



Law Enforcement Recruitment in the 21st Century

Forum Proceedings

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Community Oriented Policing Services
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Letter from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

In July 2016, President Obama convened leaders from across law enforcement and civil rights organizations, as well as members of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, to talk about the ongoing need to build trust between law enforcement and the community. There was consensus among participants that further discussions were needed to focus on recruiting for a diverse workplace and on the challenges, often during the hiring process, that agencies experience in making that a reality.

In response to this meeting, President Obama asked the COPS Office to explore these topics and provide additional recommendations for law enforcement agencies as they work to improve the recruitment and hiring process. In August, the COPS Office teamed with Strategic Applications International (SAI) to host the forum on Law Enforcement Recruitment in the 21st Century. This publication is a summary of that meeting and is a companion to the Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer forum convened in partnership with the Police Executive Research Foundation in September 2016.

The recruitment forum brought together leaders from law enforcement, civil rights, and other stakeholder groups to identify a broad range of strategies to attract the best candidates to policing careers. Participants stressed that agencies must recognize that diversity is more than race and ethnicity; it includes gender and gender identity, religion, age, sexual orientation, language, and social backgrounds.

Though many recommendations focused on recruitment strategies such as outreach and marketing, underlying the entire discussion was procedural justice. For participants this meant that agencies are more likely attract diverse candidates if they accept and embrace diversity, and that a recruit could measure this by the professional opportunities and promotion potential in a department and by the way agencies treat people in the community. When departments commit themselves to recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse workforce that reflects the communities they serve, the community and the department benefit.

I recommend this report to all police and sheriff's departments, not only as a guide to recruiting and hiring but as a starting point for discussions about present and long-range personnel planning. The quality of American law enforcement has always depended upon the quality of its officers. I believe this publication can help us to continue to attract the best candidates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Davis', written in a cursive style.

Ronald L. Davis
Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Acknowledgments

It is with great appreciation that we recognize the work of the dedicated Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) staff members—Deborah Spence, Helene Bushwick, and Brenda Auterman—who helped design and implement the forum on Recruitment and Diversity. Their work to identify the departments to be represented and to develop the agenda for the forum was vital to its success.

Jessica Drake of Strategic Applications International (SAI) organized logistics and coordinated travel for the 40 participants. Colleen Copple, principal and co-founder of SAI, organized materials and contributed to the design of the forum. We are also grateful to Letitia Harmon for providing transcription for the entire forum and for Teresa Towey for note taking and assistance with pre-interviews.

We wish to offer a special recognition to Noble Wray, chief of the Policing Practices and Accountability Initiative of the COPS Office, for assisting in the design of the forum.

Throughout this document are numerous quotations. Where and when the sources gave permission, we cited the name of the organization.

James E. Copple, co-founder of Strategic Applications International, facilitated the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing and facilitated the forum on recruitment for the 21st Century.

Introduction

In the aftermath of the tragic events in Missouri, New York, and Ohio that captivated the nation's attention in 2014, President Obama issued an executive order establishing the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (task force) "to identify the best means to provide an effective partnership between law enforcement and local communities that reduces crime and increases trust."¹ The 11-member task force held seven public listening sessions in January and February 2015 to gather information that would help the task force develop recommendations and action steps on community and police interactions that promoted crime reduction while building public trust.

In May 2015 the task force released its final report with 59 recommendations to increase trust between law enforcement and the communities they protect and serve. The recommendations were organized into six pillars—Building Trust and Legitimacy, Policy and Oversight, Technology and Social Media, Community Policing and Crime Reduction, Training and Education, and Officer Safety and Wellness.

Building Trust and Legitimacy—the first pillar of the task force recommendations and the foundation upon which relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve begin—requires that departments recruit, hire, and retain officers that reflect the communities they serve. When departments commit to creating a diverse workforce, they reinforce the need and legitimize their efforts to build a procedurally just agency. The U.S. Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) has a long history of working with local, state, and tribal law enforcement to improve police and community relationships through technical assistance and resources developed in response to emerging issues in policing.

In response to the President Obama's July 13, 2016, meeting with law enforcement executives, civil rights leaders, social justice activists, national policing organizations, and members of the task force, the COPS Office convened two forums with national leaders to discuss law enforcement recruitment and hiring.² On August 31, 2016, the COPS Office, in partnership with Strategic Applications International (SAI), convened 50 law enforcement executives, community leaders, civil rights leaders, researchers, and subject matter experts to move from conversation to action – to strategize and identify best and promising practices for attracting diverse applicants to serve in law enforcement.

