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Operator: Good day and welcome to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice conference call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time I would like to turn the conference over to Director Phil Keith. Please go ahead.

Phil Keith: Thank you Shelby and good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. I call the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice to order. And on behalf of Attorney General Barr, thank you for joining us today for this important commission teleconferencing meeting.

This week's series of teleconferences will be focused on law enforcement recruitment, training, and retention. As mentioned last week, we're on track to continue the schedule of conference calls with three calls per week through the week of June the 15th. And we're continuing to explore an in-person Commission meeting the week of June the 22nd.

As most of you know, this is Police Week. This is a time where, as a country, we come together and honor those brave men and women in law enforcement that have lost their lives and we pray for their families. We also recognize the tremendous sacrifice that law enforcement makes for us every day. We're typically together this time of the year sharing memories and stories and honoring our protectors and that have made the ultimate sacrifice.

With the impact of the COVID-19 has removed us to - from that opportunity to a virtual environment. All of us recall the informative and compelling testimony we heard in Miami this past February on officer safety and wellness. And now we're seeing a continuation of felonious acts of violence

against the men and women that serve so bravely, as well as dozens and dozens of deaths of our first-line responders to the COVID-19 virus.

I would encourage all the commissioners to observe the virtual candlelight ceremony tomorrow morning at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. We'll provide you with a link to the ceremony in our reminder email that'll go out this evening. At this time I'd ask our Executive Director Dean Kueter to conduct the roll call of commissioners.

Dean Kueter: Thank you Mr. Chairman. And before I call the roll I'd once again like to remind everyone that today's event is open to the press. And for any members of the media on the call, if you have questions and need clarification on anything, please contact Kristina Mastropasqua in the Justice Department's Public Affairs Office. And with that, I will begin the roll call. Commissioner Bowdich.

David Bowdich: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Clemmons.

James Clemmons: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Evans.

Christopher Evans: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commission Frazier. Commissioner Gualtieri.

Robert Gualtieri: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Hawkins.

Gina Hawkins: Present. Thank you.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Lombardo.

Regina Lombardo: Here. Thank you, Dean.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner MacDonald.

Erica MacDonald: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Moody.

Ashley Moody: Here on the line.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Parr.

Nancy Parr: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Price.

Craig Price: Good afternoon. I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Ramsay.

Gordon Ramsay: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Rausch.

David Rausch: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Samaniego.

John Samaniego: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Smallwood. Vice-Chair Sullivan.

Katharine Sullivan: Hi. I'm here.

Dean Kueter: And Commissioner Washington.

Donald Washington: Here.

Dean Kueter: Mr. Chairman that concludes the roll call.

Phil Keith: Thank you. Any other announcements, Dean? Any other announcements, Dean?

Dean Kueter: No sir. We're good to go.

Phil Keith: Thank you. All commissioners should have about and some of the testimony for this panel. And as a reminder, we'll be posting all these materials on the Law Enforcement Commission web site. Once again we continue to acknowledge everyone's commitment, efforts, and contribution to meet the goals of this historic commission. On behalf of General Barr, we thank each of you.

As noted on previous calls, we encourage commissioners to take notes during the testimony of panelists. And we will then open for questions for our commissioners after the last witness.

Our first distinguished panelist is Dr. Charlie Scheer who is an Assistant Professor from the University of Southern Mississippi. Not only is Dr. Scheer a published researcher on police workforce management, police training, and organizational development, he's also a sworn sheriff's deputy. Dr. Scheer, thank you for joining us today. You're recognized.

Charles Scheer: Thank you, sir. Once again my name is Charlie Scheer from the University of Southern Mississippi and the project that I'm going to talk briefly about today is actually started from the marketing and business realms, a little different than social science research usually is. It came about through conversations with Chief Leonard Papania from Gulfport, Mississippi Police Department. This is a department that was heavily affected by Hurricane Katrina.

And the partner on this was Mike Rossler from Illinois State. The origin of this project was there's a lack of research about what applicants want from the career, what they expect from an agency that would want to hire them. And a sub-question that we were interested in in this project is what may draw them towards policing and what may potentially push them away or be a barrier to their interest.

So we conducted a survey of five universities, students, and those universities are listed on the report that you're provided with. And there were 100 items on the survey. Briefly, the descriptive statistics show us several points of information that are interesting and were very unexpected.

The first is that these respondents are curious and interested in police work. About 40% show some interest and they display a curiosity about things like promotional potential and the aspects of the helping profession that policing is. They are interested in the job.

