RECRUITMENT ANALYSIS
2020

JANUARY 15, 2021

WEST ORANGE POLICE DEPARTMENT
Authored by: Captain Richard McDonald
Introduction

The West Orange Police Department is a NJ Civil Service Commission jurisdiction and hiring procedures are set forth by CSC rules, statutory regulations, and case law. This means that hiring practices must abide by the CSC procedures which include utilization of a statewide entrance examination. Due to this fact, recruitment efforts are often hampered. Potential employees need to score high on the CSC written examination before the West Orange Police Department may even be given the eligible employee’s names. This is a statewide approach to keep the testing and hiring processes as fair and non-discriminatory as possible.

Although recruitment is a departmental mindset that must be continually evolving and must be focused on long term results as well as immediate, the mindset of the Department is always of recruiting, selecting and training the next generation of officers.

The Department did hire 12 new officers in 2020, after no new hires in 2019. Out of the twelve officers, three officers were females (one African American and two Caucasian females) and three were African-American.

As it stands, the WOPD is currently staffed with 14.4% of total officers representing minority races (which is up from 12.6% in 2019) and 15.0% of total officers representing Hispanic ethnicity. These numbers indicate that over 35% of the total number of sworn officers represent a minority race, Hispanic ethnicity or female gender.

In comparison with 10 years ago, the percentage of African American officers has increased almost 50% from 6.8% to 12.1% and the percentage of Hispanic officers has almost tripled with a jump from 6.8% to 15.0%.

“In just 10 years, the agency showed an increase in female officer percentage from 3.4% to 6.1%, a rise in African-American percentage from 6.8% to 12.1% and a rise in the percentage for Hispanic officers almost tripled.”
OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain liaison with local minority community leaders, encouraging them to refer information about qualified minority applicants. This is an ongoing process.
- Advise all potential applicants that the department is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin or ancestry, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, handicap, political affiliation or other non-job related personal criteria. This is an ongoing process.
- Utilize the skills of our minority and women officers by having them represent the department at school presentations and community functions. These officers will also be more visual in our bicycle patrols and community policing efforts.
- Contact church congregations, to encourage them to assist with recruitment efforts and locate potential candidates. This is an ongoing practice.
- Conduct recruitment activities outside the agency’s jurisdiction through the use of public service announcements on West Orange TV Channel 36 and the Township web page. This is based on the announcement of any upcoming Civil Service entrance examinations.
- Utilize the Junior Police Academy and the Community Policing Programs to create and forge lasting relationships with potential future employees.
- Utilize the college internship program, specifically by allowing college-aged township residents who wish to pursue a future in law enforcement to intern with the Department. This will expose an eligible resident to be introduced to the Department.
**SUCCESSES:**

**Community Services Unit**

The WOPD Community Services Unit has continued to keep an open dialogue and relationship going with local community and church leaders since its inception in 1998. CSU officers often attend local festivals and events to meet young people and create relationships with the future officers of this Department. CSU is a great tool for creating relationships with the youth of our town so that they feel more comfortable approaching officers with questions about careers in law enforcement.

One of the primary goals of the CSU is to create a positive impact on the youths of the neighborhood. These young people are our future community partners, local leaders and potential employees. The CSU has provided numerous police supervised youth activities, which include an After-School Program, Junior Police Academy, Hooked on Fishing, Bike Rodeos, DARE Program, Gang Resistance Programs, and more. These programs are intended to provide our youth with a level of self-confidence, team-building skills, and opportunities to participate in structured excursions outside of the township.

Through the years, the demographic make-up of the Unit has been carefully selected to represent the neighborhoods that they serve, which has included the use of African-American, Jamaican-American, Indian-American, Hispanic and female officers. Currently, Officers Herbert Granados and Jason Padilla are both of Hispanic descent and are part of our CSU bicycle squad. They represent the department at dozens of community functions as well as the Essex County Police and Public Safety Expo every year.