The Law Enforcement Recruitment in the 21st Century forum produced a number of recommendations and action steps that law enforcement agencies should consider as recruitment strategies are developed and/or updated to best reflect the needs of the community, the principles of community policing and public service, and a culture of diversity.

¹ "Executive Order—Establishment of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing," The White House, December 18, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/18/executive-order-establishment-presidents-task-force-21st-century-policin>.

² The second forum, *Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer*, was convened on September 13, 2016.

Recruiting for Diversity

As stated in recommendation 1.8 of the final task force report, “Law enforcement agencies should strive to create a workforce that contains a broad range of diversity including race, gender, language, life experience and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities.”

This recommendation was followed by five action steps designed to guide departments toward specific implementation strategies:

1.8.1. The Federal Government should create a Law Enforcement Diversity initiative designed to help communities diversify law enforcement departments to reflect demographics of the community.

1.8.2. The department overseeing this initiative should help localities learn best practices for recruitment, training and outreach to improve diversity and improve law enforcement’s cultural and linguistic responsiveness.

1.8.3. Successful law enforcement agencies should be highlighted and celebrated, and those with less diversity should be offered technical assistance to facilitate change.

1.8.4. Discretionary federal funding for law enforcement programs could be influenced by that department’s efforts to improve diversity and cultural and linguistic responsiveness.

1.8.5. Law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to explore more flexible staffing models.

Overview

Overview of the day

On August 31, 2016, the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), in collaboration with Strategic Applications International (SAI), convened a forum in Washington, D.C., on law enforcement recruitment in the 21st century. More than 50 participants from law enforcement, civil rights and community-based organizations, researchers, subject matter experts, nonprofit media and public service advertising organizations, and higher education offered recommendations on recruitment efforts, activities, and best and promising practices to advance the law enforcement profession.

Facilitators from SAI conducted a number of pre-forum interviews to better understand the issues and challenges related to law enforcement recruitment. These interviews revealed common themes that helped shape the agenda for the forum, exemplified in the following key quotes:

- There is no more important topic we can explore.
- If we fail to diversify we will fail to serve our entire community.
- I cannot effectively recruit if I am not modeling procedural justice.
- The officer we recruit today is not the same officer we recruited 25 years ago.
- We must reshape the image of policing and emphasize that we are guardians to protect and serve.
- We must recapture the importance of policing as a profession and not simply a job.
- We must understand that technology plays an important role in both recruitment and in service to our community.
- Cultural transformation is modeled in leadership and leadership must be inclusive and transparent.

Forum goals and topics

Drawing on the experience of diverse departments and experts in law enforcement, the forum focused on two primary goals:

1. Identify and develop strategies around best and promising practices to attract diverse applicants to serve in law enforcement.
2. Develop a roadmap that law enforcement agencies can immediately use to implement recruitment activities that attract diverse applicants.

Forum participants discussed the following topics:

- The relationship between community policing—building trust and strengthening relationships—and recruiting diverse applicants
- Barriers and challenges to creating a diverse applicant pool
- Best practices to enhance and improve recruitment efforts
- Understanding the public perception of policing and its impact on recruitment
- Recruitment campaigns that attract candidates who espouse the principles of community policing

The recommendations and action steps found in this document reflect input from subject matter experts and law enforcement agencies that participated in the August forum and the pre-forum interviews, and from a literature review. As departments work to attract and recruit diverse candidates that reflect the community they serve, departments must also develop policies and procedures that reflect the department's commitment to hiring, retaining, and promoting all law enforcement officers.

Forum Proceedings and Recommendations

As with all professions, law enforcement recruitment strategies need to be flexible and respond to the public safety needs of the community. In recent decades many communities have experienced demographic changes on axes including age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, and ability. The role of technology in communities has also changed, and law enforcement agencies must adapt to these changes as well and incorporate social media into their traditional recruitment efforts. The forum focused on these emerging issues, and this document focuses on identifying overarching recruitment strategies that will help improve and inform efforts to attract and recruit the 21st century law enforcement officer.

