

CITY OF OAKLAND
AGENDA REPORT

FILED
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
OAKLAND

To: Office of the City Administrator
Attn: Deborah Edgerly
From: Police Department
Date: November 6, 2007

Re: Supplemental Information to the Monthly Informational Report on the Measure Y Accelerated Police Recruiting, Hiring, Training and Deployment Strategy

As requested by the Public Safety Committee on October 9, 2007, staff has prepared supplemental information concerning the Measure Y Monthly Informational Report. Additionally, staff has included two news articles which address the nationwide issue of police hiring and recruiting.

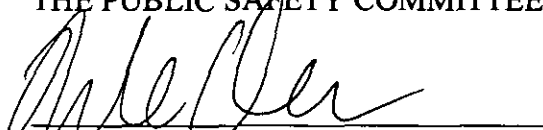
The Mayor's Office is working to identify additional resources to assist in the Police Department's current recruiting and hiring strategy.

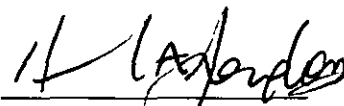
The attached information will address the Committee's specific requests of the:

- Net number of officers on the street
- Possibility of running concurrent academies in an effort to graduate more officers simultaneously
- Roadblocks that prevent running concurrent academies
- Month to month analysis of hiring and attrition rates (Attachment A)

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO
THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:


Office of the City Administrator


FOR Wayne G. Tucker
Chief of Police

Reviewed by:
Ms. Cynthia Perkins

Prepared by:
Captain Ricardo Orozco,
Lt. Ken Parris
Bureau of Administration
Oakland Police Department

Attachments:

- A) Monthly Hire/Attrition Matrix
- B) PERF Report Executive Summary
- C) NIJ Report – Hiring and Keeping Police Officers
- D) News Article *Future Trends in Law Enforcement Recruiting*
- E) News Article *Police Relaxing Age, Fitness Standards*

Item: _____
City Council
November 6, 2007

Deborah Edgerly
OPD – Measure Y Supplemental Information

1. What, if any, are the difficulties in conducting three or more concurrent Police Academies thereby increasing overall police officer output?

There are several “bottleneck” areas in the police training process that impact the Police Department’s (OPD) ability to place more fully trained officers on the street. These key areas are:

- Size of qualified candidate pool;
- Academy training capacity;
- Use of non-OPD training academies; and
- Field Training Program capacity.

At present, the City is taking full advantage of the available qualified candidate pool. The Office of Personnel and Resource Management (OPRM), in cooperation with OPD, is conducting open recruitment and testing for police officers. OPRM has done an exceptional job in providing OPD with a generous pool of qualified candidates for police officer trainee positions. Through OPRM and OPD’s combined efforts, 153 new police officers have been added to OPD since February 2005, which is a tremendous accomplishment. Unfortunately this success is tempered by the fact that you must subtract the number of police officers leaving the Department for a variety of reasons (e.g., service and disability retirements, resignations, terminations, etc.) to realize a **true net gain of 32 police officers.**

It should be noted that the law enforcement profession nationwide is experiencing a hiring crisis. Competition for the dwindling pool of qualified applicants is keen. Coupled with the projected increase in retirements among the *Baby Boom* generation, law enforcement recruiting has reached a crisis point. The US Department of Justice and law enforcement research foundations like the Police Executive Research Forum [(PERF) Attachment B] have commissioned studies to analyze this crisis. OPD keeps abreast of the innovations and recommendations resulting from these studies, implementing them where practical.

OPD has increased the size of its academy to approximately 40 police officer trainees (POT) per class. This is an increase of 10 to 15 POTs per class from traditional class sizes; an effort that was undertaken in the hope of increasing the overall output of qualified police officers. Unfortunately, the academy attrition rate is approximately 30 - 40%. According to the California Commission on Peace Officers’ Standards and Training (POST), OPD’s attrition rate is consistent with other academies collecting their statistics in a similar manner. A significant concern that has been expressed is that while OPD has the capacity to run concurrent academies, doing so will divide its resources among more POTs. This may contribute to an even higher attrition rate among the POTs in the concurrent academies as they struggle for more individualized attention where needed to be successful.

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OPD also researched the use of other academies and outside training resources to accomplish the training of more POTs at an even greater accelerated pace. The other academies in the Bay Area are either already functioning at capacity, offering no available slots to OPD, or do not have a schedule that would allow for a timely graduation of new officers to mesh with OPD's mandatory field training program (see below). Additionally, new police officers receiving training at a non-OPD academy would require attendance at a six week transition course to provide them instruction in City, OPD and NSA specific requirements, delaying their actual deployment to the street.

In a best case scenario, OPD can maintain 50 Field Training Officers (FTO) who can accommodate 30 to 35 trainees at a time for the 15 week field training program. OPD can run three 15 week field training cycles for a total potential output of 90 to 105 officers at the maximum. If OPD were to graduate either a larger academy class or two classes simultaneously there would be police officers who could not begin field training due to the lack of FTOs. These officers would have to be assigned desk duties under the direct supervision of a veteran police officer until such time as an FTO is available for assignment. The FTO Coordinator has spoken with numerous FTOs concerning the training program and the impact the proposed change to 12 hour shifts might have. The coordinator stated a significant number of FTOs have indicated they would no longer be willing to serve as FTOs and/or could not guarantee the same high quality training. Many FTOs already spend one to two hours after their regularly assigned shift to assist trainee officers complete reports and other paperwork. They would be unwilling to work any additional hours after a 12 hour shift. With the profile of OPD's officers becoming younger and younger, it is harder to find enough FTOs to meet the qualification matrix requirements established in the Negotiated Settlement Agreement (NSA). As Council is aware, OPD cannot compromise or change the NSA mandated minimum qualifications for appointment as an FTO. To do so may compromise the quality of training the officer-in-training would receive.

Increasing overall officer output would also require additional staff and funding for OPRM and OPD to enhance their exceptional efforts in support of OPD's recruiting efforts. Current funding for recruitment efforts are from carry-forward from the April 2006 appropriation. However, those funds will be depleted shortly. Those resources would enable OPRM to extend its reach beyond the local area to attract other well qualified applicants to the region's shrinking candidate pool.

SUMMARY:

- With the nationwide law enforcement recruiting crisis, the City has reached the maximum size of the POT candidate pool.
- Academy attrition rate increases with the size of the academy class.
- Mandatory City, OPD and NSA training requirements eliminate FTO training flexibility
- Field Training Program output limited to 90 to 105 officers per year.

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- Additional staff and funding is required for OPRM to enhance its already exceptional recruiting efforts.

