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AGENDA REPORT

2015 MAR 19 PM 3:04

TO: JOHN A. FLORES
INTERIM CITYADMINISTRATOR

FROM: Sean Whent

SUBJECT: Oakland Police Department African
American Recruitment Efforts –
Supplemental Report

DATE: March 16, 2015

City Administrator
Approval

Date

3/19/15

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Public Safety Committee receive this supplemental informational report regarding Oakland Police Department (OPD) recruitment efforts from 2010 to present with a focus on efforts to recruit and retain African Americans as Police Officers.

REASON FOR THE SUPPLEMENTAL

The purpose of this supplemental report is to transmit to the City Council more in-depth information about both past, current, and potential future efforts to recruit and retain African Americans as Police Officers.

OUTCOME

This report will help inform discussion between OPD and the Public Safety Committee regarding efforts to recruit and retain people of African American descent for sworn positions with OPD.

ANALYSIS

The Oakland Police Department has relied on many strategies to advertise and recruit new police officer trainees. The report dated February 5, 2015, outlined current strategies such as partnering with local faith-based organizations, multiple outreach efforts (local schools, local retail establishments, community events and job fairs), and advertising in local and non-English language media. These strategies have been used to greater or lesser extent depending on the City's particular need and staffing levels in recent years. As Oakland now looks to expand sworn staffing and to increase the percentage of officers of African American descent as well as with Oakland residency, OPD must increase and further develop its outreach efforts. The following

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strategies showcase past, current and potentially new efforts for OPD to recruit well qualified African Americans as well as local residents.

Historically Black College and University Alumni Associations and Other Organizations

The report dated February 5, 2015 explained that OPD has sent mass mailings to the career centers of several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Staff continues to believe that alumni of HBCUs, particularly those originally from the Bay Area, may be interested in pursuing careers in law enforcement. Staff will now expand outreach to focus on local Bay Area alumni associations of national HBCUs. These organizations may offer a better conduit for connecting with locally connected African Americans who could become OPD officers.

In addition to local chapters of HBCU alumni associations, local chapters of the National Pan-Hellenic Council and Jack and Jill of America present opportunities to focus on African American recruitment. The National Pan-Hellenic Council is made up of nine (9) African American sororities and fraternities. Jack and Jill of America, an organization of mothers with children ages two (2) to 19, is dedicated "to nurturing future African American leaders through leadership development, volunteer service, philanthropic giving and civic duty." Youth Uprising, East Oakland Youth Development Center, and Girls, Inc. should also provide opportunities for outreach, recruitment and partnership for OPD.

Better Noticing of Test Dates

OPD competes with many other police agencies to recruit new officers. At times, multiple police agencies may have initial testing (physical, written, oral) dates that overlap with competing agencies. OPD can help potential applicants to better plan for attending future test dates by having OPD Recruiting and City Human Resources staff determine testing dates several months ahead - and publish these dates with more advance notice. Staff has also begun initial conversations regarding creating reminder notices via phone, text, email, and social media; evidence suggests that agencies that send out reminders about test dates yield higher turn-outs.

Media Outreach

The City of Oakland is currently in the process of redesigning the official website. The Oakland Police Department can and should take advantage of this redesign process to strategize how to better use the online platform to advertise recruitment efforts as well as mentorship programs (see below). The Washington DC Metropolitan Police, for example, utilize their website to advertise their cadet program¹ as well as the entire application process in a very navigable format.

The Oakland Police Department Recruiting and Background Unit maintains its own Facebook and Twitter accounts and regularly updates these accounts to highlight news and positive stories. Additional efforts can be made to specifically target the demographics OPD wishes to reach.

¹ <http://mpdc.dc.gov/page/become-cadet>

Search engine optimization (SEO) and banner ads could be explored to reach out to African Americans and other people of color. Additionally, OPD can explore producing videos showcasing benefits and realities of Oakland police work and distribute such media through the City's KTOP station as well as YouTube and similar modern video streaming services.