Although the CSU are usually involved with Township Government Days and school Career Days, in-person schools were cancelled within West Orange due to the COVID pandemic.

Due to the COVID conditions that slowed down community engagement and programs in 2020, the Community Services Unit stepped up and assisted with food distribution programs, community outreach organizations for mental illness or homelessness and safe community gatherings such as birthday drive-by’s.
School Resource Officer
The WOPD has a full-time officer assigned to West Orange High School. Officer Ed Diaz is of Hispanic heritage and it cannot be overlooked that Officer Diaz was a walking billboard to any high school student who expresses an interest in law enforcement. He had many responsibilities such as instructing DARE and Gang Resistance classes. Officer Diaz was assigned to WOHS full time during Spring 2020 until classes were cancelled.
Looking forward to 2021, the agency has selected Officer Jeff James, an African-American officer, to take over as the SRO as soon as schools re-open.

Junior Police Academy
Although the Junior Police Academy was cancelled due to COVID, every summer since 2000 the WOPD Juvenile Aid Bureau has conducted a Junior Police Academy for children between the ages of 11 and 14. The JPA was established in 2000 as a joint venture between the WOPD, the Township of West Orange and the West Orange Board of Education in a proactive effort to curtail juvenile delinquency, to promote better relations between police officers and youths, and to promote good communication skills. The JPA seeks to foster an understanding for the law and respect among individuals at a critical age of development. The week-long event involves demonstrations from such law enforcement groups as the NJ State police Aviation Unit, NJSP TEAMS Unit, Essex County Bomb Squad and K9 Unit and US Air Marshals. The program was showcased on Channel 11 WPIX News for its years of success.

The JPA is an excellent opportunity for the WOPD to create relationships and expose law enforcement to minority youths and females. During the 2019 JPA, there were 77 total junior cadets. There were 37 females. There were 21 cadets of Hispanic descent and 31 were African-American. The Junior Police Academy appears to be a success in reaching out to the females and minority youth of the Township in a program designed to create an awareness of law enforcement and relationships with future possible candidates.
Internship Program
The Department works with local high schools and colleges to provide internships to local youths who have an interest in law enforcement. The interns gain credits and provide service to the Department in various functions while the student learns about the department from the inside. During the 2019-2020 school year, the department had two African American females and one Hispanic female intern from William Paterson University. There were no high school interns due to COVID. The program was temporarily suspended until the COVID procedures are back to normal.

Equal Opportunity Employment
The Department does a good job of utilizing proper hiring practices and is actively attempting to achieve an accurate representation of the service population. Although there have been some new hires during the past year, there were also a good number of retirements which changed the percentage of officers who represent minority groups. As you can see from the tables listed below, the percentage of Caucasian officers from 2009 until 2020 decreased from 92.2% to 85.7%. Also, the percentage of Hispanic officers increased from 6.8% to 15.0% of the department. The percentage of African-American officers increased from 6.8% to 12.1% in the ten years.

There are currently 6 female officers in the department, which equals 6.1% of all sworn officers and is double the percentage of just one year ago. This is below the state percentage of 9.5% but it is getting closer to our departmental goal of matching that state average.

The present departmental goal, as listed in the Recruitment Plan conceived in 2011, is to increase the percentage of sworn minority officers by 1.25% each year. From 2019 to 2020, the agency increased in total minority representation from 31.8% to 35.5%. To look at the bigger picture of the past ten years, the agency showed an increase in female officer percentage from 3.4% to 6.1%, a rise in African-American percentage from 6.8% to 12.1% and a rise in percentage for Hispanic officers almost tripled in just 10 years.

WOPD is An Equal Opportunity Employer
The Township of West Orange is a Civil Service Commission jurisdiction and draws upon the entire state of New Jersey as an available workforce. Due to statutory requirements, only personnel between the ages of 18-35 are eligible for entry level employment. The data under the available workforce reflects the 2006 Projections of Civilian Labor Force Estimates published by the New Jersey Department of Labor. The data under the service population of West Orange reflects the 2010 Demographic Profile Data published by the U.S. Census Bureau.

