

# Oakland Police Department



## 2022-2023 Recruiting, Training & Retention Strategic Plan

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## Introduction

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) has struggled with maintaining the authorized number of police officers budgeted for the Department. Unfortunately, there has also been a spike in crime, not only in the City of Oakland, but in many other U.S. cities throughout 2021. This issue, when coupled with retirements and resignations, has resulted in staffing shortages.

In order to ameliorate these staffing issues, OPD has worked with City Officials to procure the funding of four Police Academies (the 189<sup>th</sup> through the 192<sup>nd</sup>) over the course of fiscal year 2022 to 2023, and the best way to maximize this opportunity is through the creation of a comprehensive recruiting plan.

This plan will provide a high-level overview of the initiatives and steps that OPD will take to attract, recruit, graduate, and retain officers for the 189<sup>th</sup> through 192<sup>nd</sup> Academies. In addition, this plan also the strategies we will use to increase retention of our current sworn and professional staff. This document is further supported by details in the OPD Hiring Plan Report.

## Vision

*To identify and implement recruiting and training strategies that will attract qualified local candidates, improve the diversity of the candidate pool to specifically increase the number of women and people of color to ensure that the department mirrors the Community that they serve, provide the necessary supports to candidates from recruitment through graduation, and ensure that newly graduated officers are able to serve their Community as guardians who utilize procedural justice to build trust and legitimacy while upholding the guiding value of protecting the Sanctity of Life.*



# Attracting the Right Candidates

## 1. Recruiting Strategies

OPD has identified the following strategies to ensure a healthy and diverse candidate pool, with a special focus on ensuring we increase the number of female applicants, along with people of color.

1. OPD will host 4 recruiting events per month at local colleges to help target candidates predominantly from Bay Area counties.
2. OPD is currently developing a recruitment video that will be Oakland-centric and focus on recruiting local people of diverse backgrounds with a special emphasis on women.
3. Attend at least 4 recruiting events at HBCUs, per year, to increase applicant diversity. Currently planned schools include Bowie University, Spelman College, Xavier University of Louisiana, and Morehouse College. We will supplement these visits with sorority and fraternity events.
4. OPD has also expanded our efforts to target former members of the Armed Forces. We plan to attend at least 4 events within the state of California this year.
5. In order to increase applications from women, OPD will attend two conferences that focus on Women in Law Enforcement. OPD will also attend 4 events that focus on female college athletes.
6. OPD also attends Affinity-based events to help increase our presence within the Community with a goal of increasing the diversity of our candidate pool.
7. OPD has entered a marketing partnership with 24-hour Fitness (Oakland and Alameda locations) to increase our brand awareness with residents. Ads featuring police officer recruitment will run every 3 minutes on all TVs in the gym, 24-hours a day for one year. No other law enforcement agencies can advertise during this time period. The average foot traffic for each site is between 34,000 to 39,000 workouts per month.
8. One of the most effective ways to attract a larger and diverse candidate pool is by using video and Social Media. OPD has been utilizing Social Media marketing to increase our presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. OPD will post at least 10 times per day across these three platforms to increase Community engagement and encourage applications.

## **2. Supporting Potential POTs**

OPD has undertaken several steps to make it easier for individuals applying for the POT position.

1. We have increased the number of practice Physical Ability Test (PAT) workshops for individuals who are initially struggling with the PAT. Our staff works directly with applicants to provide guidance on how to increase their level of physical fitness.
2. OPD has also increased our testing site to include the South Bay Regional Testing Center, which has increased the frequency of testing by expanding the days and times that testing is available.
3. Working to increase testing availability for the National Testing Network by opening a center in Oakland. Testing has also moved to a digital format to increase participation and submission of tests.

## **3. Working with CPS Consulting**

OPD has also started working with an external HR Consulting firm called CPS Consulting. They will partner with the Recruiting and Background Unit to help create a healthy pipeline of candidates by doing the following:

1. Create and execute a strategic marketing plan that will increase the applicant funnel on Facebook and Instagram. This will include tracking key performance indicators over a 3-month period.
2. Provide relevant ad sources for OPD to utilize, including
  - a. International Association of Women Police
  - b. National Asian Peace Officers Association
  - c. National Black Police Association
  - d. National Latino Peace Officers Association
  - e. Women Police Jobs
3. Create or augment partnerships with local community and religious leaders to share these job opportunities and encourage their membership to apply.
4. This should allow OPD to create a large and diverse candidate pool that will target the fulfillment of vacant positions.