They're also very motivated in this interest. We were fishing for something in this project. We looked at the rigorous hiring process; the scrutiny of the selection process, including their social media

scrutiny; the academy length and intensity; potential for hard physical training; a change in lifestyle associated with police work; family and friends pressuring them; and personal history issues. None of these things were found to be well-established barriers from just the basic descriptive statistics. They do influence their concept of going into police work. But they're not deal breakers which is kind of important to think about.

These folks who answered the survey also see a disconnect between police departments and their recruiting practices that they're exposed to and what they expect from, not only the career and the lifestyle, but what they expect to see from a recruitment standpoint.

They desire more mentoring and career preview, not just information about the selection criteria but an immersion in police work from the beginning of their interest which is very intriguing. It was an unexpected finding. They have curiosity and expectations about the career ladder that even they admit may be unrealistic somewhat.

But they don't believe they're getting proper information about these promotional opportunities. For instance, we asked a question, "Would you be interested in becoming a sergeant?" The same percentage said yes, I would, as said they don't know what a sergeant specifically does. So that told us a lot.

We did some additional statistical modeling with this sample and, especially taking African-American respondents and women out of the sample, and we found a number of talking points that I'd like to present.

The first is that there's sustained interest in the face of multiple potential barriers, but the work needs to be done to reach these people. They want to know more. And I highlight a question that we asked about their generation expecting not to pay their dues before they obtain success in a career field. Well, that's something that we could all agree may be consistent across generations.

But interestingly enough, it raises the possibility that we're not telling them what they're going to get from paying their dues. We're not allowing them to see the rewards of paying their dues, especially what paying their dues might even entail in a police department.

The second talking point is there are opportunities for sincere transparent relationship building. And I use the metaphor of a football coach recruiter type. And this comes about in some of the concerns of the African-American respondents as it pertains to peer, friend, and family support.

And women's concerns about barriers to promotion and police culture. And this implies a targeted personal, sort of, one-to-one recruiting realism that we, you know, as I'd say the football coach recruiter's style. Somebody who's willing to make a personal identification with that person.

The third talking point that comes up is, it's a cool career, so let's show them this. Including the realities of physical confrontation which they're curious about and want to know more information in order to, sort of, dispel myths that may exist. And this raises the possibility of things like ride-alongs, meaningful internships, and opportunities to really see the department that we wish departments were doing across the board. And we know that that's not the case universally.

Fourth talking point would be these people were attracted to the helping mission within the context of blue-collar professions. They're interested in knowing about job security and benefits. This is a wide-open opportunity for mentoring from Zillow to Apartment Finder to Trulia to exploring the benefits to overtime. They've never been down this path that they're about to embark on called adulthood. And we can really show them the interplay of career rewards and benefits, and brand our agencies in the process.

A fifth talking point is be wary of a potential target candidate. There are a lot of people in these responses as you can look through that are on the margins of interest. And if police recruiters could

influence family and peer groups and significant others, they may be able to nudge these curious people with a concerted recruitment strategy.

Wanted to finish up by asking, is your agency a great place to work because that's what these young people are looking for? I've personally seen them pass up salary to work for certain people who they perceived as being charismatic and committed to the same things they wanted out of life.

And I'd like you to imagine a person who from a young age is curious about the police. You know they may have dressed up as a cop as Halloween costume. All their life there's been this mystique about the police. They've really been into the idea. They'll do what it takes to make this happen. They've reached that point.

And they finally are able to talk to somebody who's doing that. And they have no opportunity to see it up close. They're told to go on a web site, no ride-alongs, or the wrong person is the public face of that department. Make your agency the one that opens the door. Because you're as enthusiastic about the career as they are. And I think you can probably make a recruit out of these folks. And that's my testimony.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Dr. Scheer, for your valued testimony and certainly your service. Next, we have a distinguished and very well-known chief with us today. Chief Will Johnson from Arlington, Texas Police Department. Chief Johnson has over two decades of law enforcement experience and is also on the Board of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Major City Chiefs Association, as well as an Executive Fellow with the Police Executive Research Forum. Chief Johnson thank you for joining us today. You're recognized.

Will Johnson: Thank you, Chairman Keith, Vice-Chair Sullivan, and esteemed Commissioners. It's my great honor to be able to be before you virtually to testify on this very important topic. For my colleagues and friends for many years serving as Commissioners thank you for your service and your

commitment and for those of you that I haven't had the privilege to meet I look forward to being able to do so at future and thank you for your commitment. I know how difficult it has been serving as Commissioner during these trying times with COVID.

As I talk about the challenges of recruitment it's certainly a perspective that is shared by many in IACP and Major City Chiefs. A recent IACP membership survey revealed that 65% of agencies reported of having too few candidates apply for law enforcement positions.

