

AGENDA REPORT

TO: JOHN A. FLORES
INTERIM CITY ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: Sean Whent

SUBJECT: Informational Report Regarding
Oakland Police Department (OPD)
Efforts to Attract and Recruit Applicants
with Work or Life Experience in
Oakland or Similar Cities

DATE: May 1, 2015

City Administrator
Approval

Date

5/13/15

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Public Safety Committee:

Receive this informational report regarding Oakland Police Department (OPD) efforts to attract and recruit more applicants from Oakland or connections to Oakland or similarly diverse cities interested in becoming OPD police officers.

OUTCOME

The Oakland Police Department's Policy of expediting the background investigations of police officer candidates with Oakland life or work experience (or such experience with similar cities) helps to ensure that such candidates are prioritized in the recruitment and hiring process to become OPD officers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Oakland is one of the most diverse cities anywhere in the world, it is imperative that OPD sworn officers have the cultural literacy to connect with Oakland's diverse residents. OPD sworn officers themselves come from many different cultural and geographic backgrounds, and regardless of background, OPD expects all officers to relate to residents and build relationships that promote trust and collaboration - building and maintaining community trust is a critical part of OPD's mission as well as necessary component of keeping the public safe. OPD recognizes

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that people who have prior life experiences with Oakland or places like Oakland will be more likely to have developed the cultural literacy that OPD expects. Therefore, OPD now to prioritizes background investigations for applicants with experience living or working in diverse places like Oakland and/or with complex crime challenges – in addition to prioritizing background investigations for applicants with very strong overall profiles. OPD will continue to look for the best strategies to ensure that sworn officers connect with, and mirror the public they serve.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) expects each police officer to uphold the mission of OPD and maintain high standards of professionalism, ethics, honesty and integrity. As three recent reports presented to the Public Safety Committee on African American Recruitment (dated February 5, 2015, March 16, 2015 and April 7, 2015) explain, the recruitment and training process is designed to find applicants whose personal histories illustrate that they share and practice these values. By recruiting officers with connections to Oakland or communities similar to Oakland, OPD can better ensure that applicants will have an awareness and appreciation of people from diverse backgrounds.

The California Constitution, Article 11 on Local Government, Section 10b states:

“A city or county, including any chartered city or chartered county, or public district, may not require that its employees be residents of such city, county, or district; except that such employees may be required to reside within a reasonable and specific distance of their place of employment or other designated location.” Also, the California Government Code, Section 50083 states: “No local agency or district shall require that its employees be residents of such local agency or district.” These laws restrict the City of Oakland’s authority to hire applicants for the position of police officer, or any other position, because of where they choose to reside. However, OPD does have the legal authority and capability to expedite the background process for well qualified applicants who the City Administrator’s Office (CAO) and OPD leadership believe will have the life experience to connect with diverse Oakland residents; the CAO and OPD believe that applicants who currently live in Oakland, have lived in Oakland, or who can demonstrate life experience from similar communities will be well-positioned to serve as OPD officers where they regularly interact with the public and help OPD as an organization foster strong relationships with communities across the City.

ANALYSIS

Oakland is one of the most diverse cities in the United States, with people from many ethnic and racial backgrounds. The economics blog “Priceconomics” ranks Oakland as the most diverse city

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in the United States¹ according to their December 2014 analysis. Oakland's demographics according to the 2010 U.S. Census are as follows:

Table 1: 2010 U.S. Census Oakland Race Data

Race	Oakland	CA
White alone	34.5%	57.6%
Black or African American alone	28.0%	6.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.8%	1.0%
Asian alone	16.8%	13.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.6%	0.4%
Two or More Races	5.6%	4.9%
Hispanic or Latino	25.4%	37.6%
White alone	25.9%	40.1%

OPD is proud to serve the diverse communities of Oakland and benefits immeasurably from having workforce that reflects this rich diversity and has an appreciation of this diversity. Officers who live in Oakland or other city with diverse demographics as well as crime challenges, are likely to have a strong appreciation for these factors which affect how officers must practice policing in Oakland. Such an appreciation builds strong cultural literacy that helps officers relate to residents and build relationships that promote trust and collaboration.

The Second Supplemental Report on African American recruitment (dated April 7, 2015) explains officers hired by OPD must protect the public and be trusted to manage in all manner of situations, including when the use of force is necessary. Therefore, OPD, like all U.S. police agencies, has a public mandate to ensure each applicant invited to a training academy can be trusted to serve the public with a high level of honesty and integrity as well as passion for public service. That report also explains that the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) was established by the State Legislature in 1959 to create minimum selection and training standards for California law enforcement personnel. California law requires that police agencies including OPD be POST-certified to provide training such as that required for the basic police academy. The Physical Ability Test (PAT), Oral Exam, Written Test, Background Investigation, Personal History Statement Review and Character Review sections are designed along POST benchmarks to ensure OPD applicants meet these aptitude and personality thresholds.

OPD does not have access to data on academy applicants' residency, name, gender or age while applicants are being administered the PAT, Written Test and Oral Exam. However, OPD does have the authority to request personal information including residency, employment and

¹<http://priceconomics.com/the-most-and-least-diverse-cities-in-america/>

volunteer history, education and many other aspects on the Personal History Statement (PHS) which applicants provide to OPD at the time of their oral interviews. The Oakland Police Department's Recruiting and Backgrounds Unit asks applicants to explain their connections to Oakland and other communities on their Personal History Statement (PHS). Beyond the yes/no question on residency, OPD asks about applicants' exposure to cities of different population size as well as cities with significant crime challenges. Applicants have the opportunity to provide a thoughtful written response that showcases their different community connections. OPD uses this information to expedite the background investigation process for the most qualified candidates such as those who disclose Oakland residency or connections to Oakland or other diverse communities. Through expedited backgrounds, OPD identifies more candidates to invite to each academy with these relevant backgrounds.

Recruiting for a Diverse Workforce

Beyond the prioritization system for background investigations, OPD is committed to utilizing varied recruiting efforts to ensure that many qualified applicants from diverse backgrounds apply to be Oakland police officers. As outlined in the March 16, 2015 supplemental report on African American Recruitment, OPD is now employing the following approaches:

- Recruiting at Historically Black College and University Alumni Associations and Other Organizations
- Better noticing to the public of test dates
- More media outreach
- Outreach of OPD officers to community events
- Creating an internship program(s)
- OPD's Cadet Program
- OPD Mentoring for at-risk youth
- Participation in the Merritt College Law and Justice Program
- Outreach and Partnership with African American Churches
- Partnering with the Black Officers Association
- Reaching out to African American Publications
- Outreach and Partnership with African American Churches

OPD is similarly making efforts to reach out to, and to recruit new academy applicants from community organizations that serve all underrepresented groups in Oakland.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

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

COORDINATION

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

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

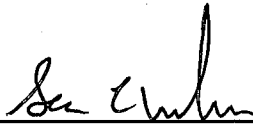
Economic: There are no economic opportunities identified in this report.

Environmental: No environmental opportunities have been identified.

Social Equity: This report provides valuable information to the Oakland community regarding efforts to ensure that OPD officers are well prepared to build relationships with diverse residents from all parts of Oakland.

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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