Forum exercise: the ideal recruit

To establish a vision for what the ideal recruit should look like within the next five years, forum participants identified the following characteristics of the ideal officer. The recruit will need to be all of the following:

1. Analytical
2. A skilled communicator
3. Streetwise and possessing common sense
4. A problem solver
5. A change maker
6. Adaptable
7. Culturally competent
8. Strong advocate for human rights
9. Well-educated
10. Compassionate
11. Visionary

As Catherine Sanz, executive director of Women in Federal Law Enforcement observed, “With such a list, no one person can be everything to everybody, but the diversity within a department allows you to learn from each other so you can problem solve in the community.” However, the totality of these skills will be found in a diverse department that embraces a comprehensive definition and view of diversity.

The *Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing* itself sets the framework for understanding diversity:

It is also important to recognize that diversity means not only race and gender but also the genuine diversity of identity, experience and background that has been found to help improve the culture of police departments and build greater trust and legitimacy with all segments of the population.³

Tracey Mears, a member of the task force and law professor at Yale University, pointed out that “demographic categories have evolved.” Forum participants agreed that diversity is more than race and ethnicity; it includes gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, language, and social background. They also agreed that diversity speaks to core beliefs and values, and that departments, organizations, and agencies that embrace diversity recognize the inherent benefits of a diverse workforce. Ronald L. Davis, director of the COPS Office, emphasized this at the forum: “I think it goes to decision making. From an organizational point of view, it’s about culture and how to make decisions and develop strategies to fight crime. If we were all one gender or race, we [wouldn’t] learn. I think diversity makes for a strong organization and has a more positive impact on the organization and the community.”

While the recommendations that emerged from the forum focused on recruitment efforts to attract more women, millennials, and LGBT candidates to serve in law enforcement, forum participants acknowledged that procedural justice—the dominant theme of Pillar One. Building Trust and Legitimacy—is a critical component of recruiting a 21st century law enforcement officer. This idea was repeatedly emphasized during both the forum and pre-forum interviews. For example, if a department pays attention to internal procedural justice, it is more likely to recruit diverse and trustworthy candidates. The final task force report defines trustworthy candidates as honest, transparent, aware of their own biases, and seeing themselves as both guardian and warrior.

³ President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), 17, https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf.

Procedural justice

To effectively recruit officers possessing the skills identified in the ideal recruit exercise, departments will have to pay attention to internal and external ideas of procedural justice.

This was not an abstract or random concern to participants. Procedural justice, and its importance to recruitment, was evident in the literature and pre-forum interviews and played a significant role in the forum discussion. Ed Madrano, chief of the Gardena (California) Police Department, shared his experience implementing procedural justice practices in his department: “We reorganized our entire force around the principles of procedural justice, believing it would help us recruit and retain the next generation of officers. We pay close attention to this issue.”

The final task force report reinforces the importance of procedural justice:

Decades of research and practice support the premise that people are more likely to obey the law when they believe that those who are enforcing it have the legitimate authority to tell them what to do. But the public confers legitimacy only on those they believe are acting in procedurally just ways.⁴

Just behavior is based on four central procedures now embraced by many, if not most, departments in the United States:

1. Treating people with dignity and respect
2. Giving individuals “voice” during encounters
3. Being neutral and transparent in decision making
4. Conveying trustworthy motives⁵

Forum participants stressed that the practice of these principles would create in the community both trust in the department and confidence that its officers would be honest, unbiased, benevolent and lawful. Participants agreed, both in the forum and in pre-forum interviews, that the overarching goal in recruitment is to find and develop officers with those qualities.

Forum participant and scholar Tom Tyler made this point regarding procedural justice and its application to recruitment: “I think one of the ways we talk about diversity is management. Initially, it was thought of as a right proportion of people from different groups to reflect a population. What we found in

⁴ Lorraine Mazerolle et al., “Legitimacy in Policing: A Systematic Review,” *The Campbell Collection Library of Systematic Reviews*, vol. 9 (Oslo, Norway: The Campbell Collaboration, 2013), cited in President’s Task Force, *Final Report*, 9–10 (see note 3).

⁵ President’s Task Force, *Final Report*, 10 (see note 3).

research is a diverse group does not act differently if you don't create the structure where that diversity can be expressed. How can we create an internal organization where it leads to consideration of different experiences and perspectives?" How a department is organized is critical to achieving success in recruiting for diversity.

Ben Crump of the National Bar Association pointed out that "department responses to police shootings of people of color have demonstrated over and over again the need for training and departmental focus on the need for both internal and external procedural justice."