This is slightly different than the 78% that responded saying that they had difficulty recruiting qualified candidates. So both the volume is low and the quality within the volume is low. Seventy-five percent of agencies reported that recruiting is much more difficult today than it was even a mere five years ago.

And, sadly, in the survey 50% of the responding agencies indicated that they had to modify or adapt their departmental policies in order to meet the changing dynamics that they were having with staffing shortages. And 25% had to reduce or eliminate certain agency services because of inadequate staffing levels.

And so the three main driving factors that, I think most people would agree, that are influencing the challenges in recruiting are generational differences. And that's not to say that one generation is better than the other or one generation is deficient than the other. It's just simply saying that as different generations emerge into the workforce that they had different priorities, different needs. And policing being a hyper-traditionalist sort of organization has not done well in managing with those changes.

The hiring process itself is daunting and frankly it takes too long. Many agencies are confronted with six months, nine months, or a year or more before they can navigate a candidate through the

hiring process to be able to join the organization in which time that candidate is at risk of being lost to other organizations and/or to other sectors.

And then frankly, there's a public image challenge with law enforcement today. Many of those who have served certainly know the nobility of policing and have given most of their adult life to that cause. But that's not always what is reported or conveyed to the community and it creates a challenge whenever recruiting new individuals into the workforce.

And so I'd like to offer several recommendations for the Commission to consider. Certainly it's not an exhaustive list but I think that it represents the high points of some of the greatest opportunities that we have for success in moving forward.

We need to create opportunities for youth to gain experience and credit toward police employment. This can be done through a variety of federal programs that create an umbrella of emphasis for state and local agencies to participate within and have shared experiences.

But very specifically I think there's an opportunity to expand the COPS Hiring Grant process to include paid police cadets where departments can recruit younger employees, give them exposure within the department, give them one-on-one mentorship as junior employees within the organization with aspirational hope of transitioning to law enforcement status.

I think that more can be done to work with the department of education to promote partnerships with law enforcement, with colleges and universities on a macro level to allow police recruits to trade their training hours for college credits. These types of programs would give recruits an opportunity to not only build upon their emerging career in policing but to also complement that career with formalized education at the university setting.

There is a real opportunity to expand and simplify loan forgiveness programs offered to police under the department of education temporary expanded public service loan forgiveness act. This is an underutilized program that quite frankly if you asked just a rank-and-file officer, a college applicant, many individuals don't know that the program even exists and those that do have an extreme difficulty navigating their bureaucracy to qualify for reimbursement.

To promote education collaborative partnerships, develop federal programs to incentivize colleges and universities that receive federal funds to develop programs within their universities to reduce barriers for students to enter public service.

Many employees -- certainly it's no different in Arlington -- that are first-generation college-educated employees have a profound sense of duty to give back to the neighborhoods in which they came from. And by working with the educational system and the public system with police departments I believe that we can expand and reduce those barriers for those students.

The same would hold true with the Department of Defense, to expand and formalize partnerships with the military where universal service credits can be received for our servicemen and women for some of the training and experiences that they have in the military to give them a competitive advantage when they reenter society through public service.

Certainly not all military service has a direct correlation with local law enforcement or policing but many of their training experiences and job assignments do. And we should leverage that to reduce barriers for service personnel to join policing.

I think there's a clear opportunity for a national recruitment campaign. This national campaign and advertising -- marketing campaign could help address some of the public stigma for policing and help share, on a national basis, what the true mission is and what the true day-to-day activities of a police officer are.

I believe that many people, and I think even the previous testimony would support that, there is an intrinsic desire to give back to the community, and people are drawn into the profession whenever you activate that sense of duty and that sense of compassion where people can give back to their communities.

But yet oftentimes the marketing of such is inadequate and whatever marketing is present is certainly one of the first items to be eliminated in budget reductions.

And then I would just kind of wrap up talking about budget reductions that recruiting and policing was extraordinarily challenged before COVID-19. I'm fearful that it will be next to impossible as we enter into the economic consequences of COVID-19 and as municipalities and states try to balance their budgets many times training, recruiting, advertising are all activities that are first to go within the budget.

And so I would offer three principled approaches for law enforcement to remain important in the post-COVID conversation. First, that we should really maximize the grant funding that is available for law enforcement specifically. That is direct funding to agencies and not block funding in which could be diverted to other non-law enforcement needs.

Secondarily this funding needs to remain as flexible as possible because each community has their own unique challenges as they're dealing with these consequences. And third, that they advocate for the elimination of the artificial population count and the CARES funding act.