Oakland Police Department Community Outreach

The February 05, 2015 report described the OPD Cadet Program and Merritt College Administration of Justice Program. Both of these programs show promise for yielding future Police Officer Trainees – in addition to generally building better relationships between OPD and diverse Oakland neighborhoods. In addition to these two programs, OPD has developed other programs that develop early connections with young residents from diverse communities.

- Elementary & Middle School Internship Program - The Washington, DC Police Cadet Program², similar to the OPD Police Cadet Program, has recently (2010) begun to extend the pipeline of support to younger students, with a Junior Cadet program. Throughout the school year, teachers of 5th Grade students in participating schools dedicate one hour per week for curriculum that emphasizes life skills, academics, anti-bullying and drug prevention, internet safety, and conflict-resolution. The program also makes positive connections between life choices and the police profession. The program targets schools in at-risk neighborhoods and a majority of students are African American. The Washington DC Police Foundation supports the program.

Oakland residents of African American descent have spoken directly with many sworn and non-sworn OPD staff about a stigma – felt by significant numbers of African Americans in Oakland - against becoming a law enforcement officer. Such a stigma may be rooted in the long history of race relations and well documented discrimination against African Americans in the United States, an issue of trust and transparency as it relates to police officers. The development of a 5th Grade internship program in Oakland could be instrumental in targeting schools with large African American populations. This program can cultivate relationships that could lead to an increased recruitment of African Americans, while mitigating the barriers and misperceptions within the community.

An additional program – similar to the Elementary School Internship Program – could be developed to bridge the gap between elementary school and high school. This program could be particularly important, as middle-school students face an even greater risk of exposure to negative influences than do elementary school students.

- High School Internship Program – Between 2008 and 2010, OPD administered an intern program for high school students 16 to 18 years old. Participating youth worked in the Police Administration Building and at OPD recruiting events. Interns were paid \$10.00 per-hour (\$12.00 per hour if 18 years old or older) and assisted with office functions and

²<http://www.dcpolicefoundation.org/junior-cadet-program.html>

recruitment outreach efforts and were exposed to a variety of aspects of both sworn and civilian day-to-day job functions. The majority of the participating interns were African American in part because the program was able to target high schools with significant African American student populations. Some of these interns transitioned into the OPD Cadet Program. The OPD Intern Program was effectively cut in 2010 when its funding was removed due to recessionary budget cuts. Since the program operated for less than two years, insufficient data exists to adequately assess the efficacy of the program in terms of recruiting candidates for the cadet program and police academies. OPD is interested in restarting the program if provided with an operational budget.

- College Internship Program – Reinstating the High School Internship Program and expanding it to college students will provide two substantial benefits for recruitment. In addition to expanding the pool of future applicants, college interns would be invaluable in their ability to connect with other potential hires. Providing young adults – particularly those of color – to staff recruiting functions will provide a connection that other recruiting staff may not be able to provide.
- Explorer Program – the OPD Explorers Program is work-site based mentoring program for youth, sponsored entirely the Police Activities League (PAL). Initially, the Explorers Program was only available for youth ages 14-21 (who have completed eighth grade), but has since been expanded into three age ranges:
 - Junior Explorers (11 to 13 years old)
 - Explorers (14 to 21 years old)
 - Senior Explorers (21 to 24 years old)

The program is designed to provide young people with realistic examples of a career as a police officer, by holding events where participating police officers meet with participating youth in fun community events. Events are held at parks or other Oakland locations. The Police Athletic League (PAL) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that does not receive any funding from the City of Oakland but relies exclusively on charitable donations.