All WOPD officer data is accurate as of December 31, 2020.
LOOKING FORWARD

LGBTQ Liaison
Also leading the way in progressive policing and community engagement, the WOPD is one of the first municipal police departments within the State of New Jersey to create a LGBTQ Liaison. Realizing a need in our community, Officer Karen Mango volunteered to represent the Department in this position. Officer Mango has attended statewide meetings with other LGBTQ liaisons in an effort to understand what this community needs. We believe that this position will be invaluable moving forward to connecting with certain neglected groups within our community and beginning to open the lines of communication and understanding.

Police-Clergy Alliance
The WOPD is also in the beginning stages of creating a Police-Clergy Alliance. We clearly recognize the importance and critical role the faith-based organizations and clergy have as leaders in the community and specifically among the families and individual citizens of our township.

Accordingly, the goal of the West Orange Police Department’s PCA will be to actively communicate with department personnel and the community at large to effectively disseminate information related to PCA, and will continuously work to improve the response to significant events in which this partnership is utilized.

Again, a well-intentioned plan for implementation was slowed down by the pandemic. However, there has already been numerous discussions between Captain McDonald and township religious and community leaders on what the Alliance should entail. There has been a survey coordinated for feedback, and zoom meetings are being planned for early 2021.
Social Media/ Community Outreach
To increase our visibility, even with the restrictions of COVID putting a damper on public interactions, the WOPD has launched a social media presence during 2020. We are utilizing the technological mediums to increase communication between our department and our community partners. Although we share information such as missing persons, roads closed and crime alerts, the social media voice of the WOPD is there to share information about our community involvement and it gives an opportunity for the public to speak with us as well. This platform will be used for recruitment purposes at all available opportunities.
REVISIONS/ FUTURE OBJECTIVES

The WOPD is a NJ Civil Service Commission jurisdiction and hiring procedures are set forth by CSC rules, statutory regulations, and case law. Despite those facts, the Department has continued some of the recruitment practices which have successfully made the WOPD a vital organization. The percentage of African American/Black, Hispanic and female officers within the department has dramatically risen the past ten years. Through such ventures as the Junior Police Academy, our Community Services Unit, and our internship program, the WOPD will continue to strive forward. I believe that these numbers are a result of our positive public image within the community.

One major issue that continues, despite some positive improvement, is the lack of total female representation within the Department. The WOPD currently has six sworn female members. Although female recruitment is a major issue across the nation and departments of any size, the current representation of 6.1% is too low. The most recent data across the state of New Jersey showed that females make up to 9.5% of law enforcement statewide.

While I believe that the department should strive for as many deserving female officers, it is historically apparent that law enforcement attracts more males than females. However, I believe that a major objective moving forward should be to strive for our female numbers to at least match those numbers across the State of New Jersey.

Objectives to accomplish this goal should include reaching out to more community groups and emphasizing that the Department is searching for female recruits and the career opportunities that await them. I believe that the Department should also consider a media outreach program specifically designed to target potential female employees. The department shall also consider promoting our auxiliary program more as an opportunity for females to become involved with law enforcement and get a taste of the business. The department can also coordinate with SRO Jeff James to reach out to more high school graduating females and educate them about the field of law enforcement. This could also be accomplished by working with the High School ROTC program as well.

In conclusion, although we continue to hire based off the parameters set by NJ CSC, I recommend that we continue to utilize television, newspapers, internet, and social media to recruit the type of citizens and future officers that we have been forging relationships with this entire time. I recommend no other revisions to the actual plan at this time.

Captain Richard McDonald
Commanding Officer of Office of Professional Development & Community Affairs

WOPD is An Equal Opportunity Employer
TODAY:

TOMORROW?