

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Chapter 2. Law Enforcement Recruitment and Training

Introduction

Law enforcement agencies across the country face critical challenges in recruiting, retaining, and training officers. These challenges do not discriminate—federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies are all affected. One of the most significant challenges facing the field today is sustaining staffing levels. With increased demands to tackle issues like public health, school safety, and housing, the law enforcement field is a challenging work environment, and it is critical for officers to join, stay, and receive proficient training during their tenure.

Law enforcement executives should start with the end in mind: change the recruitment process and position descriptions to gain a dedicated, long-term workforce.¹ Before the recruitment process, executives should determine the characteristics they need in a law enforcement officer. From those characteristics, executives should build profiles of ideal recruits. Using this approach, agencies can target individuals who meet the established criteria and increase the efficiency of recruiting.

For the agency to be successful and for its officers to grow in their profession, agency leadership and line-level officers should maintain strong relationships. Incentive structures and positive organizational climates lead to greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment.² In any profession, employees who feel valued are more likely to commit to staying with their organization and performing their job well.

The quality and nature of the training staff receive through the duration of their law enforcement career has a direct impact on the effectiveness of a law enforcement agency. Of the approximately 650 different training academies and 18,000 local law enforcement agencies in the United States, focus area requirements and mandated training hours vary, leaving knowledge gaps and a lack of standardized skills across the field.³

2.1 Recruitment

Background

Many agencies struggled with a growing number of recruitment problems during the past decade, even as the number of recruits temporarily fluctuated due to changing economic conditions.⁴ Law enforcement leaders conclude that changing generational preferences for law enforcement duties, an increasing number of disqualifications (e.g., tattoos or facial hair), and a growing competition from other organizations (e.g., private security, corporations, and other law enforcement agencies) may lead to an increased interest by potential candidates.⁵ The fragmented approach many agencies take when recruiting further complicates recruitment efforts. Agencies should improve and enhance recruitment strategies to increase the number of people interested in law enforcement careers.

Current State of the Issue

One of the most important challenges facing the law enforcement field today is sustaining staffing levels. As attrition increases and officers pursue careers elsewhere, the demand for qualified officers exceeds the

¹ Regina Lombardo, Acting Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, in discussion with the Recruitment and Training Working Group, February 26, 2020.

² Fidel Espinoza, Lieutenant, Dunwoody, GA, police department (presentation to Recruitment and Training Working Group, teleconference, April 1, 2020).

³ Brian Reaves, *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016), 1, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/slleta13.pdf>.

⁴ Police Executive Research Forum, *The Workforce Crisis, and What Police Agencies Are Doing About It* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 2019), 20-21, <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/WorkforceCrisis.pdf>.

⁵ Andy Ouriel, "Beards, Tattoos Help to Humanize Police Officers," *Sandusky Register*, December 18, 2019, <https://sanduskyregister.com/news/21417/beards-tattoos-help-to-humanize-police-officers/>.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

supply of people who enter the law enforcement profession at the local, state, and federal levels. While the economy grows and other industries flourish, the law enforcement field currently faces its greatest competition with recruitment.⁶ As policing changes and becomes more complex with new types of crimes, an increased demand to manage social problems, and a growth in technology, law enforcement officers are required to do more without the expertise or training to adequately confront these new realities.

Recruitment Challenges

Finding the right people to fill open positions generally requires a sound recruitment strategy, even for small agencies. In response to the dynamic set of conditions that affect the labor pool, law enforcement agencies should develop a comprehensive recruitment program based on a written recruitment strategy. Rather than “selecting out” officers based on undesirable background or characteristics, agencies should “select in” officers based on desirable traits.

[CROSS-REFERENCE RESPECT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT]

Diverse workforces are more effective, creative, and resilient than homogenous workforces, and teams with broader perspectives are better at making decisions and solving problems.⁷ According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, racial and ethnic minorities accounted for 31 percent of the U.S. population in 2000. By 2010, this number increased to 36 percent, and data suggest that minorities will account for 50 percent of the population by 2045.⁸ These demographic changes highlight the need for internal career paths that support diversity in all ranks.

Additionally, officers should have a strong sense of community, and the communities they serve should feel that their officers are responsive to its needs.⁹ An agency can ensure success, engender trust, and develop good relations within their communities if these efforts are transparent and accountable to their communities and cultures. Law enforcement agencies can support this effort to bridge relationships with their communities by recruiting officers who look like community members and are fluent in multiple languages.¹⁰

Furthermore, law enforcement agencies should bring more women into the field, which could also support efforts to improve police–community relations. Women rely more on communication skills than on force in their policing style.¹¹ Women in Federal Law Enforcement, a membership organization of female federal law enforcement officers, notes, “In a highly competitive and increasingly fractious world, women possess the kind of critical problem-solving skills that are urgently needed to break down barriers, build understanding, and create the best conditions for law enforcement to effectively address its jurisdictional responsibilities, as well as contribute to the future of law enforcement.”¹²

Agency Approaches

⁶ Ouriel, “Beards, Tattoos Help.”

⁷ Kevin P. Morison, *Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Success* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2017), 41-49, <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-w0831-pub.pdf>.

⁸ Sandra L. Colby and Jennifer M. Ortman, *Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), 1, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf>.

⁹ International Association of Chiefs of Police, *Mobilizing the Community for Minority Recruitment and Selection* (Alexandria, VA: International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2003), 1-3, <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/document/minority-recruitment-mobilizing-the-community-for-minority-recruitment-and>.

¹⁰ Susan Shah, Insha Rahman, and Anita Khashu, *Overcoming Language Barriers: Solutions for Law Enforcement* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2007), 6, 10-11, https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/vera_translating_justice_final.pdf.

¹¹ National Center for Women and Policing, *Equality Denied: The Status of Women in Policing* (Los Angeles: National Center for Women and Policing, 2001), 3, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=195786>.

¹² Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE), *Transforming Law Enforcement by Changing the Face of Policing: 21st Century Policing: Guide to Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining and Promoting Women and Minorities* (Arlington, VA: Women in Federal Law Enforcement, 2016), 23, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/39a8e7_9f395ae47c254bdea74ac89574d7307e.pdf.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

While recruitment is critical in any law enforcement organization, it is of particular importance in small agencies.¹³ A single hire in a smaller agency may have a greater impact than 10 new hires in a larger agency. Although the costs of sound recruiting and screening processes may burden an agency with a smaller budget, this expense should be viewed as a critical, long-term investment. Not only does such an investment meet the community expectations of professionalism, it also saves money by increasing retention. When one employee chooses to leave an agency, costs associated with recurring hiring, training, and equipment increase. In addition, immediate budget shortfalls may occur through unexpected overtime costs to maintain minimal shift coverage.

The law enforcement field attracted previous generations who desired to serve for long periods in excess of 20 to 30 years; however, current recruits are often motivated by professional growth and career development, pay, and benefits. Current recruits are also less likely to remain in the same job for longer periods.¹⁴ Some law enforcement leaders interpret this as a lack of commitment, but others hypothesize that current job seekers change jobs or professions because these positions do not ensure job security in the same manner it was when previous generations entered the work force.