- Cadet Program – The cadet program, as described in the February 05, 2015 report, is designed for youth age 17.5-20.5 years old, who wish to explore the law enforcement field. The program pays \$13.87 to \$15.29 per hour. The Oakland Police Department is currently budgeted (FY 14-15) nine full time equivalent (FTE) cadet positions, which yields a total of 18 half-time cadets, as each cadet is allowed to work a maximum of 19.5 hours per week. The Oakland Police Department has submitted a request for an additional five FTE positions (for 10 additional cadets) as part of the FY 15-17 Budget process. The Budget request is for an additional \$150,000 per fiscal year. The program cannot be expanded without additional funding. Beyond the clear benefits of recruiting local youth from diverse backgrounds to explore local law enforcement, the Cadet Program can more

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prominently feature the cadets in recruiting efforts, which may help attract diverse applicants.

- OK Mentoring Program – The Our Kids (OK) Youth Mentoring Program connects OPD officers with youth, many of whom come from single parent homes or foster homes. OPD currently partners with Acts Full Gospel Church in East Oakland to operate the program. Most program participants desire - and need - more time with responsible, caring adults. The program is not seen as a gateway to recruiting new African American and/or Oakland residents, but rather to help local youth who statistically face a higher risk of developing relationships with acquaintances involved in crime, and thus face a higher than average probability of becoming involved in crime, incarcerated, and/or victims of crime. There may be opportunities however, to reach out to program participants and facilitate positive discussions within African American communities concerning the Oakland Police Department.
- Participation in Law Enforcement at Local Administration of Justice Programs – The Oakland Police Department can do more to participate in law enforcement day events at local colleges. Staffing such events with young people of color (college interns and cadets) should be effective at connecting with a diverse applicant pool.
- Outreach and Partnership with African American Churches – Churches in Oakland and beyond which have predominantly African American congregations offer strategic opportunities for positive messaging. The Oakland Police Department has begun recruiting at local churches which have allowed the department to set up booths – such as Acts Full Gospel Church, Allen Temple, Beebe Memorial Cathedral, Friendship Christian Center and Shiloh Church. Background and Recruiting as well as officers will rotate their weekly efforts at the different locations. Additionally, background and recruiting staff currently hold written test workshops at local churches to help and encourage local African Americans to apply for police academies and to help them through the testing process.
- Partnering with the Black Officers Association – This organization of African American Police Officers and Firefighters provides an excellent opportunity for a partnership to perform greater outreach and recruitment.
- Reaching out to African American Publications – Engaging publications (through advertising and providing targeted press releases and interviews) that focus on an African American audience should be an effective outreach and recruitment strategy.

Applicant Support

The background investigations and written tests have posed the greatest application-process difficulties on average for African Americans applying to OPD academies. All applicants must pass all stages of the application process, as outlined in the February 5, 2015 report; no more

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than 23% of initial applications (all races) were eventually invited to each of the academies held from 2012 – 2014.

The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requires that “[e]very peace officer candidate shall be the subject of a thorough background investigation to verify good moral character and the absence of past behavior indicative of unsuitability to perform the duties of a peace officer.”³ While local law enforcement agencies have discretion as to how this requirement is applied, the reasoning is universal; applicants with a history of irresponsible behavior such as breaking the law, engaging in violence, acting dishonestly, showing poor judgment, and/or showing a pattern of irresponsible decisions making should be disqualified. Law enforcement agencies must disqualify such applicants from employment to protect the communities they serve; Oakland in particular must maintain high POST standards in its hiring process to help ensure that the abuses that resulted in the imposition of Oakland’s Negotiated Settlement Agreement never occur again.

The written test in particular is the application stage where more African American applicants on average fail in the application process. OPD is committed to offering academic support to applicants, to ensure the greatest opportunity to succeed on the POST written tests. OPD and Merritt College, as mentioned in the February 5, 2015 report, are collaborating on Merritt College Administration of Justice Program. As of March 16, the Merritt College Program has twice offered all day POST written test-specific workshops to help applicants focus on the grammar and writing rules that govern the written exam. Furthermore, the Merritt College Program Administration of Justice Program will begin a 17-week intensive course on all aspect of POST testing and the actual police academies, and featuring OPD former Chief of Police Howard Jordan. OPD and Merritt College have also created a personal tutor at the URL: <http://www.passingthepost.com> which gives the applicants a one-on-one tutoring session. Furthermore, applicants can schedule tutoring sessions online through the URL: www.theacademy.ca.gov/tests. OPD also offers test information updates through Twitter at: @OPDJobs. Furthermore, as mentioned above, OPD is offering written test workshops at local churches to help and encourage local African Americans to apply for police academies and to help them through the testing process.