I don't care if you're a two-man department, a thousand employee department like mine, or a 35,000 like New York, every community is challenged in recruiting and being able to leverage those grant

dollars in the most direct, meaningful way is going to be important as we move forward. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. This concludes my verbal remarks.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Chief Johnson for your valued testimony and certainly for your dedicated service.

Our next panelist is another distinguished law enforcement professional, Deputy Chief Valerie Cunningham from the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department. Chief Cunningham has over 30 years of law enforcement experience and she's been a valued partner to both the COPS Office and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. We're happy to have her join us today. Chief Cunningham, you're recognized.

Chief Cunningham: Thank you Director Keith and thank you, Commissioners, for your time today. I'm very pleased to be here today to talk to you specifically about recruitment strategies to attract female applicants. This is an easy conversation for me to have with you here today because my agency has had some success in that in the recent past.

IMPD, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, is not unlike most major city police departments in that a sworn work-force is approximately 13% female. In fact that 13% of females on the agency has been around for about the last two decades as kind of a ceiling where females have been in law enforcement.

Although we make up, as you know, 50 to 51% of the population. And currently, trends show that we're actually decreasing. As we talk about women in this profession, it's important to remember that we haven't been on the front lines as much as our male counterparts. In fact just over 50 years ago, in 1968, the first women were assigned to patrol duty. And I'm very proud to say that that occurred in Indianapolis, Indiana when Officers Elizabeth Robinson and Betty Blankenship hit the streets in September of 1968.

In the decades that have passed since then women have proven that they can not only do this job and excel but that our communities and our profession are better served by the unique and complementary skill sets that they bring to the table. There's no doubt that increased representation by women and minorities at all levels affects the culture within law enforcement agencies.

A culture that we need to take a realistic look at to examine the barriers that are either perceived or real that exist to discourage women and minorities to applying to this profession. Biases that are either explicit or implicit must be aggressively rooted out of all agencies and leadership must be cognizant that they exist and they need to identify and address it.

Today I'm going to share with you some of the recruitment successes that the Indianapolis Police Department has had to increase the number of female applicants and, in turn, the number of females entering into our academy and joining our agency.

This past December our 20th recruit class was made up of 31% females. We made changes in our recruitment strategies that began in late 2016 and every year since then the percentage of females entering into our academy has been higher than the national average.

I do hesitate though to share these tactics as specifically focused towards women or minorities. We changed our overall recruitment strategy to look for highly qualified, motivated, and committed individuals with the mindset that this profession requires an individual that is called to service.

We don't look at any applicant as a number or a checkbox. As a matter of fact we often talk about looking beyond diversity and talking about the culture within our agency being an inclusive one where everyone is welcome. Fighting the lower number of applicants nationwide as you just heard, we focus on the quality of our interaction with every applicant that shows interest.

I'm going to present and highlight a couple of the programs that were in my written testimony that I believe are foundational cornerstones for where agencies can start. My recommendation -- I'm going to present now and at the end again as a reminder but -- my recommendations and takeaways for this for agencies are to focus on marketing campaigns that are inclusive of females.

As a matter of fact in the past two years all of Indianapolis marketing campaigns as far as billboards, bus boards and bench boards, have focused on one of our programs Women Behind the Badge. And they've all been photographs of women only in uniform.

The second recommendation is to tailor all the contact that an agency has with their applicant so that it's mutually beneficial to both the agency and the applicant. Applicants want to understand what they are going to be asked to do, what they are committing to, and what that's going to look like for them as an individual. If you use tactics such a ride-alongs or introducing an internship program, ensure that there's oversight to make sure that they have quality engagement at each of those levels.

If they're riding with an officer, make sure that officer is open to discussing to give that applicant a preview into what it would look like if they were in this career.

The third one is focus on that preview of what the career would look like for that individual. Talk about the organizational culture. Talk about the resources available within the profession and have transparent, open conversation. One of the highlights of our recruiting efforts are, we engage our candidates in community forums where they sit in the audience and we academics, community stakeholders, and executives from our agency have a moderator to discuss current incidents that have occurred or issues within law enforcement and national narratives that may be anti-law enforcement. And have those open discussions in that classroom.

And, fourth and the key to all of this is to develop a meaningful relationship, professional relationship with these applicants. That occurs through reoccurring contact. And this leads me to talking about our PAR program. PAR, which stands for pre-academy readiness. we look at every applicant and we try to remove and perceived obstacles that they may have of coming on to the agency.

The women specifically, physical testing has always been a barrier. Indiana still has very archaic standards. They are focused on strength, particularly upper body strength. And over the years we've shown a disparate impact in one of our standards, which is a requirement that a female must do 22 military points-out push-ups. A male must do the same to enter into the academy. Should a female only do 21, they are not accepted in our process, and they are out of the process for the next two years because of one push up.