# Ensuring Successful Academy Graduates

## 4. Pre-Academy Program

After identifying and recruiting the right candidates, the next step is to ensure that we fill our academies with a healthy cohort of Police Officer Trainees (POTs). OPD has created a Pre-Academy program to provide additional support to POTs which begins two to four weeks before the actual academy start date and is 20-hours long. The Pre-Academy is presented in a disciplined training environment. The focus of the program is to:

1. Introduce trainees to the concepts of the academy to acclimate them to the environment they will find themselves in. More specifically, students participate in activities such as class lectures, note-taking, written tests, and physical fitness exercises.
2. Familiarize students with self-assessment exercises to help them evaluate their individual emotional, mental, and physical readiness before entering the Academy.

## 5. POT Academy Supports

OPD has taken several steps to increase the chances that a POT will successfully complete the academy:

1. Evaluating only POST objectives, which has led to a higher pass rate on POST exams.
2. POST minimum scores have been adjusted to 70% from 85%.
3. Moving POST exams to times when POTs are well-rested.
4. The Chief of Police reviews all removals from the Academy program to ensure that the Training Staff adheres to POST standards.
5. POTs are typically paired up with a mentor, to help them through the rigors of the academy.

While OPD cannot commit to a specific attrition rate target, the programs that we have outlined in this section provide a wide foundation of support for all police trainees. These efforts should allow OPD to minimize attrition so that we can provide a steady output of qualified and well-trained police officers.

# Post Academy Support

## 6. Field Training Support

After successfully graduating our POTs, it is important to continue to provide them with resources that will help them transition into their new roles as Police Officers. OPD helps ease this transition by providing Field Training Officers (FTOs) for at least sixteen weeks after an Officer graduates from the academy. This program includes:

1. Pairing FTO officers with graduates based on their learning style and needs.
2. Continued mentorship.
3. Proactive monitoring of potential areas of struggle, with training staff interventions provided as needed.
4. For those who need more guidance, OPD offers remedial instruction. The officer may be removed from active duty for up to two weeks to focus on the material covered.

While the FTO program is no less than 16 weeks, OPD can extend this time to provide the officer with the training that they need. The training reinforcement and continued expert guidance improve the chances of the Officer completing their FTO program successfully, as the metrics below show:

| Class | Officers Starting FTO | Officers Finishing FTO | % Passed FTO |
|-------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 183rd | 28                    | 26                     | 93%          |
| 184th | 23                    | 19                     | 83%          |
| 185th | 23                    | 21*                    | 91%          |
| 186th | 26                    | IN FTO                 | IN FTO       |

\* 2 injured officers have not started FTO

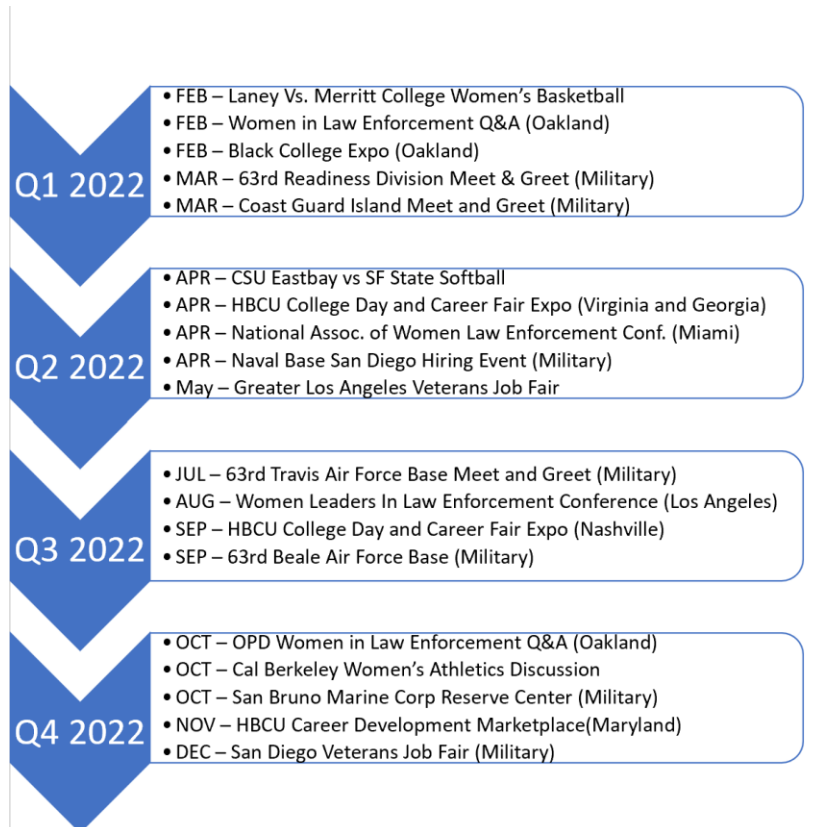




# Roadmap to Success

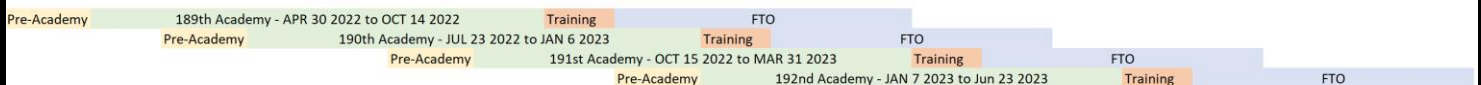
## 7. Maximizing Academy Class Size

Below you will find our recruiting schedule for 2022, which will allow OPD to maximize its Academy class size. Recurring virtual college recruiting events are omitted.