In order to address the issue of applicants who are not selected for hire as police officers for OPD (refer to Attachment 1 to the February 5, 2015 report), it is recommended that all of the preceding strategies be implemented. Providing a positive influence to young people and facilitating a strong understanding of the consequences of poor decision-making should help build a pool of qualified local applicants who are interested in pursuing careers with OPD.

³ California Government Code Section 1031(d)

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SUMMARY

The Oakland Police Department will continue to look for the best strategies to ensure that sworn officers mirror the public they serve. Table 1 below summarizes the recruitment and outreach strategies listed in this report, along with identified staff required to implement each one.

Table 1: Outreach Strategies

Strategy	Staff	Implementation Challenge; Possible Fiscal Impact
Outreach to HBCU Alumni Association and Other Organizations	OPD Recruiting Staff; OPD Officers and Cadets	Moderate; May require additional staff.
Better Noticing of Test Dates	OPD and DHRM Civilians	Not Difficult; No fiscal impact
Media Outreach	OPD Public Information, Recruiting Staff and City Online Engagement Staff	Moderate; Additional staff may be required to sustain efforts.
Implementation of Internship Programs	OPD Recruiting and Backgrounds Staff; OPD Youth and Family Services Division (YFSD) Staff	Moderate; Additional staff may be required to sustain efforts and some additional funding will be required to compensate interns.
Explorer Program Expansion	OPD Recruiting and Background Staff; OPD YFSD	Not Difficult; The Police Activities League may require additional funds to expand program.
Cadet Program Expansion	OPD Recruiting and Background Staff; OPD Training Section Staff	Not Difficult; Additional funding will be required to expand program participation.
OK Mentoring Program Expansion	OPD YFSD	Not Difficult; Program may need greater grant funding to expand.
Participation in Law Enforcement at Local Administration of Justice Programs	OPD Recruiting Staff; OPD Officers, Cadets, and College Interns	Not Difficult – program in operation; No fiscal impact.
Outreach and Partnering with African American Churches	OPD Recruiting Staff; OPD Officers, Cadets, and Interns	Moderate; Additional staff may be required to sustain efforts.
Partnering with the Black Officers Association	OPD Members of the Black Officers Association	Moderate; Additional staff may be required to sustain

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		efforts.
Reaching out to African American Publications	OPD Recruiting Staff; OPD Public Information Staff	Moderate; Additional staff may be required to sustain efforts.

Each of the above strategies represents an increase in workload for OPD and/or the Department of Human Resources and Management (DHRM). In order to effectively enact each one, funding will be required for identified personnel on overtime or other supplemental basis. In addition to the above resources required to enact the strategies, additional funding will also be needed for the Oakland Department of Human Resource Management (HRM) to respond to the increased number of applicants.

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PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

This report contains information of public interest as it directly relates to public safety within the City of Oakland.

COORDINATION

The City Attorney's Office as well as the Department of Human Resources and Management were consulted in preparation of this report.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

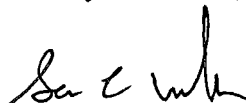
Economic: There are no economic opportunities identified in this report.

Environmental: No environmental opportunities have been identified.

Social Equity: This report provides valuable information to the Oakland community regarding inclusion of under-represented groups in the Oakland Police Department.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Bruce Stoffmacher, Management Assistant, OPD Research and Planning, at (510) 238-6976.

Respectfully submitted,



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