2. What can be done about the slow pace of our recruitment?

Overview

As mentioned above, OPD's recruitment efforts match the pace of other law enforcement agencies. In fact, the efforts are not slow paced but are impacted by the significant attrition rate that OPD has not been able to overcome. The nationwide law enforcement recruiting crisis, brought on by the *Baby Boom* generation reaching retirement age, plus disability retirements all have a fundamental impact on OPD's retention and recruiting efforts.

The challenges presented by the nationwide law enforcement recruiting crisis have been presented in publications of the US Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)¹, National Institute of Justice (NIJ)² and research organizations like the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF).³

Specifically, the NIJ report (Attachment C) summary noted:

“After several years of growth in police employment, fueled in part by Federal grants, police agencies now say it is hard to find qualified applicants...Retaining new hires is a concern, because they account for many of the officers who leave police agencies each year...By 1999, more than half of actively hiring agencies had difficulty finding enough qualified applicants.”

State Challenges

The California Organization of Police and Sheriffs posted the following information on their website⁴ as it relates to the law enforcement recruiting crisis in California:

“It's no secret that local law enforcement agencies are understaffed. A study conducted by Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) of 1,270 agencies showed that the supply of qualified candidates was down throughout the Nation. More than half of the small agencies surveyed, and two-thirds of the large agencies

¹ Scrivner, Ellen, PhD; *Innovations in Police Recruitment and Hiring*; for the US Department of Justice COPS Office, 2006

² Koper, Christopher S.; *Hiring and Keeping Police Officers*, US Department of Justice National Institute of Justice, August 2004

³ Taylor, Bruce, PhD *et al*; *The Cop Crunch: Identifying Strategies for Dealing with the Recruiting and Hiring Crisis in Law Enforcement*; Police Executive Research Forum, December 2005

⁴ California Organization of Police and Sheriffs website: <http://cops.cc/programs/leap/staffing-crisis/>

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(serving populations of over 50,000) reported that a lack of qualified candidates caused staffing problems. Among these agencies having difficulty finding candidates, there was a thirty-three percent (33%) vacancy factor.

With the aging population and the numbers of officers looking to retire in the next five years that percentage will drastically increase. The personnel shortage in the criminal justice system will reach critical mass within the next five years. Adding to the burden, the younger population is looking elsewhere to make career choices. Again, with the general aging of our population, the rush to fill jobs will continue to get worse.”

The website went on to state,

“Demand for Officers – Between 2002 and 2012, the state projects an estimated 68,000 peace officers will need to be hired with an estimated 30,300 as a result of separations.”

Contributing to OPD’s attrition rate caused by *Baby Boom* generation retirements is the loss of police officers due to disability retirements. The current PERS disability retirement program is very generous. Officers who sustain an injury resulting in a permanent disability may be eligible for a PERS disability retirement. This results when the physician prescribes duty restrictions as a result of the officer’s injury that precludes him/her from performing one or more of the essential job functions of a police officer. Provisions of this program are governed by state law which is often very specific with regards to the acceptance of claims and the processing of disability retirement applications.

Grow Our Own

The California Organization of Police and Sheriffs advocate the adoption of a Law Enforcement Apprenticeship Program (LEAP) in an effort for law enforcement agencies to plan for the future and attract young men and women in high school to the law enforcement profession. OPD has pursued this strategy through its Summer Vacation and School Year Internships, Police Cadet and Police Explorer programs. While it will take time for these programs to bear fruit, the projection of the hiring crisis out to the year 2012 makes it prudent for OPD to pursue this course to *Grow our Own* future police officers.

In this same vein, OPD is developing an innovative approach to accomplish this same goal through the addition of police paraprofessionals (e.g., Police Services Technicians) to handle the more routine law enforcement tasks that do not require the services of a sworn police officer. These paraprofessionals, who can be hired as young as 18 years of age, have an opportunity to become familiar with the law enforcement profession and form a first hand perspective. They also have an opportunity to be trained in law enforcement knowledge and skills, be mentored by experienced police officer and

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acquire valuable work experience while waiting to be eligible to apply for a police officer trainee position.

SUMMARY

- Pace of recruiting is consistent with that of other California law enforcement agencies.
- Law enforcement recruiting shortages is a national crisis.
- Retirement of the *Baby Boom* generation (PERS 3% @ 50 retirement formula), disability retirements and the portability of a PERS retirement all have a significant negative impact on police officer retention.
- Agencies must look towards the future in building a potential pool of qualified applicants.

Authorized FTE		803 Timeline Projection as of 10/23/07										
FY04-05	1-Jul-04	1-Aug-04	1-Sep-04	1-Oct-04	1-Nov-04	1-Dec-04	1-Jan-05	1-Feb-05	1-Mar-05	1-Apr-05	1-May-05	1-Jun-05
Filled FTE	728	723	721	718	717	712	701	697	698	692	688	693
Sworn FTE Attrition	(5)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(5)	(11)	(4)	0	(6)	(4)	(2)	(1)
Officer FTE Added								1			7	
FTE below Authorized	(11)	(16)	(18)	(21)	(22)	(27)	(38)	(42)	(41)	(47)	(51)	(46)
											7 start 8th L.A./Grad 20 May	
											16 POTs start 154th >>	

Authorized FTE		803										
FY05-06	1-Jul-05	1-Aug-05	1-Sep-05	1-Oct-05	1-Nov-05	1-Dec-05	1-Jan-06	1-Feb-06	1-Mar-06	1-Apr-06	1-May-06	1-Jun-06
Filled FTE	692	689	688	692	688	687	679	697	696	690	686	685
Sworn FTE Attrition	(3)	(1)	(4)	(4)	(1)	(8)	0	(1)	(6)	(4)	(1)	(10)
Officer FTE Added			8				18					16
FTE below Authorized	(111)	(114)	(115)	(111)	(115)	(116)	(124)	(106)	(107)	(113)	(117)	(118)
											154th graduates 10Sep05	
											34 POTs start 155th 11Jul05	
											155th graduates 13Jan06	
											27 POTs start 156th 28Nov05	
											156th graduates 2Jun06	
											22 POTs start 157th 6Feb06 >>	

Authorized FTE		803										
FY06-07	1-Jul-06	1-Aug-06	1-Sep-06	1-Oct-06	1-Nov-06	1-Dec-06	1-Jan-07	1-Feb-07	1-Mar-07	1-Apr-07	1-May-07	1-Jun-07
Filled FTE	691	686	702	694	688	712	701	693	721	721	713	734
Sworn FTE Attrition	(6)	(4)	(8)	(6)	(4)	(12)	(8)	(2)	(1)	(8)	(3)	(3)
Officer FTE Added	1	20			28	1		30	1		24	
FTE below Authorized	(112)	(117)	(101)	(109)	(115)	(91)	(102)	(110)	(82)	(82)	(90)	(69)
											157th grads 11Aug06	
											3 Start 7th L.A./Grad 28Sep06	
											44 POTs start 158th 5Jun06	
											158th grads 17Nov06	
											29 POTs start 161st 26Feb07 >>	
											49 POTs start 159th 11Sep06	
											159th grads 9Feb07	
											42 POTs start 160th 11Dec06	
											160th grads 25May07	
											162nd >>	

