So we need to rethink the old approaches.  
Who will be the police officers of the future?  
Where will we find them? And how can we  
appeal to the next generation?**

Fortunately, PERF has found that many agencies are already developing solutions. This report describes police and sheriffs' departments' innovative strategies for recruiting a wider range of officer candidates:

- Some departments are “going upstream” in the recruiting process—creating programs like Police Cadets, Explorers, and internship opportunities that show young people what policing is about. Hopefully, in a few years, many of them will be joining a police agency. These “farm systems” are similar to colleges' efforts to recruit star athletes from high schools.
- Many departments are developing new recruitment strategies, such as “Women in Blue” events in which female officers encourage women to consider a career in policing.
- To recruit minority officers, some departments are incorporating recruiting activities into a much wider range of community events.
- Some departments are offering new recruitment incentives, such as signing bonuses, or are relaxing policies against tattoos or other rules that reduce the applicant pool.
- Many departments are working to speed up the process of becoming a police officer, and are reviewing online application procedures

to ensure that they work smoothly and do not create blockages that discourage applicants.

- To retain current officers, departments are striving to identify what employees want, and to the extent possible, to give it to them. For example, some departments have found ways to ensure that even the newest recruits have some weekends off every month. Other agencies are focusing on providing professional development opportunities that expand officers' skills and experiences.

In short, policing in the United States is facing a crisis. It is unclear who will be the police officers and sheriffs' deputies of the future. The old ways of recruiting and hiring are being replaced by innovative, streamlined approaches. Money is no longer a strong enough motivator; young people want a higher quality of life to match the job. And the job itself is changing; being a crime-fighter is still important but it's not enough. We need police recruits who see the importance of their new role as street workers confronting the social ills of drug addiction, mental illness, and homelessness. And we need recruits who understand cybercrime and changes in how crimes are committed.

So we need to redouble our efforts and find new ways to encourage candidates with the right stuff—and hold on to those we have. PERF hopes that this report will serve as a guide to identifying your specific recruiting problems, and developing solutions.

# PARTICIPANTS:

## “THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF POLICING AND THE POLICE WORKFORCE” CONFERENCE ■ DECEMBER 4, 2018 ■ WASHINGTON, DC

*Participants' titles and affiliations are those at the time of the meeting.*

**Colonel Franklin Adderley**  
Broward County (FL) Sheriff's Office

**Patrolman Jason Alava**  
Wilmington (DE) Police Department

**Director Randolph Alles**  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security,  
United States Secret Service