Recruitment efforts should start in the community, and law enforcement agencies should seek out youth programs to attract younger generations. Explorer programs, internships through local schools, cadet academies, university partnerships, and youth mentorship programs foster special relationships between young adults and departments.¹⁵ Not only do these programs open the door for career development at a young age, they also acquaint law enforcement agencies with a newer perspective of those younger generations, including their work-life preferences, expectations, and career visions, which can help shape an agency's policies and procedures and lead to more informed recruiting strategies.¹⁶

[CROSS REFERENCE RESPECT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT]

As technology changes, law enforcement must change with it. Old recruitment methods, such as advertising in newspapers and on television, are no longer the best ways to reach younger generations. Instead, recruitment efforts targeted toward younger generations should consider the social and consumer behaviors of their target recruitment demographic and leverage the most appropriate method, technology, and platform.

2.1.1 Law enforcement agencies should organize a working group of command staff and rank-and-file officers to address recruitment needs within the department. Where appropriate, the working group should also include the leadership of local labor unions or representative organization, civil organizations, and community members.

The working group should begin with the end in mind, meaning that it should consider what the agency looks for in a candidate over the course of an entire career. The working group should use data—including data profiles from its local Equal Employment Opportunity Commission—to determine how the department currently reflects the diversity of the community it serves. The working group should examine barriers to recruitment, such as residency requirements, education, background checks, grooming policies, and physical standards or training and academy requirements that might exclude potential recruits. The working group should assess the necessity of those requirements for a law enforcement officer in the twenty-first century. The working group should also identify the values and characteristics of the ideal recruit for the local

¹³ U.S. Department of Justice, "Law Enforcement Best Practices: Lessons Learned from the Field," Abstract, *COPS Office Resource Center* (2019): 106, <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-W0875>.

¹⁴ Jeremy M. Wilson et al., *Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium: The State of Knowledge* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), 35-36, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG959.html>.

¹⁵ Morison, *Hiring for the 21st Century*.

¹⁶ Wilson et al., *Police Recruitment and Retention*, 15-16.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

community. Values can be complex and should include the voices of officers, the community, and other key stakeholders.¹⁷

2.1.2 Law enforcement agencies, in collaboration with their local labor or representative organization, should redefine the critical characteristics and traits of individuals recruited into the field and ensure job descriptions match those characteristics to better align career aspirations with the work they will be tasked to perform.

The 1967 U.S. President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (i.e., Johnson commission) recommended that all police candidates be tested to determine "moral character" and "emotional fitness."¹⁸ The Johnson commission noted that these tests should identify and measure personality characteristics. Personality assessments remain the most popular choice for pre-employment psychological evaluations.¹⁹ These assessments of candidate traits serve one of two functions: either "screening in" desirable characteristics or "screening out" undesirable qualities.²⁰ Research demonstrates the relationship between personality assessments and police performance.²¹

However, the dominance of personality screening has overlooked the importance of assessing other important "soft skills" in policing.²² Dr. Anne Li, Kringsen, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Assistant Dean of the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences, states, "Certain skills that are likely necessary to effectively work in law enforcement, such as communication and dispute resolution, are generally not part of pre-employment testing. This speaks to the greater issue that the attributes tested for in current hiring processes do not align well with those needed to effectively practice law enforcement."²³ A 2016 joint forum with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and Police Executive Research Forum highlighted number of skills that pre-employment does not currently screen for (see text box).

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The COPS Office's forum highlighted traits for an ideal recruit:²⁴

- analytical
- a skilled communicator
- streetwise and possessing common sense
- a problem solver
- a change maker
- adaptable
- culturally competent

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, *Law Enforcement Best Practices*, 31-32.

¹⁸ President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), 110, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/42.pdf>.

¹⁹ Peter Weiss and Robin Inwald, "A Brief History of Personality Assessment in Police Psychology," in *Personality Assessment in Police Psychology: A 21st Century Perspective*, ed. Peter Weiss (n.p.: Charles C. Thomas Press, 2010), 20-21.

²⁰ Paul Detrick and John Chibnall, "NEO PI-R Personality Characteristics of High-Performing Entry-Level Police Officers," *Psychological Services* 3, no. 4 (2006).

²¹ Michael Aamodt, *Research in Law Enforcement Selection* (Boca Raton, FL: Brown Walker, 2004), 16.

²² Michael Pittaro, Ph.D., "The Importance of Soft Skills for Criminal Justice Professionals," *In Public Safety*, September 21, 2018, <https://inpublicsafety.com/2018/09/the-importance-of-soft-skills-for-criminal-justice-professionals/>.

²³ Anne Li Kringsen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Assistant Dean, Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences, email communication to President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, April 30, 2020.

²⁴ James E. Copple, *Law Enforcement Recruitment in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 2017), 5, <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-w0830-pub.pdf>.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

- a strong advocate for human rights
- well-educated
- compassionate
- a visionary

[END TEXT BOX]

Adequate representation among certain groups, specifically women and Native Americans, is also essential for policing. Law enforcement should make the profession more desirable for women. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women hold the majority of jobs in the nation's workforce, yet they are not equally represented in state, local, tribal, territorial, or federal law enforcement.²⁵ For federal law enforcement, women represent just 15 percent of officers.²⁶ In 2016, 12 percent of full-time sworn officers in local police departments and 14 percent in sheriffs' offices were women.^{27 28} The current methods to recruit women do not increase the hiring rate to accurately represent the population of women in the United States. If women's representation in law enforcement does not mirror their proportion of the population, communities may lose trust in law enforcement due to the lack of equal representation.²⁹

Tribal law enforcement agencies face many of the same issues and problems as small and rural agencies. Most are small, employing fewer than 10 sworn officers; are located in non-metropolitan areas serving jurisdictions with fewer than 20,000 residents; and engage in primary police functions similar to those of comparably sized agencies.³⁰

[CROSS-REFERENCE RURAL AND TRIBAL CHAPTER]

Tribal police departments, and especially tribal agencies, should be strengthened. Native officers can improve community support; be valuable mentors to both non-Native officers and new Native officers; and help recruit new candidates from the community, leveraging word of mouth and tribal news sources to announce job opportunities.³¹

Pre-employment testing should include assessments of other important soft skills for officer candidates. Additionally, hiring should target specific groups who have been underrepresented in law enforcement, specifically women across all law enforcement agencies and Native Americans for tribal agencies.

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2.1.3 Law enforcement agencies should leverage partnerships and relationships with external organizations and other agencies to help build recruitment strategies.

Law enforcement agencies should continuously seek and employ creative recruiting methods to maintain healthy staffing levels. Agencies can broaden their applicant pool by reaching out to veteran and non-veteran career fairs, high schools, and university classrooms.

[CROSS REFERENCE RESPECT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT]

²⁵ Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE), *Transforming Law Enforcement*, 13-15.

²⁶ Helen H. Yu, Ph.D, An Examination of Women in Federal Law Enforcement: An Exploratory Analysis of the Challenges They Face in the Work Environment, *Feminist Criminology* 10, no. 3 (2015), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1557085114545824>.

²⁷ Shelley S. Hyland and Elizabeth Davis, *Local Police Departments, 2016: Personnel* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2019), 5, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/lpd16p.pdf>.

²⁸ Connor Brooks, *Sheriffs' Offices, 2016: Personnel* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2019), 3, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/so16p.pdf>.

²⁹ Muhlhausen, "Women In Policing."

³⁰ L. Edward Wells and David N. Falcone, "Rural Crime and Policing in American Indian Communities," *Southern Rural Sociology: SRS*, 2008, <https://agris.fao.org/agris-search/search.do?recordID=US201301670889>.