Authorized FTE		803										
FY07-08	1-Jul-07	31-Aug-07	30-Sep-07	23-Oct-07	1-Nov-07	1-Dec-07	1-Jan-08	1-Feb-08	1-Mar-08	1-Apr-08	1-May-08	1-Jun-08
Filled FTE	731	722	735	730	722	717	712	732	727	722	742	737
Sworn FTE Attrition	(9)	(9)	(5)	(8)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)
Officer FTE Added		22					25			25		
FTE below Authorized	(72)	(81)	(68)	(73)	(81)	(86)	(91)	(71)	(76)	(81)	(61)	(66)
											161st grads 17Aug07	
											48 POTs start 162nd 09Jul07	
											162nd grads 4Jan08	
											38 POTs start 163rd 15Oct07	
											163rd grads 11Apr08	
											40 POTs start 164th 28Jan08	
											164th grads 25Jul08 >>	
											165th >>	

Authorized FTE		803										
FY08-09	1-Jul-08	1-Aug-08	1-Sep-08	1-Oct-08	1-Nov-08	1-Dec-08	1-Jan-09	1-Feb-09	1-Mar-09	1-Apr-09	1-May-09	1-Jun-09
Filled FTE	732	757	752	747	742	767	762	757	752	777	772	767
Sworn FTE Attrition	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)
Officer FTE Added	30				30				30			
FTE below Authorized	(71)	(46)	(51)	(56)	(61)	(36)	(41)	(46)	(51)	(26)	(31)	(36)
											164th	
											40+ POTs start 165th 19May08	
											165th grads 07Nov08	
											48 POTs start 166th 01Sep08	
											166th grads 02Mar09	

Italic = Projection

ATTACHMENT A

Chuck Wexler
Executive Director



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Cop Crunch:
Identifying Strategies for Dealing with the Recruiting and Hiring Crisis in Law
Enforcement***

December 30, 2005

PERF Project Staff:

Bruce Taylor, Ph.D., Research Director
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* This study was funded by the National Institute of Justice (Grant # 2001-7433-DC-IJ). The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or the official position of the National Institute of Justice or any other organization.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The processes of recruitment and selection are key to developing agencies with high quality personnel and to producing agencies that are representative of their communities in terms of race and gender. The headlines reveal, however, that many departments are having major problems with recruitment and hiring. And, although warnings were sounded in the 1980s and 1990s (see e.g. comments made by Shannon, 1984; Sanders et al., 1995; Bowers, 1990), the "cop crunch" based on anecdotal evidence appears to have hit many agencies very hard and very quickly. The challenge of recruiting and hiring quality personnel has emerged as a critical problem facing law enforcement nationwide. It threatens to undermine the ability of law enforcement to protect our nation's citizens and to reverse important gains in our efforts to increase the representation on our forces of racial/ethnic minorities and women. In response to this potential problem, PERF conducted this project, with NIJ funding, to examine the nature and extent of the "cop crunch" and identify department-level policies/practices that facilitate the recruiting and hiring of quality personnel, and that facilitate the recruiting and hiring of quality women and minorities.

Methods

The current project utilized a two-part methodology involving a national survey and follow-up phone interviews. We also used extant data sources.

Through a *national survey* of just under 1,000 agencies we collected information on the nature and extent of the apparent recruitment/hiring problem and identified how various agency-level factors (e.g., recruitment efforts, pre-employment standards, selection procedures) and jurisdiction-level factors (e.g., median income, percent minority population, unemployment rate) impacted on the ability to hire and the ability to hire women and racial/ethnic minorities. PERF selected a stratified, random sample of law enforcement agencies from around the country. To ensure that the sample was representative of the population of law enforcement agencies, the population was divided into strata based upon agency size, agency type, and geography. The survey was sent to the executives of law enforcement agencies throughout the United States (unweighted N=2,138). A stratified, random sampling design was utilized to select agencies based upon the type of agency (municipal, county, State Police) and the size of the population served (less than 10,000 population, 10,001 to 49,999 population, 50,000 and greater). All regions of the US were represented in this sample. The surveys were initially mailed in early September 2002. This initial mailing was followed up with another wave of surveys to non-respondents in early October 2002. A reminder postcard was sent in November 2002. Finally, a final reminder letter was sent to the agencies that had not responded to either of the first two survey waves, nor the reminder postcard. Of the 2,138 agency executives that received the survey, 985 submitted completed surveys resulting in a response rate of 46.1%. Our survey

response rate of 46.1% was lower than we expected. While we did conduct non-response analysis which suggested that the impact of this low response rate on our substantive results might have been minimal, this low rate is still a concern and a potential limitation of this study.

The survey also allowed us to characterize recruitment and hiring activities nationwide and to identify innovative practices that facilitate hiring generally and the hiring of women and racial/ethnic minorities, in particular. This survey included key questions related to recruitment and selection developed by Strawbridge and Strawbridge (1990) and was sent, not only to a stratified random sample of 2,138 agencies, but also to the 72 agencies previously surveyed in 1990 and again in 1994 (Langworthy et al., 1995). The survey of these 72 agencies produced a third wave of data for the large agencies previously studied.

Phone interviews with a subset of agencies provided information on comprehensive and effective recruitment/hiring programs within agencies and on specific innovative strategies. Specifically, the survey data was used to identify 60 agencies that (1) are effective in recruiting and hiring generally, (2) are effective in recruiting and/or hiring women and/or racial/ethnic minorities, and/or (3) report innovative policies or strategies that promote hiring. Staff interviewed by phone relevant personnel in the 60 sites to document the characteristics of the programs or practices that are linked to hiring successes.

Extant data. Information collected from other sources (e.g., UCR, 2000 Census) regarding the department and/or jurisdiction was added to each department's survey data, including Part I offenses reported to police per officer, unemployment rate, median household income, consumer price index, percent population between 21 and 30, percent female population, percent population with bachelor's degrees, jurisdiction population and density, racial/ethnic breakdown of jurisdiction. Some of this information was used to develop the dependent measures (e.g., percent female, racial/ethnic breakdown of jurisdiction) and others served as control variables (e.g., unemployment, median household income).

FINDINGS

What emerges from our analyses first is a picture of recruitment efforts, and application/selection procedures being used by the nation's local and state law enforcement.

Recruitment efforts: Some of the key highlights from our survey relating to recruitment efforts include the scarcity of resources dedicated to recruitment. With the exception of the State Police Departments and the larger agencies with greater than 500 officers, only a small proportion of the responding agencies have a permanent

recruitment unit. The smaller agencies more typically had either one employee with recruitment responsibility or part-time recruiters. Also, most of the agencies in the sample had fairly modest budgets for recruiting outside personnel costs. Further, the majority of respondents indicated that their agency did not provide awards for those officers that referred successful applicants.