It's a physiological fact that women are 70% as strong as men in the upper body. A female can do 22 push-ups. The encouragement we do through the pre-academy readiness program is making them understand that even if they start at 0 they can get to 22. It just takes time and commitment.

The disparate impact we've had in the past is the fact that people do not sincerely look at that number 22 as a challenge and think that it's something that can be accomplished in 30 days having never done a pushup. We educate them, encourage them, and train them over the course of months to get them to that standard for success.

We practice physical skills to get a comfort level with the testing which is very important for females who tend to be less confident. There's an informal atmosphere created. I myself, having oversight of the academy and the recruiting, I participate in the workouts. Our pre-academy readiness is held every Tuesday evening at the same time for one hour and we're very respectful of people's time in that one hour.

I put on workout clothes, I mix in with the group, and it's an informal atmosphere where they can ask questions, garner information and again preview and get a snapshot of not only our culture in our agency but an understanding about what's going on with the recruiting process, what's going on with the hiring process, what will be going on in the academy. It's also an opportunity for us to assess the applicant's suitability, their performance, and an opportunity to lay down the building blocks to enhance resiliency, which is in my opinion the most important trait an officer can have for survival.

That includes for their own mental resiliency but their physical wellness as well. We also set the expectation in this pre-academy readiness that it's not a competition, but it's built for confidence and the only thing you need to bring is a good attitude and 100% willingness to exert your best effort.

We also invite formal mentors, field training officers, academy staff, and our wellness unit to join in these workouts with the applicants. The relationships that we've built through PAR form internal networking relationships amongst each other and the applicants and carries into the academy then and already establishes a support system for them.

The other program that I would like to highlight is our Women Behind the Badge program that is a workshop. The workshop is females only, and again it goes to giving them a preview of what it would be like for an officer. And for females specifically, it addresses some of the concerns that they come in with which is shift work, child care, family dynamics, support from community, the culture that they are entering into being a male-dominated culture, and how they're going to fit in.

They're all candid conversations that are had there. The good news in all of these programs is we just heard that budgets are probably going to be reduced. None of these programs cost a lot of money. It all involves commitment of time and if someone -- as I've always heard the most valuable gift you can give someone is your time.

And again the recommendations are to be your marketing efforts to be inclusive of females, to tailor all contacts with the applicant so it's mutually beneficial, to make sure you provide previews of what being an officer would be like, highlight your organizational culture, and develop relationships with your applicant through transparent conversations and clear expectations. And that is my testimony, thank you.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Chief Cunningham for your testimony and for your valuable contribution to law enforcement and certainly your service. Our last panelist today is retired Lansing, Michigan Chief of Police Mike Yankowski. He is also the assistant director of the institutional ethics and compliance at the Michigan State University.

Chief Yankowski modeled his career around five key areas including building police and community trust, recruiting and hiring a diverse department, reducing violent crime, increasing training and officer wellness, and strengthening policy and accountability. Chief Yankowski,, thank you for joining us today. You are recognized

Mike Yankowski: Thank you. I want to start off by saying good afternoon to the Commissioners and thank you for serving on this important presidential commission. As was stated my name is Mike Yankowski. I retired from the Lansing Police Department in 2009. Lansing Police Department's located in Lansing Michigan and my - currently chapter two career is in ethics and compliance as the Assistant Director at Michigan State University.

I want to first start out by really saying that one of the most important responsibilities of a law enforcement executive is to hire the best possible police officers you can. And in the city of Lansing which is the capital city of Michigan, sixth largest in the state of Michigan population of about 120,000, a diverse urban city.

The Lansing Police Department has been providing policing service for 125 years and had 203 sworn police officers. So it's one of the largest police departments in the state of Michigan, but it's really considered a medium-size agency so you can relate to other agencies during this review. No doubt you're hearing a similar theme here today and I want to highlight this because Chief Johnson mentioned it earlier.

The City of Lansing was not immune to the great recession from about 2006 to 2012. Downsizing a busy city government led to reductions of almost 40% of our personnel. Lansing Police Department didn't hire one police officer for almost five years. When we were finally given that green light to go ahead, we opened up the valve and that water wasn't really coming out. It was a trickle and it was rusty.

And the fact is that a lot had changed in the world of police hiring during the great recession. Not only did the candidates' viewpoints on public safety change, so had the playing conditions. And so when we talk about it's almost like déjà vu, potentially, that with the COVID-19, the funding sources and all of the best practices lessons learned, we cannot repeat the same mistakes.