³¹ International Association of Chiefs of Police, *Promising Practices in Tribal Community Policing* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2016), 11-13, <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P359>.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Agencies should also participate in small- and large-scale community events to spread the word about recruitment efforts. Law enforcement agencies should enhance diversity by specifically targeting their efforts at youth and young adults from underrepresented groups and building partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities. Agencies may consider transitional workers (e.g., cadets who do not yet qualify for the police academy or promising students who have not yet completed educational or age requirements) to serve in a civilian position until they meet the qualifications for a sworn personnel position.

[CROSS REFERENCE JUVENILE JUSTICE CHAPTER]

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The Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho collaborated with its tribal police department to create the Indian Youth Explorer's Police Academy (IYEPA). The program stresses the principles of community policing and public service, and encourages teenagers to consider a career in law enforcement by introducing them to police work through a variety of engaging activities. Topics include tracking, firearms operations, officer safety, building clearing, tactical medical procedures, and court testimony. Drills, swimming, and competitive sports emphasize physical fitness.³²

[CROSS REFERENCE RURAL AND TRIBAL]

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2.1.4 Law enforcement agencies should engage the community to increase community trust and enhance the hiring process. Efforts should solicit community input, especially through interviews, and invite community leaders and representatives to participate as panel members during oral board interviews.

By soliciting community input, the community will be invested in the law enforcement agencies and create partnerships with the agency. V. Harrison Dillard, Civil Rights and Diversity Committee Chairperson of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives' New Jersey Chapter, states, "An agency's image and reputation, especially within minority communities, is a significant factor with the organization's ability to recruit minority applicants."³³ To help recruit those applicants, agencies should work with community groups to ensure the hiring process is fair, transparent, and relatable to minority applicants.

2.1.5 Law enforcement agencies should include information on officer wellness in their recruitment efforts.

PULL QUOTE: "By encouraging communication early in an officer's career, it will normalize the long-term sustainability of the officer talking about his or her stress."³⁴ - Officer Nicole Juday, Indianapolis Police Department

By providing information on officer wellness during recruitment, an agency displays that their officers' well-being is at the forefront of its mission. In the Indianapolis, Indiana, police department,

Officer wellness is now formally and informally entrenched in every aspect of an officer's career: it begins through introduction to a formally assigned mentor the first week of the academy, continues throughout their career and culminates by walking the officer through the retirement process with someone from the Office of Professional Development and Wellness (OPDW). By marketing officer wellness in recruitment efforts, it informs potential applicants that talking about experiences and feelings is supported in the agency.³⁵

³² Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S Department of Justice, "Raising Tipis and Solving Crimes: The Nez Perce Indian Youth Explorers' Police Academy," *Community Policing Dispatch*, March 2019, https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/03-2019/raising_tipis_solving_crimes.html.

³³ V. Harrison Dillard, Civil Rights & Diversity Committee Chairperson, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) New Jersey Chapter, email communication to President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice: Hearings on Grant Programs, April 30, 2020.

³⁴ *President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice: Hearings on Officer Safety and Wellness* (February 27, 2020) (statement of Nicole Juday, Officer, Indianapolis, IN), <https://www.justice.gov/ag/presidential-commission-law-enforcement-and-administration-justice/hearings>.

³⁵ Juday, *President's Commission on Law*, February 27, 2020.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

[CROSS REFERENCE HEALTH AND WELLNESS]

2.1.6 Law enforcement agencies should develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for recruitment.

The marketing strategy should include branding; using the agency's mission to create a clear understanding of career satisfaction and advancement; advertising the strengths and benefits of the agency to entice recruits; creating an introduction video from the chief or sheriff that welcomes potential recruits and invites them to learn more about opportunities in the agency; and using testimonials from officers, sergeants, lieutenants, and other positions to describe the equipment, training, and culture. Local labor and representative organizations can complement these efforts by demonstrating that new recruits will have a voice at the agency. These organizations give potential recruits assurances that their rights will be protected as employees.

2.1.7 Law enforcement agencies should assure the validity of, and periodically audit, all testing instruments.

[CROSS-REFERENCE DATA AND REPORTING]

Law enforcement agencies should conduct a validation study whenever jobs and job requirements change significantly. They should consult with either police-testing specialists, college- or university-based psychologists, or private professional industrial psychologists regarding test validation. Agencies can minimize errors associated with the subjective interview process by providing a candidate with the specific wording of the questions (i.e., structured interview) and allowing the interviewer to clarify the meaning of a question when necessary (i.e., limiting probing questions).

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- Agencies should invest in face-to-face interviews that include scenario-based questions.
- Agencies should have candidates go on ride-alongs with officers and involve them in community engagement activities.
- States and individual agencies should adopt research- and evidenced-based physical fitness standards.
- Agencies should embrace physical fitness as a priority throughout officers' careers.
- Agencies should check candidates' social media accounts for any indicators or warning signs of explicit bias.
- Agencies should advise candidates about the role of the local labor or representative organization and how the organization engages with agency leadership.

[CROSS REFERENCE OFFICER HEALTH AND WELLNESS; RESPECT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT]

[END TEXT BOX]

Law enforcement agencies should ensure that they assess each applicant in a valid, reliable, fair, and legally defensible manner.

2.1.8 Law enforcement agencies should offer recruitment and retention incentives.

Recruitment incentives help applicants offset the cost of entering the law enforcement field. A 2019 Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) study analyzed the recruitment incentives for 412 new recruits across the United States. The most common recruitment incentive involved paying a recruit's salary while they attended the academy, followed by offering free training at the academy, a college tuition reimbursement, health and

³⁶ Morison, *Hiring for the 21st Century*.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

fitness opportunities, or a stipend for fluency in a language other than English. The study also found that offering childcare assistance to a new recruit would better meet the needs of working families.³⁷

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In the Dunwoody Police Department, a new hire receives a \$4,000 hiring bonus: \$2,000 at their one-year anniversary and \$2,000 at their two-year anniversary. Additionally, an employee receives a \$1,000 bonus for each referral who is hired. The department also offers a monthly housing stipend of \$700 for employees who live in the city of Dunwoody.³⁸

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2.1.9 Law enforcement agencies should develop family support programs.

Examples of family support programs include moving assistance, home locator programs, financial planning, school district information, physician finders, spousal training and support groups, mindfulness retreats, and family CPR training.

[CROSS-REFERENCE HEALTH AND WELLNESS]

The Arlington, Texas, police department hosts a family night during their academy training. During this event, they share a book about how to care for and live with a police officer.³⁹

2.1.10 Law enforcement agencies should redefine their prior drug use policies.

Many agencies are proactively reexamining their policy on prior drug use to remove the number of prior uses as an automatic disqualifier. Instead, agencies should focus on whether drugs were used one year prior to hiring and the type of drug, the totality of prior drug use, and potential impacts to the agency after hiring. In light of the recent changes to state and local laws related to cannabis (i.e., marijuana) possession and usage, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has taken a broader view regarding applicant use of cannabis and derivative products to ensure continued employability of a diversified and talented applicant pool.

Mike Stuart, United States Attorney of the Southern District of West Virginia, states, “In places like West Virginia, an incredibly high percentage of youth make tenable decisions and get involved in drugs. People make mistakes in life. We need to provide opportunities and hope for those who seek a second chance by creating pathways for careers in law enforcement.”⁴⁰ By redefining prior drug use policies, it allows for those who have made mistakes in their past to be considered for careers in law enforcement.