The most commonly reported recruitment methods included newspaper ads, career fairs and the Internet. These were typically done in isolation of other departments, with the majority of agencies reporting that they did not engage in joint recruitment efforts with other law enforcement agencies. Also, about half of the responding agencies use one of their own police programs as a means to recruit young people for a career with their agencies, with the larger agencies reporting greater use of this approach than the smaller agencies. The police programs most commonly utilized for this purpose across all agencies were college internships, explorer programs, and school resource officers. Across all the responding agencies, the most commonly targeted group were those with previous police experience, followed by college graduates, racial and ethnic minorities and women. The larger agencies were also more likely to target these groups than the smaller agencies.

Application procedures: Another factor related to problems potentially associated with hiring problems is the application procedures in place for hiring officers. Respondents were asked how many weeks it takes from the submission of an application to the acceptance of an offer of employment. The data indicate that, the larger the agency, the longer the process takes. The bulk of responding agencies indicated that they accept applications continuously or only when a vacancy exists, as opposed to a particular schedule (e.g., once every six months). The majority of respondents did not require that applicants or sworn officers live in the agency service area, but these agencies did typically maintain the following requirements for applicants: must be a U.S. citizen, must have a driver's license, must have a high school diploma, must meet a minimum vision requirement, may not have a criminal record, and may not have a dishonorable discharge from armed forces. The vast majority of agencies did not require individuals to submit their applications at law enforcement or other government facilities. However, most of the responding agencies did not supply applicants with study or reference materials to help them prepare for tests and other selection procedures.

Selection procedures: Our survey included an extensive number of questions on the selection procedures used by law enforcement agencies in hiring officers/deputies. One condition which could greatly affect the selection of officers is the presence of a court order or consent decree, or a specific Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) plan affecting hiring decisions. Very few respondents indicated that their agencies were under this scrutiny, but, of those that did, a slightly higher percentage of respondents were from larger agencies, as well as the State Police agencies.

The survey also contained a question that asked respondents to specify the order in which a series of selection procedures take place. The first procedures to take place in the selection process were a civil service exam and a written entrance exam. Although the precise order may differ, the data indicates that subsequent steps include a criminal records check and a fitness/agility test, followed by the assessment center and practical tests. With some consistency, the final steps in the process often include a medical exam, a psychometric test, a psychologist interview, and a drug test. Regarding pay and benefits, the data indicate that the base starting salary for an officer/deputy generally increased as the size of the agency increased. Agencies with 501 or more officers were an exception to this, with the second lowest base starting. The vast majority of all agencies indicated that they paid their recruits a salary during training, offered a uniform allowance or provided them, paid the tuition for recruit training at an external academy/school, offered salary increases for college degrees and/or had take-home cars. Additionally, most respondents indicated that their agencies allow officers/deputies to work overtime and/or work secondary employment.

Replication of Strawbridge and Strawbridge and Descriptive Data on Attracting and Hiring Applicants: Next, we compared our survey results (2002) with those achieved earlier by Strawbridge and Strawbridge (1989 survey). During the intervening 13 years, the average number of officers per capita significantly increased. As expected, significantly more minorities and females are working in law enforcement; the proportion of white officers has declined in the PERF survey. These findings indicate that the trends discovered by Langworthy et al. (1994) have continued. Black, Hispanic, and officers of other races, as well as females, have all made noticeable gains, as white officers have dropped as a percentage of officers on average.

Despite the gloom and doom predictions from the media and among law enforcement practitioners; we did not find sufficient evidence to either support or to reject the existence of the much discussed *Cop Crunch*. We *do not* have evidence that the number of applicants for sworn officer positions in 2002 was statistically different than 1989. Although there was a substantial decrease in the mean number of applicants by 2002, the change was not statistically significant.¹ However, there were a number of agencies in our comparative study with the Strawbridge and Strawbridge (1990) data that did have fewer applicants, supporting the belief that at least some agencies are having difficulty attracting applicants and are under some form of a "crunch." Also, Department of Justice statistics on hiring trends during this period indicate that agencies had a variety of experiences in attracting applicants, hiring applicants and retaining officers. Department of Justice statistics demonstrate that from 1996-2000, only 22% of agencies nationwide experienced a reduction in force,

¹ A major limitation of this study was the small sample size associated with our test of the "cop crunch" hypothesis. With a sample of only 32 agencies containing both 1989 and 2002 data, even large differences might not be statistically significant. Therefore, our observed drop of 1,164 applicants between 1989 and 2002 could have been statistically significant if we observed the same pattern with a larger sample.

while the majority either remained stable or grew (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). Another study reveals that from 1996-1999 slightly more than 50% of agencies grew in size while the rest remained level (Koper, 2004).

Also, when examining the PERF survey data on attracting and hiring applicants, we did uncover a noticeable minority of agencies (greater than 10%) that appear to have severe shortages, that is less than 90% of their sworn positions were filled on January 2002. Although there is no distinct pattern by agency size, it is apparent that some agencies are having significant difficulty in maintaining staffing levels, with somewhat greater problems appearing with the smallest agencies and the very largest agencies. Examining the PERF survey results on recruiting success also yields a less than optimistic picture. While our data suggest that most of the agencies in our sample are able to draw sufficient applicants, the agencies with over 500 officers and state agencies have significant problems drawing sufficient qualified applicants. Agencies are also having difficulty attracting and hiring qualified female applicants across all agency size categories, and concerns still remain about the hiring of minority applicants. These data provide reasons to be concerned about the future of police staffing for many agencies as officers retire or move into a different occupation, these statistics indicate that it may be difficult to replace many of the officers. Likewise, the ability to hire female and minority officers is likely to remain difficult. People from these groups continue to apply in relatively low numbers.

There have been several positive shifts in the use of special recruiting strategies to target specific groups. In fact, the current survey confirms results achieved by Langworthy, et al. (1995) that indicated minorities and females are targeted for recruitment. Women, military veterans, four-year college graduates, and people with prior police service were all targeted by significantly more agencies in 2002 than previously. It appears that college graduates as a proportion of officers has also increased in concordance previous findings.

Next, applicant screening characteristics have not changed, with two significant exceptions. The number of agencies that require residency has significantly decreased and the number of agencies requiring a "clean criminal record" has significantly decreased. However, increases were observed with regard to drug testing. Other statistically significant differences that occurred between 1989 and 2002 included reductions in requirements for written tests, and the use of intelligence tests. Considering that agencies are concerned about attracting applicants, police salaries have not kept pace with inflation over the past 13 years. Additionally, agencies have not improved the efficiency of their screening and hiring process; it still takes nearly six months from time of application to employment.