**Inspector of Police Kevin Amberg**  
AMTRAK Police Department

**Chief Steve Anderson**  
Metropolitan Nashville (TN)  
Police Department

**Captain Afsoon Ansari**  
Colorado State Patrol

**Assistant Chief Barry Archie**  
Hampton (VA) Police Division

**Assistant Chief (ret.)  
Kristine Arneson**  
Education for Critical Thinking

**Officer Derek Austin**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Police Department

**Chief Barry Barnard**  
Prince William County (VA)  
Police Department

**Chief Ramon Batista**  
Mesa (AZ) Police Department

**Assistant Chief Lori Bender**  
Houston (TX) Police Department

**Major Shawn Bennett**  
Fairfax County (VA) Police Department

**Lieutenant Mark Benton**  
Gloucester Township (NJ)  
Police Department

**Officer Kyle Bingham**  
Clearwater (FL) Police Department

**Chief of Staff Chad Bingham**  
Jefferson County (CO) Sheriff's Office

**Sergeant Brad Blout**  
Melbourne (FL) Police Department

**Staff Inspector Joseph Bologna**  
Philadelphia (PA) Police Department

**Chief Deputy Patrick Bonner**  
Dallas County (TX)  
Sheriff's Department

**Director Erik Bourgerie**  
Colorado Peace Officer Standards and  
Training (POST)

**Chief of Staff John Bowman**  
Montgomery (AL) Police Department

**Sergeant Jeffrey Brauning**  
Atlanta (GA) Police Department

**Director of Continuing Studies  
Jessica Bress**  
Metropolitan DC Police Department

**Deputy Chief/Acting Lt. Colonel Sheree Briscoe**  
Baltimore (MD) Police Department

**Chief Victor Brito**  
Rockville (MD) City Police Department

**Director of Training Josh Bronson**  
International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators

**Professor Rosa Brooks**  
Georgetown University Law Center

**Deputy Chief Thomas Browne**  
Burlington (MA) Police Department

**Sergeant Amanda Buckley**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Police Department

**Officer Mary Jane Bueno**  
South Bend (IN) Police Department

**Chief Eddie Buffalo, Jr.**  
Elizabeth City (NC) Police Department

**Police Officer Ashley Buxton**  
Arlington County (VA) Police Department

**Sheriff Timothy Cameron**  
St. Mary's County (MD) Sheriff's Office

**Chief David Carter**  
University of Texas Police Department

**Officer Jasmine Castillo**  
Greenville (SC) Police Department

**Director of Recruitment Christine Chan**  
Suffolk County (MA) Sheriff's Department

**Brett Chapman**  
U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice

**Officer Terry Cherry**  
Charleston (SC) Police Department

**Sergeant Daniel Claxton**  
Harrisonburg (VA) Police Department

**Corporal David Clements**  
Burlington (VT) Police Department

**Chief Richard Clements**  
Miami Beach (FL) Police Department

**Lieutenant Diana Clevenger**  
Mesa (AZ) Police Department

**Lieutenant Jason Cokinos**  
Montgomery County (MD) Police Department

**Sergeant Daniel Conley**  
Hudson (NH) Police Department

**Captain Tashawn Counts**  
Wilmington (DE) Police Department

**Lieutenant Andy Crawford**  
Rockville (MD) City Police Department

**Assistant Director Kenneth Croke**  
U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives

**Inspector Mark Crowell**  
Waterloo (ON) Regional Police Service

**Chief John Cueto**  
Duck (NC) Police Department

**Salah Czapary**  
Metropolitan DC Police Department

**Chief Antonio DeVaul**  
Takoma Park (MD) Police Department

**Chief Michael Diekhoff**  
Bloomington (IN) Police Department

**Chief Inspector Cynthia Dorsey**  
Philadelphia (PA) Police Department

**Chief Neil Dryfe**  
Cheshire (CT) Police Department

**Executive Director Mark DuPont**  
National Maritime Law Enforcement Academy

**Officer Lily Duran**  
Tempe (AZ) Police Department

**Assistant Chief Seth Ellington**  
Kaysville (UT) Police Department

**Inspector Matthew Elzinga**  
Kalamazoo (MI) Department of Public Safety

**Commander Ralph Ennis**  
Metropolitan DC Police Department

**Lieutenant Marc Erme**  
Montgomery County (MD) Police Department

**CorporalCarolynne Erwin**  
Burlington (VT) Police Department

**Social Science Analyst Sarah Estill**  
U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Office

**Major Jeff Evans**  
University of Delaware Police Department

**Deputy Director William Fallon**  
Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers

**Captain Shahram Fard**

Alexandria (VA) Police Department

**Major Esther Farmer**

Miami (FL) Police Department

**Chief Jay Farr**

Arlington County (VA)  
Police Department

**Chief Robert Ferullo, Jr.**

Woburn (MA) Police Department

**Chief Ernest Finley**

Montgomery (AL) Police Department

**Chief Strategy Officer****Christopher Fisher**

Seattle (WA) Police Department

**Sergeant Latoya Flanigan**

Elizabeth City (NC) Police Department

**Lieutenant James Floyd**

Plainville (MA) Police Department

**Deputy Assistant Director****Peter Forcelli**

U.S. Department of Justice,  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms,  
and Explosives