Procedural justice is the thread that holds the principles of the ideal candidate or recruit together. When departments and communities understand the importance of procedural justice, then trust and respect become standard operating practices in both the department and the community.

Barriers and Challenges to Attracting Diverse Applicants to Law Enforcement

Forum participants were quick to identify that the single most significant barrier to recruitment is the changing image of law enforcement in the community. Since Ferguson and the consistent media coverage of police shootings, potential recruits are rethinking their career decisions and choices. Sean Smoot, member of the task force and treasurer of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), pointed out that “both the risk inherently found in policing and the lack of appreciation by communities is calling into question the nobility of the profession.” While the image of law enforcement is being examined, there are many other challenges and barriers to recruiting.

Other barriers and challenges include the following:

- Background checks that rule out candidates otherwise qualified for the profession on the basis of credit history or minor, usually drug-related, offenses
- The length of time it takes to qualify or train for the profession
- Personnel requirements such as residency, age, and experience
- Ability to advance in the profession
- Outdated physical requirements
- The lack of consistent or national professional standards—similar to those in medicine, aviation, and law—to define and measure professional performance
- The need for a comprehensive understanding of diversity in policy and practice
- Lack of resources as cities and, as a result, police departments experience budget cuts even as departments continue to lose staff through attrition from retirement, furloughs, or resignations

“A lot of families are intimidated by the application process—we can do better.”

– *Will Johnson, Arlington (Texas) Police Department*

General recruitment strategies for departments recruiting for the 21st century

In the early 2000s, law enforcement was experiencing a number of new challenges in recruitment and hiring. In response, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) released the *Law Enforcement Recruitment Toolkit* in 2009 to share innovative recruitment practices with agencies across the country. The toolkit focused on three key topics:

1. Recruiting for diversity
2. Agency collaboration
3. Community partnerships in police recruiting⁶

While the publication is eight years old, it has valuable information about how best to organize a department for recruitment in the 21st century. As forum participants noted, we are beginning to understand that the boxes we normally check for diversity are not separate, but instead are overlapping identities, and require a broader understanding of the community and the recruits seeking employment. Further, some forum participants stated that the challenges to recruitment in 2009 were largely driven by the recession, economic downturn, and people seeking professions with higher compensation and less danger; while for some agencies, the urgent need to maintain a police presence negatively impacted recruitment and hiring decisions.

Over time, officer-involved shootings in Ferguson, Long Island, Cleveland, Chicago, and South Carolina gave rise to public criticism of police as too quick to use deadly force, inappropriately using military tactics, biased in their relationships to people of color and LGBTQ+ people, and completely uninformed of the millennial generation's changes in attitudes and experiences. The IACP toolkit must be read with these later developments in mind; however, it remains an excellent resource and should be consulted as agencies revise and update strategies to recruit for a 21st century law enforcement officer.

Action steps for recruitment

As departments assess capacity and organize for recruitment in the 21st century, the following action-steps are recommended:

1. Departments should organize a working group of command staff and rank-and-file officers to address recruitment needs within the department.
 - a. The working group should use data, including its community's local EEOC data profiles, to determine how the department currently reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

⁶ International Association of Chiefs of Police, *Law Enforcement Recruitment Toolkit* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2009), 29–86.

- b. The working group should examine barriers to recruitment, such as residency requirements, education, background checks, physical standards or training and academy requirements that might exclude potential recruits. The working group should assess if those requirements are necessary for a 21st century law enforcement official. When possible, it should remove unnecessary or outdated barriers to create easier access to employment.
 - c. The working group should identify the values and characteristics of the ideal recruit for the local community. Values can be complex and should include the voices of officers, the community, and other key stakeholders.
 - d. The working group should review internal procedural justice practices to facilitate confidence in police leadership.
2. Departments should explore the development of candidate assessment centers, modeled off university assessment centers, to help candidates overcome barriers that might preclude a career in law enforcement.
- a. Departments should develop recruitment mentors to help recruits through the application process.
 - b. Departments should introduce potential candidates to all ranks and levels of responsibility in the department to give recruits a sense of the diverse jobs and responsibilities within a department.
 - c. Departments should involve local university and community college criminal justice programs in both recruitment and pre-application mentoring of recruits.
 - d. Departments should facilitate ride-alongs and open houses and provide other opportunities for recruits to interact with command staff and rank-and-file officers.
 - e. Departments should create summer internship programs with local high schools and universities.
3. Departments should identify local or regional communications and marketing firms that can assist agencies in the development of recruitment campaigns that focus on recruiting for a 21st century officer. Social science research can be helpful in developing recruitment campaigns.
- a. Ask local affiliates of national organizations representing diverse populations to assist in recruiting and in shaping the image of a 21st century law enforcement officer.
 - b. Explore how other “helping professions”⁷ recruit, and identify lessons that could be applied or employed by law enforcement.