Factors that impact the number of applicants and hiring rates for females and minorities: Concerns for diversity in recruiting and hiring have become heavily linked with efforts to enhance the applicant pool in general. Some often cited reasons for inadequacies in hiring women and minorities include decreasing numbers of

qualified applicants, and individual characteristics among recruits, such as past drug use and limited life experience (Shusta et al. 1995). Others also point to a competitive market and higher education requirements as combining to cause qualified women and minority applicants to choose private sector jobs over law enforcement (Dantzker, 2000; Decker & Huckabee, 2002). Still others point to concerns about institutional racism and policies non-supportive of women and minorities as reasons for these problems (Shusta, Levine, Harris, & Wong, 1995; Roberg, Crank, & Kuykendall, 1999).

Other macro-level factors have also been discussed in the context of gender and racial representation. A survey of large police departments indicates that a larger percentage of African American officers relates to higher percentages of African American citizens in the jurisdiction (Hochstedler & Conley, 1986). While a higher percentage of women is related to a larger department, which in turn is related to being located in a larger jurisdiction, larger departments were also more likely to have a stated strategy for recruiting women (IACP, 1998). Agency level decisions and policies related to the advertising of job openings, the requirement to pass a written exam, and the requirement of college credits may also affect gender and racial representation. (Chivers, 2001b).

Despite these previous findings, our multivariate analysis of agency-and jurisdiction-level factors revealed only one jurisdiction-level significant factor and no agency-level significant factors. That is, jurisdictions with higher percentages of the total population with a bachelor's degree were associated with a larger number of female applicants. Next we examined the total number of female hires. The main variable that significantly impacted the total number of females hired was the requirement of a college degree. When an agency requires recruits to have at-least a bachelor's degree, the number of female hires also increases. No other jurisdiction-level factors were significant, nor were any agency-level factors, significant predictors in this model.

Based on our phone interviews a number of best practices emerged in the area of recruiting women. One method cited by several agencies was direct recruiting at events geared towards women, such as women's trade shows or women's fairs. Several agencies also reported recruiting at women's fitness clubs or women's athletic events, as the women who attend these venues are likely to be physically fit and thus more inclined to consider a career in law enforcement. Several other agencies formed advisory committees to determine the most effective ways to recruit women. One respondent noted that while they do not have any formal programs in place, the agency has a commitment to increasing opportunities for female officers, so female recruits can see fellow females in positions of authority.

Next, we examined the total minority applicant model. There were two substantively meaningful agency-level predictor variables in the minority hires model. First, when an agency requires that their applicants have two years of college or 60

credit hours, the total number of minority applicants decreases. Second, when an agency requires that their applicants have a college degree or higher the total number of minority applicants increases. No other jurisdiction-level factors were significant, nor were any agency-level factors significant predictors in the minority hires model.

Based on our phone interviews a number of best practices emerged in the area of recruiting minorities. In terms of recruiting minorities, several agencies reported forming task forces and advisory groups to determine the best strategies to recruit minorities. One agency reported bringing different minority groups onto the task force, and then using a person of each group to recruit fellow minorities (e.g., a Hispanic member would go out into the Hispanic community to help find places to advertise and recruit; an Asian member would do the same for the Asian community, etc.). In a similar vein, several agencies reported partnering with minority organizations such as the NAACP to help recruit minority applicants.

JULY 04

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Hiring and Keeping Police Officers

COPS

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AUG. 04

Hiring and Keeping Police Officers

Findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the authors and do not reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Urban Institute, or the trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.

This summary report is based on the full technical report by Christopher S. Koper, Edward R. Maguire, and Gretchen E. Moore, *Hiring and Retention Issues in Police Agencies: Readings on the Determinants of Police Strength, Hiring and Retention of Officers, and the Federal COPS Program*, Research Report, Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, October 2001, NCJ 193428. Available on the Web site of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service: <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/193428.pdf>.

The study was supported by National Institute of Justice grant 99-IJ-CX-0011 with funds from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Additional support was provided by the Jerry Lee Center of Criminology of the University of Pennsylvania.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

After several years of growth in police employment, fueled in part by Federal grants, police agencies now say it is hard to find qualified applicants. An NIJ-sponsored study also found that most recruits successfully complete their training, although training is taking longer because of the growing complexity of police work. Retaining new hires is a concern, because they account for many of the officers who leave police agencies each year.

What did the researchers find?

- As a result of Federal funding and demands for service, slightly more than half the Nation's police agencies grew in officer strength during the late 1990s. However, in about 20 percent of police agencies (mostly small ones), officer strength declined, often as a result of fiscal or recruitment problems.
- Most agencies with Federal hiring funds keep the positions after the grants expire.
- Continued growth in hiring may not be sustainable at recent rates. By 1999,

more than half of actively hiring agencies had difficulty finding enough qualified applicants.

- Screening and training new officers typically took 8 to 11 months.
- Nine out of ten recruits completed their training.
- Many officers leaving their agencies in 1999 had served only a few years, and many left one law enforcement agency to work for another.

What were the study's limitations?

The study did not include historical data that could show whether recent patterns differ from earlier patterns, and it did not examine specific practices in hiring, training, and retaining officers.

Who should read this study?

Police managers and executives involved in recruiting, hiring, and retaining officers; elected officials and policymakers responsible for public safety; teachers of police management courses; and policing scholars.

by Christopher S. Koper

Hiring and Keeping Police Officers



In the wake of rising crime rates of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Congress passed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. This omnibus legislation included the Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act (establishing the "COPS" program), which provided funding to put 100,000 additional police on the Nation's streets. Approximately 61,000 of these officers were funded through hiring grants made to State and local police agencies. The rest were funded through grants for technology and civilians that enabled agencies to put more of their officers in the field and keep officers in the field for longer periods.

To help plan, manage, and assess the COPS program, and to provide information for police practitioners and scholars, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), at the request of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), examined the recent experiences of police agencies nationwide in hiring and retaining sworn officers.

The NIJ study, conducted by the Urban Institute, looked at what determines the size of police agencies; the amount of time it takes to hire, train, and deploy officers and the problems encountered in doing so; officers' length of service at an agency and reasons for leaving; and whether positions initially funded with Federal grants were retained after the grants expired.

Most agencies grew during the late 1990s

Slightly more than half of police agencies grew in officer strength¹ from 1996 to 1999, while most of the rest maintained their staffing levels. The availability of grant money and concerns about crime, calls for service, and population size drove much staffing growth during the period. For the minority of agencies whose staffing levels declined, fiscal constraints and a lack of qualified recruits were contributing factors. However, emerging patterns could change this overall upward trend in staffing.

About the Author

Christopher S. Koper, Ph.D., is a research associate at the Jerry Lee Center of Criminology at the University of Pennsylvania.