**Chief Operating Officer****George Forman**

Palm Beach County (FL) Sheriff's Office

**Chief (ret.) James Fox**

Axon

**Lieutenant Greg Fried**

Fairfax County (VA) Police Department

**Kathy Fulnecky**

South Bend (IN) Police Department

**Chief Gary Gacek**

Concord (NC) Police Department

**Captain Lance Gambrel**

Montgomery (AL) Police Department

**Deputy Chief Marc Garth Green**

Seattle (WA) Police Department

**Major T.J. Geary**

University of South Carolina  
Division of Law Enforcement  
and Safety

**Officer Richard Gehrlicke**

Greenville (SC) Police Department

**Deputy Chief Stacie Gibbs**

Atlanta (GA) Police Department

**Director James Gibney**

Guidehouse

**Commander-Lieutenant****Detective Patrick Glynn**

Quincy (MA) Police Department

**Major Lisa Goelz**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC)  
Police Department

**Hilda Gonzalez**

Palm Beach County (FL) Sheriff's Office

**Police Advisor Laura Goodman**

Education for Critical Thinking

**CEO Scott Greenwood**

Greenwood & Streicher, LLC

**Major Samir Guerrero**

Miami Beach (FL) Police Department

**Captain Kyle Haas**

Palm Beach County (FL) Sheriff's Office

**Chief Jeffrey Hadley**

Chatham County (GA)  
Police Department

**Executive Director Ben Haiman**

Metropolitan DC Police Department

**Chief Howard Hall**

Roanoke County (VA)  
Police Department

**Assistant Chief Russ Hamill**

Montgomery County (MD)  
Police Department

**Lietenant Jason Hapner**

Indio (CA) Police Department

**Major Dawn Harman**

Prince William County (VA)  
Police Department

**Assistant Chief Mike Harmon**

Cedar Park (TX) Police Department

**Commissioner Shawn Harris**

Mount Vernon (NY) Police Department

**Captain Herbert Hasenpusch**

Anne Arundel County (MD)  
Police Department

**Senior Human Resources****Specialist Kendra Heckstall**

Maryland-National Capital Park  
and Planning Commission

**Captain (Ret.) Ashley Heiberger**

Bethlehem (PA) Police Department

**Chief Robert Hertman**

Wallkill (NY) Police Department

**Officer Emma Hicks**

Metropolitan DC Police Department



**Chief Anthony Holloway**  
St. Petersburg (FL) Police Department

**Chief David Huchler**  
Metropolitan Washington Airports  
Authority Police Department

**Deputy Chief Damian Huggins**  
Metropolitan Nashville (TN)  
Police Department

**Chief of Staff John Iorio**  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security,  
Customs and Border Protection

**Lieutenant Gregg Jager**  
South Burlington (VT)  
Police Department

**Captain Dave Johnson**  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC)  
Police Department

**Colonel Alexander Jones**  
Baltimore County (MD)  
Police Department

**Captain C. Thomas Jordan**  
Montgomery County (MD)  
Police Department

**Lieutenant Jonathan Josey II**  
Philadelphia (PA) Police Department

**Chief Laurence Juriga**  
North Miami (FL) Police Department

**Chief, Recruitment  
David Kamentz**  
U.S. Department of Justice,  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms,  
and Explosives

**Assistant Chief Eric Kazmierczak**  
Tucson (AZ) Police Department

**Chief Douglas Keen**  
Manassas City (VA) Police Department

**Deputy Chief David Kiddle**  
Grand Rapids (MI) Police Department

**Molly Kimpel**  
Waterloo (ON) Regional Police Service

**First Sergeant Saemi Kitchens**  
Prince William County (VA)  
Police Department

**Sergeant Clifton Knight**  
Metropolitan Nashville (TN)  
Police Department

**Commander Rudy Komisza**  
Long Beach (CA) Police Department

**Anna Kuntz**  
Guidehouse

**Executive Assistant Chief  
Michael Kurtenbach**  
Phoenix (AZ) Police Department

**Chief Brian Kyes**  
Chelsea (MA) Police Department

**Captain Shawn Laffey**  
Goose Creek (SC) Police Department

**Officer Kayla Lambert**  
Roanoke County (VA)  
Police Department

**Captain Brian Larkin**  
Manassas City (VA) Police Department

**Major Gun Lee**  
Fairfax County (VA) Police Department

**Inspector Roland Lee Jr.**  
Philadelphia (PA) Police Department

**Supervisory Special Agent  
Avatar LeFevre**  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

**Lieutenant Pete Lenhoff**  
University of Delaware  
Police Department

**Town Manager John Lestitian**  
Riverdale Park, Maryland

**Lieutenant Matt Lethin**  
San Mateo (CA) Police Department

**Melisa Ley**  
Tucson (AZ) Police Department

**Chief Andrew Lipson**  
Brookline (MA) Police Department

**Mark Logan**  
University of Phoenix

**President/CEO Warren Loomis**  
Versaterm

**Professor Christy Lopez**  
Georgetown University Law Center

**Lieutenant Kevin Lutz**  
Camden County (NJ)  
Police Department

**Chief David MacDonald**  
Newton (MA) Police Department

**Lieutenant John Madison**  
Dallas (TX) Police Department

**Deputy Director Kristen Mahoney**  
U.S. Department of Justice,  
Bureau of Justice Assistance

**Ryan Malo**  
Georgetown University Law Center

**Director of Engagements  
Linda Mansour**  
U.S. Department of Homeland  
Security, Office for State and Local Law  
Enforcement