⁷ “A helping profession is defined as a professional interaction between a helping expert and a client, initiated to nurture the growth of, or address the problems of a person’s physical, psychological, intellectual or emotional constitution, including medicine, nursing, psychotherapy, psychological counseling, social work, education, or

4. Department leadership should develop a community advisory committee that includes leaders from business, the faith community, and other public sector organizations to coordinate with the working group to promote collaboration in recruitment.
 - a. Leadership should meet and confer with other public-sector organizations to identify gaps in diversity and to develop strategies for recruitment. This collaboration could lead to the development of a candidate pool shared among all agencies.
 - b. Leadership, working in cooperation with union leadership, should explore the viability of recruitment incentives or signing bonuses.
 - c. Departments should look at Police Explorer programs, police camps, and other youth-development programs to build trust and confidence in the profession of policing.
 - d. Department leadership should work with local elected officials and other municipal or state leaders to promote careers in law enforcement.

coaching,” quoted in “Discourses of Helping Professions: Concepts and Conceptualizations,” *Discourses of Helping Professions*, ed. Eva-Maria Graf, Marlene Sator, and Thomas Spranz-Fogasy (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2014), 1.

Recruitment Road Map for a 21st-Century Workforce: Best and Promising Practices to Attract Diverse Applicants to Law Enforcement

Forum participants recognized that recruitment into law enforcement requires departments to objectively evaluate their current practices and be open to exploring new strategies and welcoming diverse populations into the profession. Of particular concern to forum organizers were the issues and challenges around recruiting women, millennials, and candidates from the LGBTQ+ community. Participants also examined how we present the image of law enforcement to the broader community and to potential recruits.

Recruiting female law enforcement officers

Gender balance remains a challenge for departments. In the pre-forum interviews it was clear that leadership is taking specific and concrete steps to advance women in the profession. However, there remain significant barriers that make law enforcement a challenging profession for women.

Catherine Sanz pointed out many of the current law enforcement leaders came from the war on drugs world, which took a “kick-ass” approach to policing and where women were told they don’t belong. Laurie Robinson, co-chair of the task force, pointed out that the percentage of women in law enforcement is about the same as it was 20 to 25 years ago.

New recruitment strategies to attract women to serve in law enforcement are desperately needed in the current environment. From implicit bias in a male-dominated profession to accommodating the needs of working mothers and the need for childcare, departments must examine how they recruit women into the profession. Law enforcement still lags behind other professions in the promotion of women into command and leadership positions. This reality continues to challenge recruitment efforts and reinforces the idea that breaking the glass ceiling is still unattainable.

Participants suggested a number of both innovative and tested strategies for creating a law enforcement culture that promotes the role of women. Carla Johnson of the Tucson Police Department described one initiative that has become very popular in her community: “We need to start in kindergarten. We start[ed] something called Camp Fury in Tucson. It's for freshman to seniors [in high school]. It's joined with the fire department and other law enforcement agencies. We have partnered with the Girl Scouts of America. This is now an annual event that has gone on for eight years. We are seeing graduates go on

to college. It's been so successful that we started a one-day camp for middle school girls called Catching Fire. We hope to inspire girls to become public safety professionals.”⁸

These practices often combine low cost with high impact. Simple interventions that emphasize inclusion can have a dramatic impact on the culture of policing.

As research has demonstrated, gender inclusion strengthens the organizational culture of a department and provides additional tools to connect with the community.