[CROSS-REFERENCE JUVENILE JUSTICE]

2.1.11 Law enforcement agencies should redefine their grooming policies.

Law enforcement agencies should examine policies related to facial hair, nail polish, women’s hair (especially policies related to minority women), tattoos, and general appearance. Policies that are overly restrictive or prohibitive reduce the size of the potential applicant pool.⁴¹

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Does it discredit the agency, interfere with essential job functions, or affect officer safety?

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³⁷ Police Executive Research Forum, *The Workforce Crisis*, 33–34.

³⁸ Fidel Espinoza, Lieutenant, Dunwoody Police Department, in discussion with the Recruitment and Training Working Group, April 1, 2020.

³⁹ Will Johnson, Chief, Arlington, TX, police department, virtual site visit of Arlington Police Department, April 15, 2020.

⁴⁰ *President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice: Hearings on Social Problems Impacting Public Safety* (April 2, 2020) (statement of Mike Stuart, U.S. Attorney, Southern District of WV), <https://www.justice.gov/ag/presidential-commission-law-enforcement-and-administration-justice/hearings>.

⁴¹ Wilson et al., *Police Recruitment and Retention*.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

The Norfolk, Virginia, police department has changed its marketing policies to convey that it supports diversity in grooming.



Source: City of Norfolk, Virginia – Official Website

2.1.12 Law enforcement agencies should market professional development opportunities for officers.

Professional development attracts applicants who are interested in self-improvement and personal growth.

2.1.13 Law enforcement agencies should annually research other agencies to look for promising practices and adoptable strategies and to ensure their agency is recruiting competitively.

Regularly researching other agencies ensures relevancy and competitiveness in the field. It also allows agencies to learn from each other and ensure comparable salary and benefit packages.

2.1.14 Law enforcement agencies should ensure that their recruiting messages reflect the reality of police work, emphasizing service rather than excitement or adventure.

For many years, agencies highlighted fast-paced, adrenaline pumping images in their recruiting videos and flyers. This does not represent the typical day-to-day policing that officers encounter on the job. Also, these images do not resonate with the population currently entering the labor market who are more service oriented.⁴²

Dwayne Orrick notes, “Even though the individual has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the job, many do not like the work or fit within the agency. Several states have found that at least 25 percent of officers leave their department within the first 18-36 months on the job. Field training officers or supervisors often hear the officer say, ‘This job is not what I thought it was.’”⁴³

2.1.15 Law enforcement agencies should reduce the time it takes to apply for and receive an offer from an agency, including the background screening.

With a wide range of applications processes (from six weeks to nine months or longer), law enforcement agencies are losing candidates to other job offers. To curb this recruiting issue, agencies should consider how

⁴² Wilson et al., *Police Recruitment and Retention*, 15–16.

⁴³ Dwayne Orrick, *Best Practice Guide: Recruitment, Retention, and Turnover in Law Enforcement* (Alexandria, VA: International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2007), 8.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

they can reduce the hiring timeframe, specifically focusing on background screenings. One method is to outsource background screens to the private sector while still maintaining integrity. Lieutenant Colonel Barry Bratt of the Colorado State Patrol says, "The Colorado State Patrol is looking into privatizing background screenings for all non-sworn personnel to help reduce the backlog, freeing up time for the sworn personnel's screenings to be processed more efficiently."⁴⁴

2.1.16 The Department of Justice should implement grant programs that allow for more funding to small agencies in recruiting.

Most small agencies do not have the recruitment budget or resources to competitively recruit officers, including registration fees for recruiting events, funds for promotional materials, or the ability to pay academy expenses.

2.1.17 Congress should increase the Department of Justice's budget annually to allow for the COPS Office Hiring Program in fiscal year 2021 and subsequent years to recruit, hire, and retain officers across the country to fill the officer deficit.

The COPS Office was established in response to rising violent crime in the 1990s, and evaluations have repeatedly found the hiring program has been successful in reducing crime.⁴⁵ COPS Hiring Program (CHP) funding exceeded \$1 billion from 1995 through 1999, but dropped considerably in the 2000s. Less than \$200 million was allocated for the program in 2003 and 2004, and less than \$20 million was allocated in each year from 2005 to 2008. In the wake of the 2008 recession, funding was increased for the CHP and brought back up to \$1 billion.⁴⁶

A 2007 study by Professors William Evans and Emily Owens found that additional police hired with COPS funding "generated statistically significant reductions in auto thefts, burglaries, robberies, and aggravated assaults."⁴⁷ Additionally, a 2019 study by Steven Mello analyzed CHP funding and found that departments that received COPS grant money saw a 3.2 percent increase in police staffing and a 3.5 percent reduction in crime compared to similar departments that did not receive the grant money.⁴⁸

More police lead to reductions in crime.⁴⁹ In 2002, criminologists from the University of Alabama at Birmingham found that "a 10 percent increase in police levels lowered crime rates by 1.4 percent over time."⁵⁰

2.1.18 Police Officer Standards and Training-type agencies should be considered law enforcement entities under the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Office of General Council.

Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) agencies should receive full criminal history or protection order information when vetting if an applicant for police officer certification is statutorily eligible to become certified. Currently, this is not available to POSTs because they are not recognized as law enforcement entities.

In Colorado, the POST Board is statutorily required to conduct a fingerprint-based criminal history check on all police officer certification applicants. Due to this federal limitation, the POST cannot receive information

⁴⁴ Lt. Col. Barry Bratt, Colorado State Patrol, in discussion with Recruitment and Training Working Group, March 18, 2020.

⁴⁵ Josh Crawford, *The Case for Cops 3.0* (Louisville, KY: Pegasus Institute, 2020).

⁴⁶ Steven Mello, "More COPS, Less Crime," Abstract, *Journal of Public Economics* 172, (2019), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272718302305?via%3Dihub>.

⁴⁷ William N. Evans and Emily G. Owens, "COPS and Crime," Abstract, *Journal of Public Economics* 91, no. 1-2 (2007), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272706000831>.

⁴⁸ Mello, "More COPS, Less Crime."

⁴⁹ Jens Ludwig and John J. Donohue III, *Report More COPS* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2007), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/more-cops/>.

⁵⁰ Tomislav V. Kovandzic and John J. Sloan, "Police Levels and Crime Rates Revisited: A County-Level Analysis from Florida," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 30, no. 1 (2002), [science direct.com/science/article/pii/S0047235201001234](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0047235201001234).

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

on previous entry into a deferred judgement and sentence agreement for assault or domestic violence, even though this would disqualify an applicant per their statutes. The same issue applies to protection orders. If a person has an active, valid protection order that prohibits them from possessing firearms, POST agencies cannot see this information and may allow the police officer applicant to attend a law enforcement training academy, where they would be allowed to possess firearms. This applies to current police officers who may have committed an offense in another state that would have resulted in decertification.⁵¹

2.2 Retention

Background

Some turnover in an organization can be a positive to allow the organization and individuals to advance, facilitate change, become more diverse, and reduce poor performance. However, continual voluntary turnover (e.g., people leaving to pursue other careers) can be detrimental to law enforcement agencies. Reducing agency attrition saves money through lowered recruiting and hiring costs and often leads to a more effective and efficient organization. Improving retention can help alleviate the ongoing need to recruit.