**Officer Patrick Marsch**  
Atlanta (GA) Police Department

**Captain Milton Martin**  
Houston (TX) Police Department

**Major Don Martin**  
Oklahoma City (OK) Police Department

**Leonard Matarese**  
Center for Public Safety Management

**Captain Pamela McAdoo-Rogers**  
Greensboro (NC) Police Department

**Human Resources Director  
Montique McClary**  
Elizabeth City (NC) Police Department

**Captain Aaron McCraney**  
Los Angeles (CA) Police Department

**Chief of Operations  
Joseph McGrann**  
Metropolitan (NY) Transportation  
Authority Police Department

**Chief Deputy Robert McMahan**  
Douglas County (CO) Sheriff's Office

**Chief Darryl McSwain**  
Maryland-National Capital Park Police

**Master Police Officer  
Christopher Meadows**  
Harrisonburg (VA) Police Department

**Captain Rebecca Meeks**  
Waynesboro (VA) Police Department

**HR Generalist Kellie Melba**  
University of Delaware  
Police Department

**Officer Daniel Melendez**  
Miami Beach (FL) Police Department

**Deputy Michael Mendelsohn**  
Jefferson County (CO) Sheriff's Office

**Special Agent Bernard Mensah**  
U.S. Department of Justice,  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms,  
and Explosives