Finding qualified applicants

The supply of good police recruits was down throughout the Nation during the summer of 2000. More than half of small agencies (those serving populations of under 50,000) and two-thirds of large agencies (those serving populations of 50,000 or more) with recent vacancies reported that a lack of qualified applicants caused difficulties in filling those slots. Many agencies reported staffing problems caused by unanticipated vacancies. Agencies that had difficulty filling open positions had roughly one unfilled vacancy for every three that were filled.

What might account for these problems of recruitment and retention? The researchers did not examine the causes of these trends in detail, but there are some possible explanations:

- The strong economy may have lured good candidates and experienced officers

away from law enforcement into better paying jobs.

- Increasing educational requirements for applicants, particularly in larger police agencies, may have restricted the number of recruits. This effect likely would have been compounded by the economy's draw on prospective applicants who have a college education.
- Some departments may be facing unusually high attrition as baby boomers retire.
- Negative publicity over such matters as racial profiling and the excessive use of force may have discouraged some people from wanting to join the profession.
- Increased hiring during the late 1990s may have contributed to the shortage by draining the pool of potential police applicants and intensifying competition for recruits among police agencies.

STUDY METHODS

The researchers used three methods to study police staffing issues:

- A national survey of police agencies.
- A critical synthesis of the literature.
- An analysis of police employment data.

Survey of Police Agencies

The telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 1,270 police agencies was administered during the summer of 2000. Staff from the National Opinion Research Center interviewed chiefs of police (or their representatives) about their COPS program hires and their general practices and experiences in hiring and retention.

Large agencies and COPS grant recipients were intentionally oversampled in the survey design; estimates were weighted as appropriate to provide national estimates.

Types of agencies responding. Most agencies sampled (80 percent) were municipal or county police agencies; 13 percent were sheriff's offices; less than 10 percent were university or school police, State police, transit police, public housing police, park police, or others.

Sizes of agencies responding. The survey included respondents from 553 large agencies (serving populations of 50,000 or more) and 717 respondents from small agencies (serving fewer than 50,000).

Grant recipients responding. Most agencies (86 percent) had received some type of COPS grant, and 59 percent had received COPS hiring grants.

Synthesis of Literature

The researchers also reviewed previous studies that attempted to identify factors influencing the supply of and demand for police resources, measured in various ways. These studies, generally based on statistical modeling of variations in resources by place and time, have produced inconsistent findings. They therefore provide little guidance for practitioners who are trying to forecast trends, recruit candidates, and retain officers.

Analysis of Employment Data

The researchers compared retention rates for federally funded positions with historical retention patterns in police employment from 1975 to 1994.

Training is taking longer

The process of screening and testing applicants, basic/academy training, and field training averaged 31 weeks in small agencies and 43 weeks in large agencies.

Since the mid-1990s, training generally has become longer and more complex: one-third of agencies reported that training time had increased by up to 3 weeks since 1995, while a quarter reported that it had increased by a month or more. Less than 4 percent of agencies reported a decrease in training time.

About a third of agencies who said training time has increased believe it is at least partly because community policing requires learning such skills as structured problem solving that are not part of traditional police training.

Most recruits complete the training

Approximately three-quarters of agencies reported hiring officers during the previous year—an average of 4.4 officers per agency. About 90

percent completed their training. Of those who failed, most failed in the academy rather than in field training.

About 12 percent of recent hires in large agencies and 36 percent in small agencies were exempted from academy training because they had previous experience or approved preservice training at colleges or vocational schools.

Keeping officers on the job

Overall attrition rates were not unusually high in 1999 (less than 8 percent), but unanticipated vacancies caused difficulty for about half the agencies. Retaining new hires seems to have been a significant part of this problem, particularly in small agencies, where two-thirds of departing officers had served for 5 or fewer years.² Half of the officers leaving large agencies were retirees; in small agencies, one-fifth were retirees.

It is not clear whether keeping officers has become more of a problem in recent years. Historically, small

agencies have generally had more difficulty retaining staff than large agencies.

About 45 percent of officers who left small agencies and 24 percent who left large agencies continued in law enforcement work. Whether this pattern has changed over time is not known. But these numbers are large enough to reinforce the notion that competition is getting stronger for both recruits and experienced officers.

Implications for policy and practice

The findings have implications for the work of police managers and policymakers.

Recruiting and retaining officers. It is hard to say how long the current hiring crunch will continue. The Nation's new concern with security is likely to create new personnel needs for all levels of law enforcement (Federal, State, and local) and private security. Many police recruiters and managers will need to assess the effectiveness of their recruiting methods and find ways to make working in

their agencies more attractive. Strategies might include improving pay and benefits, recruiting officers with the right skills for community policing, changing job roles to enhance officers' satisfaction, improving career development, changing residency requirements, and creating incentives for retirement-eligible officers to remain with the agency.

Becoming more efficient.

Greater use of technology and civilians can free more uniformed officers to work in the field for longer periods. When implemented carefully, this heightens police presence in the community without adding new officers and can enhance other aspects of organizational performance, such as solving crimes. Federal funding has encouraged this trend with grants for technology and civilian hires. Furthermore, research in preventing crime suggests that *how* officers are used is more important than *how many* officers are used. Police managers can maximize their effectiveness by, for example, concentrating police attention on hot spots that generate disproportionate amounts of crime.

MOST AGENCIES ARE KEEPING COPS OFFICERS BEYOND THE GRANT EXPIRATION

The Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) aimed to add 100,000 police officers to the Nation's communities in the second half of the 1990s, largely through grants given to State and local agencies to hire new officers.

As of the summer of 2000, about three-quarters of agencies with expired hiring grants had kept their funded positions—in virtually all cases retaining the full complement—for at least 1 to 2 years without cutting other positions or relying on attrition. (These figures, however, are based on short-term followup data.)

Looking ahead, 74 to 80 percent of grant recipients who have non-expired positions expect to keep at least some of them even after they expire. About two-thirds anticipate keeping all of them. Generally, agencies that anticipate retaining positions expect to keep them 5 years or more.

Overall, staff retention rates of COPS grant recipients appear to be fairly consistent with the retention patterns of police agencies during the 20 years before the program was established. Using that criterion, the hiring grants have been reasonably effective in raising police staffing levels beyond the life of the grants.

Setting hiring standards and screening applicants.

In the current environment, some agencies may feel pressure to lower standards or expedite the applicant screening process. Although higher recruiting standards, such as requiring a college degree, may contribute to applicant shortages, agencies must consider the demands of contemporary policing—including the need to work with new technologies,

conduct community policing and problem-solving activities, and navigate complex legal rules—in determining background requirements and planning organizational strategies to attract applicants. At the same time, rushing the screening process to fill positions can have adverse consequences, as some departments have learned after suffering through scandals arising from corrupt or abusive

officers who were inadequately screened and, in a few notable cases, had criminal records prior to their police service.