Current State of the Issue

A number of items lead to attrition in law enforcement: changing career expectations and job duties, the work environment, competitive salaries, benefit packages, and the focus on employee well-being. People also leave the field because of staff poaching, which often happens when an employee will serve on a task force, work closely with a contract company, or become an expert in a product and then be offered a non-competitive job.

[CROSS-REFERENCE TO OFFICER HEALTH AND WELLNESS]

Agencies can adopt many initiatives to improve retention or to minimize the detrimental effects of attrition, including planning and analyzing employees' needs, reducing the financial impact of attrition, enhancing compensation and non-traditional incentives, engaging employees in ways to improve the agency, and improving organizational effectiveness through open communication and fair and transparent practices.⁵² Additionally, agencies should analyze who is likely to leave, when, and why.

2.2.1 Law enforcement executives should conduct an evidence-based analysis of agency retention needs.

Law enforcement agencies should examine data that convey the reasons people stay and leave to ensure that their work environment and culture facilitate officer retention. Agencies should conduct periodic job satisfaction surveys to identify areas where they risk losing staff due to dissatisfaction. Agencies should develop these satisfaction surveys with input from rank-and-file officers to increase transparency. They should also regularly communicate what the agency is doing to address those deficiencies.

[CROSS-REFERENCE DATA AND REPORTING]

Law enforcement agencies should also develop "stay" interviews to identify reasons why employees are committed to the agency. Similar to job satisfaction surveys, stay interviews identify what employees value about their agencies plans and provide leadership the opportunity to view the agency from the line officers' points of view. They also help leadership ensure that employees value the core elements of the agency's mission and vision.

2.2.2 Law enforcement agencies should develop a comprehensive onboarding process.

⁵¹ Bourgerie, in discussion with Recruitment and Training, March 24, 2020.

⁵² Wilson et al., "Police Recruitment and Retention," 63.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Agencies should develop an onboarding checklist that ensures new hires spend time in each department of the agency, attend court, and schedule appointments with the command staff and chief or sheriff. Comprehensive onboarding should incorporate both a portal that serves as a repository of information for new hires (e.g., the Federal Bureau of Investigation's New Employees webpage) and in-person support from human resources and mentors.⁵³ They should also be afforded the opportunity to meet with the leadership of the local labor or representative organization to familiarize them with the role this organization will play in protecting their rights and their future with the agency.

2.2.3 Law enforcement agencies should increase staff engagement in the agency, allowing for both top-down and bottom-up input into policies, procedures, and operations.

Allowing everyone to have a voice in agency policies, procedures, and activities fosters a synergy of ideas and broader discussions. It also demonstrates that respect can be fostered at all levels of the agency. Employees who feel they have a voice in their agency are more satisfied with their job than those who do not feel they have that voice.⁵⁴ Agencies should leverage their relationship with the local labor or representative organization and make it clear to those members the role of their organization is respected and their voice is heard on workplace issues.

2.2.4 Law enforcement agencies should develop formal procedures for exit interviews to identify reasons for leaving.

Exit interviews can help identify where an agency's retention efforts fall short.⁵⁵ Exit interviews are cost effective (i.e., easy to conduct and take little time with minimal investment), obtain honest information delivered without fear of retaliation, and provide insight into the actual work environment. Such insights may include comments on leadership style and ways to improve the agency, and increased future retention once negative practices are corrected.⁵⁶

2.2.5 Law enforcement agencies should offer incentives for professional development and offer time for staff to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Employees feel valued in their organization when the organization offers time for employees to seek professional development opportunities.⁵⁷ The agency benefits when it allows employees to become more proficient and increase their promotion potential within the organization. Agencies that encourage professional development retain officers more than agencies that do not.⁵⁸ When officers feel that their agency invests in their professional development, they are less likely to look to other agencies that do encourage learning and training. Agencies may offer incentives to encourage officers to complete trainings and certifications, including increased pay, bonus pay, or compensatory time. Agencies should consult with their local labor or representative organization to gain their perspective about what types of incentives would be most effective.

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2.26 Law enforcement agencies should establish a mentoring program that extends beyond new hires.

⁵³ "FBI's New Employees," Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed June 3, 2020, <https://www.fbi.gov/about/new-employees>.

⁵⁴ Kristie Rogers, "Do Your Employees Feel Respected?," *Harvard Business Review*, July 1, 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/07/do-your-employees-feel-respected>.

⁵⁵ Everett Spain and Boris Groysberg, "Making Exit Interviews Count," *Harvard Business Review*, April 1, 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/04/making-exit-interviews-count>.

⁵⁶ Kevin Mason, "Four Benefits of Conducting Exit Interviews," Genesis HR Solutions, July 27, 2015, <https://genesishrsolutions.com/peo-blog/four-benefits-of-conducting-exit-interviews/>.

⁵⁷ Rogers, "Do Your Employees Feel Respected?"

⁵⁸ Police Executive Research Forum, *The Workforce Crisis*, 51.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Many officers seek mentors within law enforcement agencies to identify avenues for advancement. The lack of a mentoring program may reduce long-term retention of officers, especially the younger generations who thrive on continual growth, strong relationships, and open dialogue.⁵⁹ When developing a mentoring program, leadership should recognize the difference between forced mentoring relationships and the flexibility of allowing mentors to self-identify potential mentees, because forced mentoring relationships may adversely affect retention efforts.

2.2.7 Law enforcement agencies should examine their salary and benefit packages and incentive programs to ensure that they are competitive in the field. Rural and tribal law enforcement agencies should provide competitive salaries and benefits to compete with larger agencies.

A recent study by the National Institute on Retirement Security shows that retirement and health benefits are closely tied to job satisfaction.⁶⁰ According to the National Association of Police Organizations, “Cities that have downgraded their pension plans or switched to defined contribution plans have seen qualified, trained officers leave for other jurisdictions who provide defined benefit plans. They also find it harder to recruit new officers to replace those who have left.”⁶¹ Agencies should consult both informally and formally with their local labor or representative organization for their perspective through the labor-management process.

According to a 2019 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, about half of law enforcement agencies in the United States have fewer than 10 officers, and a significant number of law enforcement agencies—approximately 70 percent—are smaller agencies that serve communities of fewer than 10,000 citizens. When an officer departs from a smaller agency, it can sometimes take about two years to recruit and properly train a replacement. These challenges make it difficult for agency leaders to maintain appropriate staffing levels and generate job satisfaction and positive morale.

Agencies should determine the optimal flex-time, shift rotation, and secondary employment authorization options that produce the best work–life balance. Changes in these benefit packages may not only save the agency money, but may also affect the longevity of staff retention.

2.2.8 The Department of Education should reexamine the Student Loan Forgiveness Program.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program offers student loan forgiveness options. Law enforcement officers who make 120 on-time payments while working for a qualifying organization may have their debt forgiven; however, only 1.1 percent of people received student loan forgiveness for law enforcement as of June 2019.⁶² In addition, life and career changes affect eligibility, and people may not have paid off their student loans by the time they qualify.

PULL QUOTE: “Loan forgiveness should be offered starting on day one of working for a law enforcement agency, and continue for either the length of their career, or for a specified length of time. For example, if you work for a law enforcement agency for the month of January, you don’t have to make your January loan payments. When a person leaves employment at a law enforcement agency, they would be required to pay any remaining balance on their loan on the normal monthly installments.” – Erik Bourgerie, Colorado POST Director⁶³

2.2.9 The federal government should reestablish an education assistance program for law enforcement.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, *Law Enforcement Best Practices*, 99.