So 2013 when I took over as chief of police, recruiting and hiring was not going to be on my first task of things, but after two really, really poor showings in police hiring we knew that we needed to change our playbook. And that's exactly what we did. As with anything it starts with leadership. You got to have the commitment from the top down.

But what we tried to do is develop a 21st century policing, hiring playbook. And the foundation of what we based our model on was to really create a farm system with our youth and by building one-on-one personal relationships. You heard Dr. Scheer talk about it a little bit. Same philosophy. I was a college athlete and when I remember getting recruited to play football, that's exactly what it was; it was a recruit.

So we kind of took the approach of what would it take to recruit a high school athlete to our university and replicated that in policing. So the Lansing model -- I'm going to combine these as recommendations as well -- is really around seven principles.

Starts out again with hiring candidates to reflect the value and the vision of your department. Listen, we're in the business of service and we got to have people that are highly ethical, good moral character, good communication, that community policing mindset. We can't make the mistake of just hiring a warm body to fill that vacancy.

We took that to the next level of growing your own town. Just like you do in baseball, you have a farm system. You got to create pipelines and we've tried to focus within a 90-mile radius. We had some youth programs, our Explorer program, our Cadet program, our youth academy. To gain resistance education and training we had ten officers go into the middle schools and teach our youngsters about making good decisions but building rapport along the way. High school career centers and Police Athletic Leagues all came into play in building that farm system.

So, an explorer program -- I'm just going to take a minute to speak on our explorer program -- is really focusing on young adults between the ages of 14 and 21. They volunteer, they're not paid, but we teach them skill sets and really introduce them to the profession of law enforcement, but they also get out into the community and community events and so we're kind of mentoring them at a younger age, trying to get them engaged into career centers, and just kind of coaxing them along.

Because of that program we were getting 35 kids a year signing up for that and it really helped us move our recruiting program to the next level, which would then be our cadet program where they're sponsored, they're paid a salary, and again that mentorship continues.

And again I think the key there is that you're really establishing a one-on-one relationship and it starts at the top. As the Chief of Police, I'd be the one making phone calls, I'd be texting individuals, any time there was a job offer, they were getting the phone calls from the police chief. I sat in on every single police officer interview. And I think that's very important because you're establishing that it's important, that you are investing time and money into someone because you want them to represent who you are.

We talk about that investment. It doesn't just start and end with financial resources. It's a big part of what you need to stay committed to that but it's a time commitment. And so when you talk about investing in your people, which we all do invest in people, it's just not about time and money. You're committing to your values as an organization, why you want them to come work for you. So again, recruitment is just more than handing out flyers and attending recruiting fairs. It's about establishing that one-on-one relationship.

And I will tell you, when you talk about establishing a relationship it's not just with the candidate. It's also with their family as well. We make house visits. We have conversations. We meet with parents. We meet with significant others just to, kind of, build that rapport with the entire family because it's a big commitment for someone to go into law enforcement.

What it also does is you create community champions along the way. We've had community members sitting in on officer interviews, and I can tell you if you want to build some capital and some trust with your community, include them in your recruiting process, include them in your interview process, and they will go out and bring new candidates.

Branding was a very important thing as well because you want the candidate to say something in your department. They like what they see, they like what they hear, we always try to have a

branding strategy. At the Lansing Police Department it was very simple for us. Come join and be one of the capital city's finest.

You heard others talk about streamlining the hiring process, and I can tell you that was one of our major obstacles. It was taking us nine months to a year to hire individuals. That's way too long. The two most common complaints was it takes too long and lack of communication. So emphasize in that time to hire and we were getting our processes done in 90 days or less.

And just kind of closing, I think it's to sum up what our philosophy was to really engage in our youth at a younger age, embrace them into this service-oriented profession, get them to see our police officers as role models, and then to also continue that process throughout their entire career.

You heard Dr. Scheer talk about it. They like to see good police, community relations. They want opportunities. It's not always about the dollar. And so we owe it to them to continue their professional development and training once we get them inside our doors because it's really a family atmosphere.

And I can tell you at the Lansing Police Department we saw this strategy help our minority hiring tremendously. My first couple recruiting classes were less than 5% in minority hiring. Our last recruiting class had over 60% minority, females so we saw great examples of how we can move from the next level to the next one. So that will complete my testimony.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Chief Yankowski, for your valuable testimony and for your service to law enforcement. Commissioners, we are now open to questions for the witnesses. Commissioners with a question, please state your name prior to your question and direct the question to a specific panelist or the entire panel. Just as a reminder to the Commissioners your mics are hot at all times. Thank you and with that we'll open for questions from Commissioners for our panelists.

Gina Lombardo: President Keith, this is Commissioner Lombardo with ATF. I have a question.