Action steps for recruiting female candidates

1. Law enforcement agencies should organize working groups composed of former and current female law enforcement officers to help develop recruitment strategies targeted at women. The working group should:
 - a. Examine barriers such as policy, bias and organizational culture.
 - b. Examine training, workplace environment, flexible work schedules, and culture.
 - c. Guide leadership in overcoming barriers to gender inclusion.
2. Departments should establish programs and projects to develop a school-to-profession pipeline that encourages participation by girls and young women examining careers in law enforcement. Examine programs such as Girls Who Code as a model for recruiting and retaining female cadets and officers.
3. Departments should look at developing internships that recruit female candidates as a way of introducing and orienting women to the culture of policing.
4. Departments, in collaboration with academies and state POSTs, should examine physical training requirements that have historically presented barriers to female participation in law enforcement. They should assess—as with all recruitment requirements that impose barriers to potential applicants—whether the physical requirements currently enforced are relevant to the actual practice or duties of law enforcement.
5. Departments should promote ride-alongs, open houses, and mentorship programs that provide women with the opportunities to better understand policing and to create connections with existing law enforcement.
6. Departments, in consultation with community organizations, should develop policies that accommodate religious expressions that demand women and men wear certain apparel or symbols. Perhaps the most obvious example and the one producing the greatest discussion is the hijab worn by Muslim women or the turbans worn by Sikh and some Muslim men.

⁸ “Camp Fury Celebrates Anniversary (Video),” City of Tucson, last modified June 9, 2016, <https://www.tucsonaz.gov/newsnet/camp-fury-celebrates-anniversary-video>.

7. Departments, in consultation with academies and state POSTs, should examine policies that require recruits to live on-site at the police academy or during other mandatory training.
8. Departments should adopt recruitment policies that promote interviewing diverse candidates for all job openings.⁹
9. Recruiters should explore recruitment efforts that attract candidates from the helping or service professions.
10. Departments should establish or strengthen relationships with local women’s organizations.
11. Departments should explore providing 24/7 childcare for public sector and first-responder employees.

Recruiting LGBT law enforcement officers

Police departments throughout the nation are adopting policies to protect and encourage the LGBTQ+ community to fully engage in the profession of law enforcement. Laurie Robinson pointed out that “the issue of transgender was not on our radar screen 4–5 years ago. However, it is today and it must be addressed.” Tracey Mears stressed that recruitment of LGBTQ+ people expands “the demographic categories we can look at and strengthens our capacity for inclusion.”

The inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in our recruitment strategies will require changes in policy and approach. William Shepherd of the New York Police Department (NYPD) and leader of Gay Officers Action League New York (GOAL NY) pointed out that simply “changing photos, putting gender on the paperwork, and creating forums for discussion has created a good critical mass of transgender people joining the police department.”

Efforts such as leadership participating in gay pride events sends the signal that law enforcement agencies support the LGBTQ+ community and their LGBTQ+ officers. Departments, however, can and should move beyond symbolic action and take specific steps to recruit LGBTQ+ people to serve in law enforcement.

The inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in our recruitment strategies will require changes in policy and approach.

⁹ Forum participants spoke about the National Football League’s “Rooney Rule”—a policy that requires teams to interview at least one minority candidate for head coaching and general manager jobs and equivalent front-office job openings—as a policy agencies could consider as they explore options to increase the number of women in law enforcement.

Action steps for recruiting LGBT candidates

1. Recruitment efforts should emphasize that the LGBT community is supported in all aspects of policing.
2. Departments must have zero tolerance for discrimination against or exclusion of LGBTQ+ officers and promptly respond to bias from fellow law enforcement. Recruits should be able to see this in policy and practice.
3. Departments need to pay attention to “gender identification” language (such as the use of appropriate and accurate pronouns) that may unintentionally expose an individual to bias or prejudice.
4. Departments need to adopt policies and procedures that accommodate officers seeking to transition.
5. Departments should actively recruit candidates in locations and places that welcome the LGBT community.
6. Departments should consult with advocacy and affinity groups on best practices and strategies to recruit members of the LGBT community.
7. Departments should use sworn officers who identify as LGBT to educate and mentor LGBT recruits.
8. Department leadership should meet regularly with advocacy and affinity groups to monitor community sentiment and emerging issues impacting the LGBT community.

Recruiting millennial law enforcement officers

According to a 2015 Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, millennials (defined by Pew as adults aged 18–34 in 2015) make up more than one in three American workers and are the largest share of the American workforce.¹⁰ The oldest millennials’ entry into the workforce in the early 2000s prompted researchers, human resource analysts, journalists, and others to write about generational workplace characteristics and values of millennials, often criticizing millennial workers. Pre-forum interviews and forum discussions suggested that law enforcement leadership often struggle with millennial recruitment, hiring, and retention.