⁶⁰ “Amid Worker Shortages, New Research Examines State & Local Employee Views on Their Jobs, Pay and Benefits,” National Institute on Retirement Security, November 11, 2019, <https://www.nirsonline.org/2019/11/amid-worker-shortages-new-research-examines-state-local-employee-views-on-their-jobs-pay-and-benefits/>.

⁶¹ National Association of Police Organizations, *Priorities for the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement*, (Alexandria, VA: National Association of Police Organizations, March 10, 2020).

⁶² Elyssa Kirkham, “The Ultimate Guide to Student Loan Forgiveness for Law Enforcement,” *Lending Tree*, November 28, 2019, <https://studentloanhero.com/featured/student-loan-forgiveness-law-enforcement-guide/#police>.

⁶³ Bourgerie, in discussion with Recruitment and Training, March 24, 2020.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

This program should reimburse state and local law enforcement personnel up to 75 percent of the cost of tuition for undergraduate or graduate course work from any accredited college or university.

2.2.10 States should recognize the right of public safety employees to bargain collectively with their employers.

2.2.11 Congress should enact legislation that encourages states to recognize the right of public safety employees to bargain collectively with their employers.

According to the National Association of Police Organizations, “History shows that denying workers the right to bargain collectively causes poor morale, the waste of resources, unsafe and inadequate working conditions, and low productivity.”⁶⁴ The Public Safety Employer–Employee Cooperation Act provides a framework for discussing workplace issues between employers and employees that could effectively retain officers.

2.2.12 Law enforcement agencies should allow staff to work part-time.

Female officers who plan to give birth and adopting parents appreciate the flexibility that part-time work offers.⁶⁵ Law enforcement agencies with short- and long-term part-time work policies increase the likelihood that officers who need to care for young or aging family members retain their positions. Often, these officers revert to full-time work within the agency after the need for part-time work is complete. Pregnancy should not be treated as a problem. Many policies support work–life balance, and having children is often part of that formula.

PULL QUOTE: “It is an obvious benefit to society as a whole for police officers to be parents, which undoubtedly make them better police officers as well.” – Karen J. Kruger, Senior Assistant County Attorney and Counsel to the Sheriff, Harford County, Maryland⁶⁶

2.2.13 Law enforcement agencies should offer non-traditional benefits.

Non-traditional benefits could be monetary, such as reimbursement for gym memberships, massages, or meal services. They could also be non-monetary, such as casual dress days or no-shave November. Non-traditional benefits could also be a combination of the two, such as on-site dry cleaners, a recreation or game room, or a meditation room.

Non-traditional benefits bolster morale and contribute to a positive organizational culture when law enforcement agencies apply them fairly and transparently across the organization. They can also be a cost-effective way to show staff that the agency values them. Agencies may also be able to leverage or promote existing benefits offered by the local labor or representative organization.

2.2.14 Law enforcement agencies should extend traditional and non-traditional benefits to the families of their officers.

Law enforcement agencies create a holistic approach to valuing employees when they include their families. Examples of these traditional and non-traditional benefits include stipends for childcare, lists to local physicians and health care facilities, family support groups, home relocation services, family training in emergency procedures, opportunities for family members to connect with leadership, family luncheons, holiday events, sporting events, and service awards for family members who volunteer and serve in the community. Agencies may also be able to leverage or promote existing benefits offered by the local labor or representative organization.

⁶⁴ National Association of Police Organizations, *Priorities for the President's Commission*.

⁶⁵ National Association of Police Organizations, *Priorities for the President's Commission*.

⁶⁶ Karen J. Kruger, *Pregnancy and Policing: Are They Compatible?* (n.p: Bepress Legal Services, 2006), 25.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

2.3 Training

Background

The quality, regularity, and consistency of training opportunities prominently influence the effectiveness of everyday police work. There are approximately 664 different training academies and 18,000 local law enforcement agencies in the United States, and they lack consistent, nationwide training standards.⁶⁷

Some—but not all—agencies require training in de-escalation, infuse officer wellness components into training, and ensure adult learning principles complement tactical skills. Some also allow officers to “try out” the profession or shadow another officer for up to a year and begin policing without prior attendance at an academy.

The number of required training hours varies; some agencies have no annual training requirements, while others require 100 hours or more. States also have different requirements to maintain POST certification. Some states have no annual requirement, some have annual requirements, and others have bi-annual requirements.

The varied education levels of officers who enter the agency further complicate the issue. Some agencies require a high school education, some require a number of continuing education credits, and others require an associate’s degree or a bachelor’s degree. The wide-ranging inconsistencies across the county can be a point of confusion and contention in law enforcement.

Current State of the Issue

The quality, regularity, and consistency of training opportunities directly relate to officer retention. Many officers want professional development throughout their careers to advance in the field and stay relevant in their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Many law enforcement agencies lose officers because of the lack of consistency in training. This loss equates to an increase in recruitment costs and an organizational budget loss stemming from the money spent to recruit, hire, and train those officers leaving the agency.

Giving command, rank-and-file, and other staff the opportunity to participate in professional development enhances the quality of the employees and the organization. According to the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, law enforcement officers should stay aware of the latest crime trends; maintain proficiency in the use of tools, weaponry, and tactics; and become familiar with more advanced topics during their tenure.⁶⁸ Officers should also learn the lessons left behind by fallen officers while performing the same duties.

A number of departments would like to attract and retain officers who have superior communications skills and higher education. Given the range of people whom officers encounter in their communities, it is vital for officers to communicate effectively, exhibit compassion, and understand and accept people of different ethnicities and cultures.

2.3.1 Law enforcement agencies and academies should develop research- and evidence-based training.

Agencies should incorporate evidence-based training that focuses on successful instructional methodologies. Successful training programs usually evolve from four steps:

1. establish training objectives
2. conduct a baseline (i.e., pre-test) to determine basic comprehension prior to training
3. conduct a post-assessment to gauge the level of learning that occurred during training
4. transition to practical application in the field

⁶⁷ “Law Enforcement Training Academies,” Bureau of Justice Statistics, accessed July 3, 2020, <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=77>.

⁶⁸ Andrew A. DeMuth, Jr., “Proactive Professional Development,” *Perspective*, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, February 11, 2020, <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/perspective/perspective-proactive-professional-development>.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Instructors should continually evaluate their teaching strategies to ensure they meet their students' needs and maximize learning.

Transitioning from lecture-based to discussion-based instruction helps to increase critical thinking skills, as does problem-based learning. Scenario-based learning allows students to experience different situations in a safe, controlled training environment, where making a mistake will not be deadly. This type of training allows students to gain firsthand situational experience and allows the instructor to provide immediate feedback, which can increase student confidence and result in better field performance. If scenario-based training is conducted in a high-stress environment, it can also provide stress inoculation that allows for better self-regulation in a high-stress environment and better decision making under stress.⁶⁹ Law enforcement agencies and academies should continue to find advances in research- and evidence-based adult learning practices to keep law enforcement training current and relevant.

2.3.2 Law enforcement agencies should develop an advisory committee that includes rank-and-file officers, representatives from the local labor or representative organization, and community members to inform an agency's training needs.

The advisory committee should ensure that the training requirements meet the needs of the agency and the community it serves. The committee should research national training trends and policies that should be included in the training plan. Advisory committees benefit from including community members, as they may illuminate potential blind spots regarding what an agency does well and what it should improve.