## 8. Academy Schedule

Below you will find a high-level overview of how OPD will graduate the 189<sup>th</sup> through 192<sup>nd</sup> Academies. At our peak, we will have three concurrent Academy classes in session. This format gives us the greatest chance to successfully train, graduate, and retain as many officers as possible.



# Retention Strategies

## 9. Engaging Our Employees

While the focus of this plan is on attracting new recruits, OPD understands that we must also put strategies in place to retain our employees. Below you will find the various strategies OPD will utilize to increase employee engagement, which should increase our ability to retain our officers and professional staff.

1. **Increased Training.** Training employees reinforces their sense of value and helps them build their skillset, leading to engaged and capable workforce.
2. **Mentoring.** Mentoring pairs a less experienced individual with someone with more experience. Mentoring benefits the mentor, mentee, and organization. Effective workplace mentoring helps decrease turnover and increase employee engagement and productivity.
3. **Improve Communication.** Communication up and down the organization is important to help employees feel involved and valued. Quarterly “all-hands” meetings are one way to improve communication. Establish a process for employees to anonymously ask questions for the Executive Team to answer at this meeting.
4. **Make Employees Feel Valued.** When employees feel valued, they are more engaged and committed to their organization. Here are some strategies to achieve this goal:
  - a. Upon approval from City officials, explore incentive programs that will reward performance and longevity.
  - b. Provide more positive feedback – even a simple thank you for a job well-done goes a long way towards making employees feel valued.
  - c. Poll employees to solicit ideas on what other rewards might work for them.
5. **Make Senior Leaders More Accessible.** It is important to foster strong rapport between senior leaders and employees. OPD will establish two working groups (sworn and professional staff) that will meet quarterly with Senior Leaders to discuss what is working and not working in the organization. This will allow employees to become change agents that help improve the organization, increasing their engagement and sense of contribution.
6. **Strategic Plan Goals** – OPD also has several goals outlined in our Strategic Plan that should help increase retention, such as instituting 360 review processes and emphasizing career development and promotional opportunities for employees.

# Challenges & Recommendations

## Challenges

1. While OPD appreciates the funding of the four academies, the compressed nature of the class schedules is leading to difficulties in implementing plans that would allow us to fully staff them.
2. Medical testing appointments can be difficult to obtain. To help ameliorate this, OPD has added a second vendor and is looking into the feasibility to add another.
3. Manual tracking of applicants is very time consuming and it will be difficult to scale this process effectively, but OPD will make every effort to do so. It currently takes approximately 5-8 hours to qualify an applicant (processing application, NeoGov data entry, various exams, and tests, etc.) and another 30 hours to complete the background investigation.
4. The pandemic continues to limit our ability to do in-person recruiting events. While OPD has embraced technology to host virtual recruiting sessions, we are not able to build the same rapport or connection with candidates as we can when we are face-to-face. As restrictions are lifted, we expect this challenge to become less problematic.

## Recommendations

1. Assigning a minimum of 3 RTOs to each academy class as opposed to the 2 RTOs that are currently assigned.
2. Start discussions to allow OPD to explore a paid internal referral program for POT positions. These programs are one of the most effective generators of quality applicants for many organizations.
3. Upon Council approval, OPD will begin gathering information on vendors who can provide scalable technical solutions to improve our applicant tracking process, with an aim to reduce the time spent on each applicant so we can work more effectively.
4. Staffing was reduced in Backgrounds & Recruiting during COVID-19. OPD requests that we hire back the 12 part-time annuitants that were let go to increase our ability to process applicant background checks to ensure we can fully staff our Academies.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Department believes that the initiatives outlined in this plan will allow OPD to attract, recruit, graduate, and retain a diverse group of officers for the 189<sup>th</sup> through 192<sup>nd</sup> Academies. In addition, this plan will help OPD close the staffing gap that we are currently experiencing and allow us to better serve the Oakland Community. OPD also recognizes that we have challenges that inhibit our ability to fully execute on our plan and has provided recommendations to help us overcome those challenges. Working with our City Leaders, we are confident that this plan will lead to positive effects for the Community we Serve.