Forum participant Aliyah Franks of Howard University emphasized, “We want to feel that we are being welcomed because we are qualified, more than [for] the color of our skin or gender. Recruit us because we are actually qualified.” Authenticity is critical to credibility in recruiting efforts.

¹⁰ Richard Fry, “Millennials Surpass Gen Xers as the Largest Generation in U.S. Labor Force,” *Fact Tank*, Pew Research Center, May 11, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/11/millennials-surpass-gen-xers-as-the-largest-generation-in-u-s-labor-force/>.

In the past few years, new research has emerged that demonstrates how millennial workers are simultaneously distinct from and similar to previous generations, in particular the baby boomer generation.¹¹ For example, millennials place high priority on work-life balance, approach work through collaboration, are “technologically savvy, globally concerned, comfortable with diversity, highly innovative, and willing to try anything [And] both millennials and baby boomers share a strong desire for high-quality colleagues and access to new experiences and challenges.”¹²

As law enforcement agencies look to attract and recruit millennials, managers will need to review and modify, if necessary, an agency’s recruitment *and* retention strategies

Millennials make up more than one in three American workers and are the largest share of the American workforce.

– *Pew Research Center*

Action steps for recruiting millennial candidates

1. Departments should involve millennial law enforcement officers in developing and carrying out recruitment strategies.
2. Departments should actively recruit millennial candidates in the community and engage in conversations about the policing profession.
3. Departments should assure new recruits that they will have a voice in the department.
4. Departments should conduct exit interviews with millennials to better understand their reason for leaving the department or the profession.
5. Departments need to maximize the use of social media in recruitment and communication with candidates.
6. Departments can look at projects within the community that connect millennial officers with community organizers working to strengthen police-community relationships.

¹¹ Wendy Marcinkus Murphy, “Reverse Mentoring at Work: Fostering Cross-Generational Learning and Developing Millennial Leaders,” *Human Resources Management* 15, no.4 (July–August 2012): 549–574.

¹² *Ibid.*, 553.

7. Restructure assignments to allow officers the opportunity to experience different jobs.
8. Departments should explore programs and policies that support education without creating unnecessary burden or enormous financial debt.¹³ Programs and policies that reinforce college education as preparation for careers in law enforcement provide potential recruits with the advantage that if for any reason they leave law enforcement, they still have a college education.

Shaping the law enforcement image to promote policing as a profession

Since September 11, 2001, the image of law enforcement has undergone a serious transformation. In just 16 years, the heroes who courageously went into the twin towers find themselves defending their profession against charges of racial bias, excessive use of force, and the militarization of policing. As a forum participant noted, although there are approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies and nearly 800,000 law enforcement officers, unfortunately, the behavior of a small group of individuals and poorly managed departments has tarnished the image of the departments and officers sworn to protect and to serve. Police shootings of people of color have led to calls from the public to reform law enforcement. As the task force noted in their May 2015 report, community policing requires law enforcement to “embrace a guardian—rather than a warrior—mindset to build trust and legitimacy both within agencies and with the public” if we are to be successful at both reform and recruitment. A department is ultimately the summation of its individual members, both sworn and civilian. To successfully recruit candidates whose commitment to service defines the profession, we must challenge the community to help recruit the best and the brightest to the profession.

To strengthen recruitment efforts for the 21st century, it is essential that law enforcement leadership examine how they present themselves to their communities. They need to engage communities to shape the image of the department, and this can’t be done in isolation. As one forum participant pointed out, the community is constantly defining the perception or image of the departments. Police leadership needs to engage those images in proactive and creative ways.

Many forum participants emphasized that the most conspicuous example of image confusion is how we promote policing on our websites and marketing materials. Departments often show the more combative or militaristic side of policing with officers in full body armor. Task force member Sean Smoot made the following observation: “We need to market honestly. We don't do that. You go to the

¹³ An example of such a program, Arlington, Texas’s Hometown Recruiting Program is a collaborative effort between the Arlington Police Department, Arlington Independent School District, and the University of Texas at Arlington. The program builds upon existing early admissions efforts between the university and school district to allow high school students considering a career in law enforcement to earn credit toward a criminal justice degree and participate in early police training. Upon completion of their degree at UT Arlington, program graduates are guaranteed an interview with the Arlington Police Department and are given preferred consideration in an upcoming police training academy. For more information about this program, visit “Youth Initiatives :: Hometown Recruiting,” City of Arlington, <http://www.arlington-tx.gov/police/hometown-recruiting/>.

recruitment video with helicopter strike, a skill I did not see when we created our list or identified the characteristics of an ideal candidate. We know people want to know that they have a challenge in their work and different things to do. Seventy percent take the job for that reason. Emphasize what we are really looking for, not this television cop. We are getting what we advertise for. The fact is, police work is pretty sedentary. You will have the opportunity to help a single mom that somebody is stalking. You will help a person get into a mentoring program. Maybe that's the commercial, not you will jump out of a plane.”