[CROSS-REFERENCE RESPECT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT]

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The Arlington Police Department has a training advisory board that consists of citizens and law enforcement personnel. The advisory board determined that officers are required to have 24 hours of annual discretionary training to meet the needs of the agency and the community. The agency also requires officers to have an additional 16 hours of annual training to meet standard law enforcement, legal, and ethical requirements.

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2.3.3 Law enforcement agencies should train their officers on the history of their jurisdiction.

Officers should understand the communities they serve and the role the agency plays in that history. In addition, officers should understand the history of law enforcement. Understanding the history of law enforcement and that of the agency can help connect new officers with the profession as a whole, increase morale, identify traditions, and create a dedication to a mission larger than the individual. By educating officers on previous missteps, new officers should better understand the importance of their relationship with the community they serve.

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The Rapid City, South Dakota, police department partners with the Center for American Indian Research and Native Americans to train their staff in their local history that highlights both the trauma of community members and the historical and current roles of law enforcement in their community.

[END TEXT BOX]

2.3.4 The Department of Justice should work with the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National

⁶⁹ Federal Law Training Center, *Stress and Decision Making* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, July, 2011), 4–12, 13, https://www.fletc.gov/sites/default/files/imported_files/reference/research-papers/Stress-and-Decision-Making-04-06-12--Approved---Pulic-Release--508-Accessible.pdf.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Fraternal Order of Police, and the National Sheriffs' Association to develop national standards for online and in-person courses that have clear guidance, objectives, and goals.

National standards allow for a common process to develop law enforcement training. They help manage quality control through a series of requirements and checkpoints, and they also establish clear outcome expectations of in-person training initiatives. National standards ensure that courses are current, relevant, and applicable and have comprehensive instructor and facilitator guides, methodologies, and tools. National standards also help prepare law enforcement courses for accreditation through national law enforcement training accreditation programs. Sergeant Bill Gleason of Prince George's County, Maryland, states, "Agencies must show that they are utilizing best practices set forth by subject matter experts. Departments do not want to show a pattern of practice of negligent training or policies."⁷⁰

2.3.5 The Department of Justice should work with the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Fraternal Order of Police, and the National Sheriffs' Association to develop national standards that require subject matter experts to peer review and pilot courses prior to delivering courses.

Including subject matter experts in the course development allows the course to be vetted for content and applicability to the law enforcement field. National standards should guide implementation efforts to ensure courses are relevant, comparable on a national level, and free from discriminatory language and actions. Subject matter experts both within and outside of ATF review ATF's training courses to ensure the courses are evidence-based, relatable to the field, and include the most up to date promising and best practices.⁷¹ Sheriff Michael J. Bouchard of Oakland County notes, "The incorporation of [subject matter experts] in the development and review of training course should be a standard practice. It reduces liability."⁷²

2.3.6 The Department of Justice should develop a national minimum standard for annual training hours.

While this is a matter for each state to determine, a national minimum standard for training would provide a baseline of education for law enforcement officers nationwide. Agencies could require additional hours beyond the minimum standard; however, all officers would be required to meet the minimum requirements, ensuring that officers across the nation have the same threshold to maintain their professional knowledge, skills, and abilities.

2.3.7 The Department of Justice should provide funding to the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training to develop a national model for academy training hours based on best and promising practices. Law enforcement training academies and Police Officer Standards and Training organizations should use this training model nationwide.

[LINK TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS CHAPTER]

Training hours for law enforcement academies vary depending on the state, and they can be significantly lower than other industry academy hours. A national model based on best practices that determines the ideal number of instructional hours on specific topic areas should guide academy instruction and delivery. While these standards would not mandate a specific number of hours to be taught, it would create a universal metric of comparison.

2.3.8 The Department of Justice should require that all officers attend an academy before being allowed to patrol.

⁷⁰ Bill Gleason, Sergeant, Prince George's County, MD, police department (PowerPoint presentation, Recruitment and Training Working Group, teleconference, April 29, 2020).

⁷¹ Peter Forcelli, Deputy Assistant Director, Training and Professional Development, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, in discussion with Recruitment and Training Working Group, April 29, 2020.

⁷² Michael Bouchard, Certified Homeland Protection Professional, Sheriff, Oakland County, MI, President Emeritus, Major County Sheriffs of America, in discussion with Recruitment and Training Working Group, May 5, 2020.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Some states allow police officers to work in the field for up to one year (and sometimes longer with a waiver) before attending a basic law enforcement training academy.⁷³ This practice is often found in rural states where law enforcement leadership believes the practice assists with recruitment and prevents wasting resources on a person who enters an academy but does not remain in the profession after graduation. It also helps mitigate delays caused by waitlists at the academy.

[CROSS-REFERENCE RESPECT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT]

2.3.9 Law enforcement agencies and academies should use different instructional delivery methods for training based on the subject matter.

Not every training course requires the same approach. Teaching statute or ordinance may require an instructor to assign online homework to gain fundamental knowledge, then use classroom time to facilitate a more in-depth discussion to help increase understanding and provide context. A more complex course, such as domestic violence response and investigation, may incorporate actors to train the officer how to compassionately respond to victims of domestic violence. The ability to duplicate real life as much as possible, with the added ability to escalate or de-escalate the situation based on the actions of the officer, creates a learning-rich environment that provides immediate feedback and better prepares officers for the situations they will encounter in the field.⁷⁴

[CROSS REFERENCE VICTIM SERVICES]

ATF uses a number of different methods to deliver training to their employees. ATF is mindful of the principles of adult learning and makes sure that it factors this into curriculum development. Some courses that were once delivered in-person are now often delivered online. Courses that require students to be more engaged or to perform functions manually to achieve comprehension are delivered in person.

The Idaho POST strongly believes that scenario-based, practical exercises provide both the best reinforcement to classroom concepts and maximum training retention. The POST constantly reviews their curriculum to determine how different training methods can be used. Currently, they have integrated 64 hours of scenario-based training into basic training topics.⁷⁵

2.3.10 Law enforcement academies should incorporate adult learning strategies and problem-based learning processes into the tactical skills portion of the academy.

Adult learning strategies convey that instructional decisions and practice must be focused on the needs and experience of the student.⁷⁶ Most retention takes place at the beginning and end of the learning session.

Adults have a greater volume and different quality of experience than younger learners. Each adult learner brings a wealth of positive and negative experiences with them to class; adults define themselves based on their unique experiences. Experiential learning techniques (e.g., discussion methods, simulation exercises, and problem-solving exercises that tap into the accumulated knowledge and skills of the learners) provide learners with a frame of reference that helps them learn through analysis.⁷⁷

2.3.11 Law enforcement agencies should incorporate training modules that develop and reinforce oral and written communication skills for officers.

⁷³ Certification Requirement, South Carolina Code of Laws Unannotated, section 23-23-40.

⁷⁴ Dave Grossman and Loren W. Christensen, "Stress Reduction and Fear, Section Three, Chapter Two," in *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace*. 2nd ed. (n.p., PPCT Research Publications, 2007).

⁷⁵ Brad Johnson, Division Administrator, Idaho Peace Officer Standards and Training (presentation to Recruitment and Training Working Group, virtual meeting, April 29, 2020).

⁷⁶ Malcom Knowles, *Self-Directed Learning*, (Chicago: Follet, 1975).