Benefiting from grants.

According to police officials, grant money was one of the most important factors contributing to growth in many police agencies and slowing staffing reductions in others during the 1990s. Federal money for law enforcement can help increase police presence on the street relatively quickly, lessen the immediate costs of staff expansion, or even cover the costs of new technology that could increase police efficiency. However, police officials should also consider nonfunded costs that may be associated with grants, such as the costs of training and equipping new officers, and of retaining officers beyond the life of the grants.

Planning Federal funding strategies. Most recipients of Federal funding appear to be keeping their funded positions past the expiration of the grants. If, however, recruitment problems continue in law enforcement, grants that promote innovative strategies and the use of

technology and civilians to maximize efficiency could become increasingly important to practitioners.

Recommended reading

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Notes

1. Police strength is most commonly measured in terms of sworn officers, total police agency employees, or amount of police expenditures. In this study, police strength was measured as the number of sworn officers.
2. In large agencies, about one-third of departing officers left after 5 or fewer years of service.

ATTACHMENT D

Future Trends in Law Enforcement Recruiting

Joint efforts and redefined jobs

Posted: February 14th, 2007 04:07 PM PDT

JEFFREY CHURCH
Recruiting Contributor
Officer.com

How can small agencies compete with an agency that has a recruiting staff of 12 and a \$500,000 annual budget? There is hope.

Recruiting is at a crossroads. There are not enough qualified bodies to fill existing openings. Las Vegas Metro has a staff of about eight recruiters and has hired a professional marketing company to help. The Los Angeles Police have 27 persons assigned to recruiting and a recruiting budget more than many entire police departments'. The U.S. Border Patrol seeks over 2,000 new agents per year and has millions of dollars to spend on getting the word out. The military is seeking even more people. In spite of big budgets, larger agencies are still not meeting goals. How can smaller agencies compete? Well there is some hope.

The major trend that I forecast is the growing involvement of state training and certification agencies, commonly called POST, in assisting local agencies. Most states have a POST (Peace Officers Standards and Training) and others go by different names such as division of law enforcement standards.

In California, POST has a specific individual assigned to recruiting issues and has hosted conferences on Recruiting and Retention. They have also published a research publication called "Recruiting and Retention, Best Practices (Update April 2006)." Take a look--it's very good reading.

However, what I'm predicting is way beyond that. I'm suggesting that your state POST or similar office actually run a website and active recruiting program to lure candidates to agencies within the state. Not just to recruit for their highway patrol or state positions, but that there be a major website that sells the benefits of being a law enforcement officer in that state, including sheriffs, police, bailiffs, school police, etc. Picture a website that sells the state as a place to be a cop. Included are schools, recreation and quality of life issues. Then there would be badges or patches to click on that would take you to each agency's recruiting site.

The cost of a recruiting booth or ad is the same regardless of agency size. They don't care what your budget is. So, once again picture a POST sponsored ad online or in magazines touting the advantages of being a cop in that state. The state should have a road crew of recruiters to go to job fairs, schools, and military bases. Once again the purpose is to direct people to all the agencies within the state.

How would this be accomplished? There is only one way that will be effective-- by lobbying by sheriffs and chiefs putting pressure on the governors, state POST director and legislature. Also check into possible federal or state grants to fund this!

If your state won't step up to the plate, small agencies should form a coalition. Do exactly what I proposed. Sell your state, or in a big state, sell your area. Small agencies must coordinate with others to have one website, one booth, one ad, one recruiter. Then do what one area has done; set up your own job fair. Don't wait for some for-profit to do it and overcharge you.

More and more agencies have set up coordinated and shared testing. We need to go beyond that.

If you read my previous article on "The 10 Golden Rules of Effective Law Enforcement Recruiting" you saw rule #9. Your chief, sheriff, director and perhaps your mayor, manager or commissioner must get

involved to make this happen.

Moving along to other trends, I also see more non-profits getting involved in mentoring candidates and even funding them through the academy. Such a program is already in place in Napa, California and believe it or not, some cops actually volunteer their time for free to work with kids. Non-profits have much more flexibility in working with minorities and disadvantaged kids without the bureaucracy of a government agency. Law enforcement professionals may serve as board members on these non-profits. If your area non-profits won't do it, start one!

A third trend is civilianization. Do we really need more cops? Can a civilian, maybe a retired or former professional peace officer, serve as a civilian in such areas as recruiting, internal affairs, crime prevention, Public Information Officer (PIO), or backgrounds? How about hiring a professional accountant or computer analyst to work as a civilian in your fraud or computer crimes sections? They can even be dual utilized to help with agency budget. More and more agencies are using contract or civilian background investigators. The Manatee County Sheriff's Department is hiring a civilian recruiter. Las Vegas Metro is looking at hiring a former peace officer part time in recruiting to augment the full time staff. Many agencies have CSOs or PSTs (Public Service Technicians). Can these civilians assist in investigative or traffic functions? Along the line of civilian help, what about part time cops? There are many retired cops who would be happy to work part time or full time for three to six months. We gotta get our motor home time in! While most agencies out west hire only full time, the Reno Police Department hires part time paid "reserves."

One trend that already exists is reduced police services, such as responses to cold property crimes and private property accidents. Each agency is different. These changes make us less popular with the community we serve. Yet the paperwork burden seems to increase. My former agency implemented a computerized report system that set us back ten years and required twice as much time to write a report. Administrators must look at making each individual more productive, not less.

One unfortunate trend in business that will be a major positive for police work is the retirement and medical care most provide along with civil service job security. Some agencies in Alaska and others have done away with the conventional retirement system; this will be a major draw to steal away those officers to an agency that does offer a good system. A strong retirement system, job security and medical care will draw in those from other professions who had not thought about law enforcement.

A final trend will be technology. As more and more technological and scientific improvements arrive (too many out there to imagine) they can replace some functions of humans and at least make us more productive.

So, as you can see, there is light at the end of the tunnel. The answer may be in asking if we really need more cops, or are there ways to free up the cops we have? Are there alternatives to full time sworn personnel? Do all detectives have to be cops or might a specialist in computers or accounting do better?

Also, should we look at some means of state-sponsored or other coordinated regional recruiting systems with multiple agencies to save money and make the smaller agencies competitive with those with big budgets and staffs? As part of that, more and more professionals outside of police work may give us a second look depending on the job security and benefits we provide. Finally, can non-profits be enlisted to help mentor and financially assist youths toward a career in law enforcement?