Phil Keith: Yes, ma'am, you are recognized.

Gina Lombardo: Thank you, I first want to say thank you for all the panel members who took the time to put together great products, good quality testimony. Will, out there, I think we've spoken in the past about your department and some of your hurdles and some of the good advice you have given us.

So I guess specifically my question would probably be to Deputy Chief Valerie Cunningham. Let me just preface it by saying first we at ATF do have our struggles with recruiting female agents especially. We're not unique to any other law enforcement organizations, state, and local. But federal government we also have our challenges as we average in the Department of Justice about 11%, 12% as the average. So we've been pretty focused on proper recruitment, and really had been staying focused on that with our campaign of #She'sATF.

And I think a lot of that is paying off. But I guess my question is, you know, I heard testimony previously about your wellness program in your police department, and you use that and highlight that in your recruitment efforts. And that's one question.

And the other would be, is there one in particular thing that you would say is sort of the must-dos? You know, is there anything in particular that sticks out that was your, the best advice, the most, you know, highly recommend, you-have-to-do in order to really make a difference in proper recruitment, especially for females, who are often our biggest challenge.

Valerie Cunningham: Thank you Commissioner. So yes, we do highlight our wellness program. The wellness program is also in the division that is underneath my responsibility. That program, one of the sergeants assigned to it has a background and degree in exercise physiology, as do I. So we participate in the physical activities at this PAR program.

So we introduce it through physical wellness, talking about that, talking about diet, talking about essentially physical wellness, and then as the walls and the barriers break down and that informal relationship fosters with the applicants, we go into talking about the mental wellness components and resources that our agency offers.

We also introduce them to the mentoring program, which is through our wellness office, and that's where we bring in some of those mentors that participate in that formalized program to be introduced to the applicant. Because what we do here in Indianapolis is we assign a formal mentor day one of the academy.

So we introduce our wellness office through the PAR program, that pre-academy readiness. And the one thing that has really helped us with the female applicants, is that Women Behind the Badge workshop. It's attended by almost 85% of the females that we have in an application process. It's voluntary attendance, it's a full-day program, and we bring in officers on our agency. I firmly believe that you have to see it to believe that you can become it. So we bring them in at all different levels, and we let them ask questions.

And most of the questions center around, you know, Dr. Scheer hit it right on the point, they want a preview of what it's like. The females in particular, where I think they have additional challenges at home, in society they're typically the ones that are responsible for taking care of the children, keeping the house up, you know, all additional responsibilities, and they want to know how that's going to work if they want to do this profession.

They ask some very specific, very pointed questions, a lot of them are around family dynamics, a lot of them are around support that they will get, or that they feel that they're going to lack in their environments and relationships that they currently have because of their gender entering into a male-dominated profession.

But just the atmosphere to allow them to openly ask questions about that. One of the biggest questions -- we have a lot because of the age of our applicants, we have a lot of brand new mothers - and some of the questions are around facilities that we have to allow them to pump breast milk while they're on duty.

You know, how that's perceived, is it, you know, are they going to be ostracized when they do something like that? Will they be looked at as being weak? But that, by far, is the one thing that I think stands out, is having a forum and an opportunity for them to interact with people already doing the job, to ask very relevant questions of what it's going to be like for them if they choose to commit. Thank you.

Gina Lombardo: I appreciate the guidance there. I'll look a little bit more into that and maybe craft something similar. Again, that is, not so much - I think it's also part of our retention issues as well. Coming on young, before they create a life and have other responsibilities and children, and all sorts of other obstacles that we're trying to sort of remove some of the roadblocks. And it helps, not just with the recruitment, but with retention. So thank you for that recommendation, appreciate that.

Phil Keith: Other commissioners with questions?

Craig Price: Mr Keith?

Phil Keith: Yes, sir, you're recognized.

Craig Price: Hi, this is Craig Price, South Dakota. Again appreciate everybody's excellent testimony today. And I sat in and listened and took a copious amount of notes just because there are so many good ideas that come from you. I do have a question for Dr. Scheer in regard to marketing, advertising, and recruiting and whether, or not that has an impact on retention.

And the specific question I have is, when agencies advertise, you know, it's common for us, I think, to advertise the highlights of what we do, specifically SWAT team members, K-9 officers, aircraft pilots, DRE's, all of the niche type of things that really require a high level of specialty that oftentimes aren't achieved until several years of employment.

Is there any data that you're aware of that shows an impact - I know this isn't about retention, but I think it somewhat has a connection - is there any data that demonstrates that using those types of recruiting efforts has a negative or neutral impact on retention, for those officers that maybe don't achieve those things that they had hoped to when they first saw the marketing campaign and had a contact with an agency?