⁷⁷ Malcom Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*, 3rd ed. (Houston: Gulf Publishing, 1984), 47-48.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

PULL QUOTE: “The most important aspect of policing in the United States is the ability to communicate effectively whether with victims, witnesses, community members, stakeholders, and suspects. Every police function fundamentally relies upon communication skills. Without competent communication skills, which can welcome participation, the police cannot serve their most basic functions. Effective communication yields accurate information, reduces errors, and garners the trust and support of the community.” - George Cronin and Marissa Bluestine, public comment⁷⁸

Police departments should recruit officers who are capable of responding to a dangerous incident, but who also have the problem-solving and communication skills required to diffuse a situation and gain compliance. Academies should teach problem-solving and oral and written communication skills.

2.3.12 Law enforcement agencies should provide individual training funds to all employees to encourage profession development beyond the agency’s required training hours.

ATF partners with a number of programs and universities to assist ATF personnel who possess a bachelor’s degree from an accredited university and who wish to achieve a master’s degree. These programs are covered in full by ATF, and the policy mandates that any employee who attends a training course that consists of more than 80 hours of study must sign a continued service agreement for three years. This ensures that the cost of the training will benefit both ATF and the employee.

For all its employees, ATF has a number of available courses that are focused on meeting career development needs, most of which are managed by the Leadership and Professional Development Division. These courses allow employees to take in-person and online training related to leadership and personal development beyond the mandatory required training hours. There are no charges for these courses, but supervisors should approve the use of official time to attend.

2.4 Use of Force Training and Policies

Background

According to the Police Executive Research Forum Guiding Principles, “the sanctity of life should be at the heart of everything an agency does,” which includes training programs and operational and administrative policies. This is especially important in how the agency addresses use of force. Use of force policies outline conditions and situations where an agency can authorize or justify uses of force. Training supports these policies and the legal framework created by statute and prevailing court decisions by preparing officers to use force through approved tactics and weapons. Agencies should devote training time to practice use-of-force techniques and develop weapons proficiency, while they balance the safety of their officers and community expectations of law enforcement conduct. This balance is difficult to achieve, as training competes with regular daily duties and limited resources. Too often, this results in agencies having to sacrifice training time and opportunities that reinforce the sanctity of life.

Many law enforcement agencies have adjusted their operating principles to elevate the sanctity of life while still addressing officer safety. More agencies have recognized the need to include training on de-escalation and defusing techniques, how to respond to mental health issues, and critical decision-making. These training opportunities give officers the confidence to consider their options when responding to a suspect’s actions. Officers who may have once considered how much force was authorized in a given situation should now analyze if alternatives to force are reasonable and appropriate.

Current State of the Issue

⁷⁸ George Cronin and Marissa Bluestine, The Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice, public comment to President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, March 31, 2020.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Excessive, inappropriate, or unauthorized uses of force damage the relationship between law enforcement and their communities. Police conduct is constantly under the microscope in modern society. Agencies should regularly and rigorously examine their training and policies to ensure that they provide support to their officers with guidance that is justifiable, legally defensible, and that demonstrates the agency's commitment to the sanctity of life and compliance with applicable standards.

Use-of-force training requires significant resources to establish and maintain the best practices of applying force. Between numerous state-mandated training topics, weapons qualifications, and required recertification of first aid and lifesaving skills, agencies are confronted with a lack of resources to provide crucial professional training development opportunities. Many agencies rotate topics on a yearly basis to cover critical skills and update operational procedures and processes to meet state or local retraining or recertification requirements. Local and state budget decisions have a direct impact on the quality and quantity of training development offered for all sizes of law enforcement agencies. All too often, the budget allocations leave agencies without the appropriate resources to meet the needs of training law enforcement professionals. However, agencies should ensure that, at minimum, their annual training program includes skills in de-escalation and defusing techniques.

2.4.1 Law enforcement agencies should include use-of-force models in their policies.

Use-of-force models describe an escalating series of actions that an officer may take to resolve a situation. A use-of-force model usually has many levels, and officers are instructed to respond with a level of force appropriate to the situation. An officer may move from one part of the force model to another as the need arises, possibly in a matter of seconds. Law enforcement should give preference to use-of-force models that allow officers to choose a level of force that is based on legal principles and provides a referential model of resistance to better guide lawful use of force. The model should also allow the officer to immediately resort to deadly force when objectively reasonable.

2.4.2 The Department of Justice should create a law enforcement ethics training course for agencies.

Ethics training, such as the "Ethical Policing is Courageous" program taught at the New Orleans Police Department, and other similar programs, reinforces the importance of having a culture of high quality and ethical policing. The course should include a peer intervention program that teaches officers how to intervene with another officer before a wrongful action occurs. The DOJ should create a toolkit of training materials and a train-the-trainer program. The DOJ should support the delivery of this training nationally.

2.4.3 Law enforcement agencies should require command and administrative staff to attend and participate in use-of-force training with line officers.

By requiring command and administrative staff to attend use-of-force training alongside line officers, the agency can establish a strong understanding and commitment of policies from all perspectives. Agency executives and command staff will gain a more precise understanding of what is taught to line-level staff, and they can apply that knowledge when assessing uses of force, policy implications, and community perceptions. Additional benefits include improved operational proficiency, morale, and camaraderie within the agency.

2.4.4 Law enforcement agencies should establish a use-of-force review panel that meets annually to conduct rigorous reviews of their use-of-force policies.

As a matter of practical necessity, agencies employ high-risk tactics in their operations. Shots fired at or from moving vehicles, warning shots, and dynamic room entries all elevate the risks of injury or death to officers, suspects, or bystanders.

Agencies should establish a review panel that includes representatives from the agency's command staff, training officers, general counsel, and prosecutor. Some agencies may also choose to include members of the community, stakeholder groups, or other law enforcement agencies. The panel should review best practices

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

and model policy examples, recent court decisions, changes in laws, training deficiencies or failures, and other considerations that have an impact on use of force policies.

Agencies should also meet regularly (e.g., quarterly or as appropriate for the agency) with representatives from the local prosecutor's office to review law enforcement use of force. The meetings may be used to review specific cases or to conduct policy reviews. These regular meetings should improve relationships among criminal justice personnel and provide a better understanding of law enforcement actions. Prosecutors can also be invited to view or participate in scenario-based trainings to create a deeper understanding of peace officer decision making under stress.

2.4.5 The Department of Justice should convene a group of law enforcement policy and training experts to review issues related to use of force and produce a report of best practices.

The DOJ, through the COPS Office, should bring together representatives from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Sheriffs Association, Major Cities Chiefs Association, Major County Sheriffs of America, the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training, the International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators and other professional associations to review topics relating to use of force. The group should review policing trends, responses to changing threats, technology developments, and other concerns. The group should produce and distribute a comprehensive report of best and promising practices with the goal of supporting local law enforcement agencies in making independent policy and training decisions by offering them guidance on these important topics. This group should identify best practices and should not establish requirements or standards.

2.4.6 Law enforcement agencies should release critical incident or use of force after-action reports, when appropriate, to Peace Officers Standards and Training or training academies for training development.

After-action reports can be a valuable source to improve officer safety and training on use of force. After resolution of all administrative or legal processes, agencies should make these reports available to the POST or academy training staff so that they may identify trends, training blind spots, or other factors that can help improve law enforcement training. The incidents contained in the after-action reports can be anonymized in training scenarios to ensure training is based as much as possible on the real world.