**Chief Ken Miller**  
Greenville (SC) Police Department

**Officer John Mirabella**  
Hudson (NH) Police Department

**Sergeant Tonatte Mitchell**  
Charleston (SC) Police Department

**Chief Sylvia Moir**  
Tempe (AZ) Police Department

**Chief Research Officer  
Nick Montgomery**  
Benchmark Analytics

**Chief Sarah Mooney**  
West Palm Beach (FL)  
Police Department

**Special Assistant Clare Morell**  
U.S. Department of Justice,  
Office on Violence Against Women

**Chief David Morris**  
Riverdale Park (MD) Police Department

**Deputy Sheriff Gerard Muschette**  
St. Mary's County (MD) Sheriff's Office

**Sheriff Benny N. Napoleon**  
Wayne County (MI) Sheriff's Office

**Lieutenant Darrell Nichols**  
Fairfax County (VA) Police Department

**Sergeant Bill Nieberding**  
Rockville (MD) City Police Department

**Chief Sol Oberg**  
Kaysville (UT) Police Department

**Lieutenant Maureen O'Brien**  
Grand Rapids (MI) Police Department

**Captain Brian O'Hara**  
Newark (NJ) Police Department

**Sergeant Sean Olson**  
Hampton (VA) Police Division

**Police Personnel Manager  
Rhonda Ostis**  
Anne Arundel County (MD)  
Police Department

**HR Administrator Teri Overbey**  
Mesa, Arizona

**Lieutenant Paris Owens**  
Gainesville (FL) Police Department

**Deputy Chief Ronald Papier**  
Miami (FL) Police Department

**Lieutenant Brian Paul**  
Rockville (MD) City Police Department

**Deputy Chief Andy Penn**  
Arlington County (VA)  
Police Department

**Captain William Penn**  
Winston-Salem (NC)  
Police Department

**Rachel Phillips**

Accenture

**Marc Piccolo**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security,  
Customs and Border Protection

**Lieutenant Nicholas Picerno**

Montgomery County (MD)  
Police Department

**HR Analyst Erin Pierce**

Mesa, Arizona

**Commander Richard Poindexter**

Roanoke County (VA)  
Police Department

**Lieutenant Kristin Polansky**

Oklahoma City (OK) Police Department

**Commander Michael Pooley**

Tempe (AZ) Police Department

**Major John Prieschl**

Palm Beach County (FL) Sheriff's Office

**Deputy Chief Scott Prill**

University of South Carolina  
Division of Law Enforcement  
and Safety

**Chief Chaplain David Rabinowitz**

New York City Police Department,  
Sergeants Benevolent Association

**Assistant Chief Harold Rankin**

Mesa (AZ) Police Department

**Deputy Chief Michael Rein**

Rutgers University (NJ)  
Police Department

**Officer Jessica Rogers**

Rockville (MD) City Police Department

**Chief Kristen Roman**

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Police Department

**Tim Schaible**

Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments

**Commander (Ret.)****Mary Schander**

Pasadena (CA) Police Department

**Assistant Professor****Charles Scheer**

University of Southern Mississippi

**Matthew Scheider**

U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Office

**Dave Schlendorf**

Federal Bureau of Investigation

**Assistant Chief Robert Schroeder**

Louisville (KY) Metro  
Police Department

**Assistant Chief****Christopher Shaefer**

Indio (CA) Police Department

**Captain Thomas Shawyer**

San Francisco (CA)  
District Attorney's Office

**Lieutenant Jeffrey Silk**

Saline County (AR) Sheriff's Office

**Major Michelle Simpson**

Anne Arundel County (MD)  
Police Department

**Chief Daniel Slaughter**

Clearwater (FL) Police Department

**Kerry Sleeper**

Federal Bureau of Investigation

**Sergeant Jamie Smith**

Broward County (FL) Sheriff's Office

**Chief Rick Smith**

Wakefield (MA) Police Department

**Harry Smith Jr.**

Atlanta Police Foundation

**Assistant Director****Deborah Spence**

U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Office

**Executive Director****Katherine Spillar**

National Center for Women & Policing/  
Feminist Majority Foundation

**Officer Jovante' Spivey**

Chatham County (GA)  
Police Department

**Chief (ret.) Thomas Streicher**

Greenwood & Streicher, LLC

**Chief Terry Sult**

Hampton (VA) Police Division

**Supervisory Special Agent****W. Travis Thiede**

Federal Bureau of Investigation

**Chief Karianne Thomas**

Kalamazoo (MI) Department of  
Public Safety

**Division Manager of HR****Karen Thomas**

Palm Beach County (FL) Sheriff's Office

**Major Bridget Thomerson**

Louisville (KY) Metro  
Police Department

**Chief Scott Thomson**

Camden County (NJ)  
Police Department

**Chief Michael Trail**

Lansdale (PA) Police Department

**Chief Michael Turner**

Wayne County (MI) Sheriff's Office

**Scott Vermeer**

Apple Global Security

**Director Ron Vitiello**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security,  
Immigration and Customs Enforcement

**Lieutenant Mike Wagner**

Albemarle County (VA)  
Police Department

**Captain Michael Wall**

Fairfax County (VA) Police Department

**Lieutenant Mike Warren**

Burlington (VT) Police Department

**Director of Public Safety**

**Laura Waxman**

U.S. Conference of Mayors

**Jody Weis**

Accenture

**Lieutenant Cindy Weisman**

Maryland-National Capital Park Police

**Lieutenant Eileen Welsh**

Prince William County (VA)  
Police Department

**Chief David Westrick**

Hollister (CA) Police Department

**Captain Jimmie Wideman**

Hampton (VA) Police Division

**Chief Robyn Wiley**

Kendallville (IN) Police Department

**Chief Michael Wilhelm**

Waynesboro (VA) Police Department

**Captain Byron Williams**

Daytona Beach (FL) Police Department

**Deputy Chief Kevin Williams**

New York City Police Department

**Professor Jeremy Wilson**

Michigan State University

**Supervisory Special Agent**

**Kisha Winston**

Federal Bureau of Investigation

**Officer Mary Wright**

Tucson (AZ) Police Department

**Chief Michael Yankowski**

Lansing (MI) Police Department

**Deputy Chief Michael York**

Kansas City (KS) Police Department

**Chief Terry Young**

Surprise (AZ) Police Department

**Chief of Operations**

**Shannon Youngblood**

Montgomery (AL) Police Department

**Chief Terry Zeigler**

Kansas City (KS) Police Department

**Chief David Zibolski**

Beloit (WI) Police Department









POLICE EXECUTIVE  
RESEARCH FORUM

Police Executive Research Forum  
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 930  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-466-7820  
[www.PoliceForum.org](http://www.PoliceForum.org)

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