Charles Scheer: Sure, that's a great question. This is Charlie Scheer. We do not have, to my knowledge, and we are embarking - the folks that have been working on this recruitment project - we are embarking on a project related to retention this year.

We expect to have some first, preliminary results of that. What we are trying to do, just quickly, is we're talking to people who have left and people who are staying. And both from agencies, that - where - both have happened, but also surveying those who are at existing agencies and talking to leaders.

And then we're going to be doing a series of round table discussions with folks from a select number of agencies in an effort to ascertain what are the things that are potentially keeping people where they are, and things that may act as the force of pushing people away or having people leave. So the short answer is we don't - I'm not aware of anything of that nature.

However, if you think about recruiting research, and it's a very small field, and specifically market research that's done with advertising, it seems to me that we'd be interested in finding out about

organizational commitment. That's a phenomenon that comes about in psychology where it's basically, "I think this place cares about me." And we haven't really done a whole lot of research yet into whether or not police officers feel as though the place they work has got their back.

And I'd like to know more about that. I think that there is a lot of research that can be done to, sort of, get at whether or not people who are existing police officers: How long have they been at that agency? Are they actively looking for another place to work right now? Have they considered it? Why?

Those are the questions that we don't have answers to, but I'd like to know. We are going to be starting a project this year like I said. We hope to have some preliminary results in the fall. I have indicated to everybody my contact information. So we would like to be able to get that information out to you if you want to keep in contact with me.

Craig Price: Yeah, that sounds very good. I have your information. I think I'll do that. Thank you, sir.

Charles Scheer: You're welcome.

Phil Keith: Thank you. Other commissioners with questions?

David Rausch: Chairman Keith, this is David Rausch.

Phil Keith: Commissioner, you are recognized

David Rausch: Thank you. Really to any of these panelists, but maybe Chief Johnson may have some insights, but I'm curious in terms of you had mentioned overcoming the narrative about law enforcement. What are some of the ways that we might be able to address that as we continue to try to fight that narrative, and it seems to never go away? How do we combat that?

Will Johnson: Thank you, commissioner, Will Johnson. You know, I think that the answers to that question really lie outside of policing, and it would be beneficial for the Commissioners to maybe get experts in marketing to share their perspective.

But because Arlington is such a sports-driven community, and I've had a chance to see some of the advertising that surrounds just the sporting profession.

The fact of the matter is, we are not structured in the United States, with our decentralized, locally controlled police department, which absolutely fits the constitutional principles in which we all hope and want for policing, to be able to address corporate communications on a profession level because of that decentralization.

And so because everybody is doing all that they can, and all the resources that they have available to try to put the best - project the best nobility of their police department, you know, we're, as we say in Texas, you know, we're an inch deep and a mile wide, right? Where we really need to have a greater degree of penetration that can only come from a structured, nationalized initiative directed towards public education and informing the American society about the true nature of policing.

Because frankly, there's so many competing voices out there, everything from Hollywood to just the small aspects of a police officer's work that actually makes the nightly news, that forms people's opinion about what policing is. And much like some of the other panelists testified, that some of today's recruits, particularly women in policing, they want to hear a more in-depth explanation and have information that's beyond just that high-level exposure. Most people form their belief of policing based on that high-level information that is vastly under-appreciative of the day-in and day-out work that police officers do serving the community.

David Rausch: Thank you.

Phil Keith: Other commissioners with questions? Other commissioners with questions?

James Smallwood: Mr Chair, this is Commissioner Smallwood. I don't have a question, but I did want to let you know I was a little late getting in the room, but I am here.

Phil Keith: Yes, sir. And the record reflects that. Thank you, Commissioner. Hearing no further questions, let me close by thanking our panelists once again for your time and most valuable testimony in the responses to questions from the Commissioners.

On behalf of the Attorney General and his leadership team of Rachel Bissex and Jeff Favitta, and all the Commissioners, your contributions provided today are most sincerely appreciated, and will assist the Commission in their deliberations and work.

Before we close, just a reminder that our next two hearings this week will be on Wednesday and Thursday. Also, please check the President's Commission page for additional updates, documents, and information on the main Justice website. We'll update it regularly when information is made available for posting.

We want to thank the FBI for their continued support by providing their teleconference network to the commission, and certainly, all the federal program managers working diligently behind the scenes to support the effort of the commission and the working groups. Are there any questions or comments from Commissioners? If there's no further business before us today, the President's Commission is adjourned. Thank you, Commissioners, for your continued dedication and commitment.

Operator: This concludes today's call. Thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.