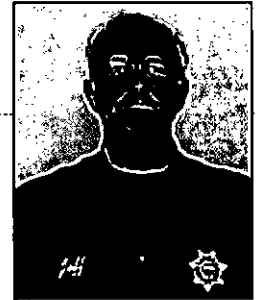
Hopefully this article will be copied and find its way under the door or on the desk of your administration. Underline the strong points. Hopefully administrators will work with other agencies and the state standards commission to step up to the plate and help solve the problem in a cost effective manner.

There is hope!

Web Links:

- California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)

Sgt. Jeff Church (Ret.) may be contacted at 800-554-9519. He is the owner of "DRS" (Diversity Recruiting Specialists) and consults, assists & teaches on recruiting matters.. He is a retired police sergeant and USAF reserve officer.



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ATTACHMENT E

Police Departments Relaxing Age, Fitness Standards

Posted: June 8th, 2007 03:31 PM EDT

By
KEN



AP Photo/Logan Wallace

Officer Laurence C. Egerton, who at age 56 is a rookie with the Wilmington, N.C. Police Department, poses at the department's headquarters in Wilmington, N.C.

MAGUIRE

Associated Press Writer

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Police departments around the country are relaxing age and fitness standards, forgiving minor criminal convictions and easing other requirements to relieve shortages in their ranks and find officers who are wiser, more worldly and cooler-headed in a crisis.

In recent years, St. Petersburg and Tampa, Fla., dropped the need for a two-year college degree if the candidate has military or law enforcement experience. Oakland, Calif., is no longer disqualifying applicants for minor, long-ago drug convictions or gang involvement. And Boston this spring raised the upper age limit for recruits from 32 to 40.

"Being well-rounded, having some life experience, makes for a better person and patrolman - someone who is coming up on a conflict who is mature and measured, as opposed to some young kid right out of school," said Boston City Councilor Michael Flaherty, who proposed the age-limit increase.

The relaxation of standards - a trend that emerged in Associated Press interviews and reviews of policies in 50 cities - has been prompted in large part by a dire need for police recruits.

A federally funded study last spring by the Police Executive Research Forum, a Washington advocacy group for police chiefs and commissioners, found that 10 percent of the nation's police departments had severe shortages of officers.

New York City is looking to hire 3,000 officers. The Los Angeles police want 1,000 more cops; Houston needs 600; Washington is short 330; Phoenix is down about 200; and the Boston force is about 100 officers below its 2000 level.

Among the reasons: The strong economy is offering other job possibilities, aging cops are retiring, starting salaries are low, and the Iraq war is drawing off both would-be police recruits and police officers who are in the National Guard and Reserves.

"There's a real demand for really good people, and there's a limited supply," said Chuck Wexler, director of the Police Executive Research Forum. "Cities are having to take a second look at their recruitment standards."

The change in standards also reflects a desire by some departments to focus less on push-ups per minute and more on life experience. Many say older recruits might be less hotheaded and less trigger-happy, and that could mean the difference between escalating or defusing a tense situation.

"There is a movement afoot to focus more on people who are creative problem-solvers," said Gilbert Moore, spokesman for the U.S. Justice Department.

The Indiana State Police last year raised the maximum age for recruits from 35 to 40. Houston went from 36 to 44 last summer.

"We had very few qualified candidates," Houston spokeswoman Johanna Abad said. "The larger pool allows for candidates that are coming out of a military career to go into a second career, which they are qualified for. It's made our pool of applicants a lot more attractive."

The higher age limit in Boston was good news for Stephanie O'Sullivan, a former member of the U.S. women's hockey team who wanted to be an officer, but at 35 was too old. She is applying to the Boston department.

O'Sullivan owns and operates a hockey school with her brother, former NHL player Chris O'Sullivan. She also has a master's degree in criminal justice and works as an investigator for the district attorney's office.

"There's great qualified candidates out there, from the city, that are committed, that have already exhibited a good work ethic, they're mature, responsible. Those are the assets I think you need on the job today," O'Sullivan said.

While many departments have no upper age limits, usually out of fear of age-discrimination lawsuits, some are seeing the advantages of older recruits, provided they can meet the physical requirements.

In North Carolina, the Wilmington police recently hired Lawrence Egerton, who turns 57 in December. He has been a social worker, and most recently owned an auto mechanic business. He passed all the physical tests and graduated from the academy as the oldest in a class of 13.

Older officers bring "overall maturity and life experience," Egerton said. He added: "I tend to get a lot of cooperation just because of my age. Whether I'm arresting someone or getting people to divulge information, I think people assume that I've been out there for a long time."

Egerton admitted, however, that 10 1/2-hour shifts can be exhausting. "When I'm done, I have dinner, read the paper and go to bed," he said.

The Police Executive Research Forum study also noted a drop from 36 percent to 20 percent in recent years of departments that require candidates to have a clean criminal record.

Many departments also subject their recruits to lie-detector tests in which they are asked about their drug use. But cities such as Fort Myers, Fla., are overlooking occasional use of drugs such as Ecstasy and powdered cocaine as long as it was more than five years in the past. Most departments still disallow anyone with a felony conviction.

"It's different now for the kids. There's a lot of drugs out there," said Fort Myers Maj. Glenn Johnson. "I'd hate to rule them out because of that."

In Alaska, Juneau Police Lt. Kris Sell said that because of rising obesity among Americans, recruits included, the department recently relaxed its fitness requirements. "It was washing out all the candidates and it washed out all the female applicants," she said.

Applicants must be able to sprint 300 meters in 77 seconds, up from 56 seconds. And they must be able to do at least 15 sit-ups per minute, down from 30.

Two years ago, Los Angeles changed the rules to allow male recruits to carry 24 percent body fat, up from 22 percent; and women 32 percent, up from 30 percent.

On May 25, the city personnel department's medical administrator resigned after six nurses who screen recruits signed a letter of protest, claiming the more lenient body fat standards did not take into account the risk of more trainee injuries and lawsuits. In response, the old rules were reinstated.

"We had people with waists over 50 inches. We're not talking about bodybuilders," said Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine, a former police officer. "The attitude was, 'Well, they'll get in shape at the academy.'"

Zine also criticized the department for easing its zero-tolerance policy toward drug use - experimental use of cocaine and marijuana will no longer eliminate candidates - and for dropping a portion of the written test for candidates.

"They're trying to manipulate the system for bodies, for personnel, for increased numbers," he said.

Sgt. Alora Perna, who evaluates and hires recruits for LAPD, said that in the past year or so the department has not eliminated candidates just because of long-ago run-ins with the law.

"We're not looking for perfect people, because we know people are human and make mistakes," Perna said. "We look at what those people have done since those mistakes."

The Philadelphia department is making no changes in its recruitment standards.

Jose Melendez, chief inspector of the training bureau, said police shift work is more suitable for younger people and younger recruits are "more eager to learn." The 367 current recruits are mostly in their mid-20s.

"These younger officers, they don't have families, wives or young kids at home. They don't have problems working weekends and holidays," Melendez said.

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