Participants in the forum recognized tension between acknowledging mistakes and the public criticism and concern over bias, use of force, and militarization and promoting a future of policing anchored in service. To successfully recruit, all departments will need to celebrate the virtues of police service and its impact on community safety and cohesion.

We must pay close attention to marketing and developing an image that is attractive to potential candidates. To reshape this image, the research and forum participants recommended the following action steps for departments:

Action steps for improving the image of policing for recruitment

1. Departments should develop a working group composed of rank and file, command staff, community representatives, professionals from local advertising and marketing agencies, and social science researchers.
2. In partnership with a marketing research firm or local university with social science researchers, the working group should design a community survey to assess community perceptions of law enforcement. The survey should allow responders to drill deep into the issues of community perception.
3. The working group should ask the question: What is the image we want to present to the community?
4. Marketing and communications strategies should be developed to reinforce the desired image.
5. Examine how a department currently promotes law enforcement on its website, in advertising, in brochures, and in all other communication and public presentations.
6. Explore how the department uses social media as a vehicle for recruitment and develop a social media platform that includes Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and all other appropriate platforms.
7. Departments should broker partnerships with media houses (print and electronic) to develop public service advertising campaigns that promote the department of the 21st century.

Conclusion

Recruitment for the 21st century law enforcement officer—and department—is complex. It requires a deep knowledge and appreciation of the past, present, and future of the community. It must be shaped by community values, developed in partnership with community and law enforcement leadership, and sustained by a commitment to cultural competency and inclusion. Perhaps the most important takeaway from the forum was the need to understand one’s community and to develop recruitment strategies that incentivize recruits, affirm their interest in the profession, and to reinforce the call to protect and serve. The action steps found in this document can help departments recruit for the 21st century law enforcement officer.

About SAI

Strategic Applications International (SAI) facilitated President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. SAI provides training, technical assistance, and organizational development strategies for domestic and international non-governmental organizations; non-profits; and local, state, national, and international government organizations responding to crime, violence, and substance abuse. SAI provides facilitation and mediation services and brokers relationships between public and private sectors to address critical issues facing communities.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice and the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SAI has facilitated 22 governors' summits on methamphetamine and, in collaboration with state and local agencies, developed comprehensive strategies with measurable outcomes. Most recently, with funding from the COPS Office, SAI worked with 40 tribal law enforcement agencies seeking to address drug abuse in tribal nations.

SAI is a global firm with projects to prevent and treat HIV and AIDS in South Africa and Swaziland; gender-based violence in Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Rwanda; and criminal-justice reform, counter-terrorism, and de-radicalization in Kenya. Globally, SAI addresses development issues around community policing, substance abuse, gender empowerment, climate and the environment, and youth employment.

SAI builds capacity, supports research, develops publications, and promotes community action with all its partners and clients.

About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community police and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Another source of COPS Office assistance is the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance (CRI-TA). Developed to advance community policing and ensure constitutional practices, CRI-TA is an independent, objective process for organizational transformation. It provides recommendations based on expert analysis of policies, practices, training, tactics, and accountability methods related to issues of concern.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 129,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

The COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—can be downloaded at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing identified recruitment, training, and retention as priorities for the future of law enforcement. Because of their importance to advancing community and police relations, the task force included them in the first pillar—Trust and Legitimacy—of their final report. And in a follow-up meeting with task force members, the President asked the COPS Office to continue to explore new hiring and policies and practices. In response, the COPS Office hosted the Law Enforcement Recruitment in the 21st Century forum with Strategic Applications International.

This report covers the discussions of the forum’s participants, drawn from law enforcement, civil rights, and other stakeholder groups. The forum’s goals were to identify ways to improve recruitment programs, practices, and strategies with a special emphasis on diversity; to better understand how the image of law enforcement impacts recruiting efforts; and to provide action steps for developing and enhancing recruitment strategies.



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To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.



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