



LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT

2021-2025 Recruitment Strategic Plan

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LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT RECRUITMENT PLAN

Recruitment Office Mission: Recruiting the future of policing through evidence-based practices

The Lincoln Police Department Recruitment Office was created to spearhead the Department's stated goal to "recruit and retain the best possible employees, reflecting the diversity of our population." The Recruitment Office recognizes that a diverse police department, particularly one which reflects the diversity of its community, is a more effective police department. Diversity within the department includes not only visible diversity such as race, ethnicity and gender, but also invisible diversity such as diversity of thought, experience, and background. Police agencies with reputations for transparency, accountability, fairness in the community and within the organization, and supporting diversity initiatives and progressive practices are better able to attract a wide array of qualified applicants. As such, the department as a whole should work to build and maintain its reputation in these and other areas.

Strategic Goal

The five-year strategic goal of the Lincoln Police Department Recruitment Office is to fill all authorized police officer positions by 2024, and thereafter maintain full staffing with a surplus eligibility pool of already vetted candidates awaiting an employment offer. The Recruitment Office will also assist as needed with recruitment for dispatch and professional staff openings.

Situational Analysis

Nationwide, police organizations are confronted with a "perfect storm" of increasing attrition and decreasing interest from qualified applicants. The Lincoln Police Department is no exception. These struggles are due to a number of societal and generational changes to which we as a department and a profession have struggled to adapt. The challenges we currently face include negative sentiment and misunderstanding surrounding the police profession, a general labor shortage in the US, and the increasing willingness of younger generations to move from job to job throughout their working life.

Additionally, we face ever-increasing competition from other agencies and other industries for the limited applicant pool that exists. As a result, it is imperative that the Lincoln Police Department

position itself as an agency that people are drawn to for a full career. Speed and flexibility in the hiring process are critical, as applicants are frequently in multiple hiring processes and will often accept the first job offer they receive.

As of August 1, 2021 LPD has an authorized strength of 358 commissioned staff, 57 dispatchers, and 84.88 full time equivalent (FTE) professional staff. The mayor's proposed budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year includes the addition of 6 police officers and 1 dispatcher. The department is currently staffed with 349 commissioned staff (including 31 recruits still in academy or field training), 50 dispatchers, and 87 FTE professional staff.

City of Lincoln Demographics

The City of Lincoln had an estimated 2019 population of 289,102 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Lincolniters are 50.2% male and 49.8% female¹ and have the following approximate racial/ethnic makeup:

White 79.6%
Hispanic/Latino 7.6 %
Asian/Pacific Islander 4.7%
Black 4.4%
Two or more races 3.9%
Native American 0.7%

Lincoln Police Department Demographics

The Lincoln Police Department's 349 commissioned staff have the following demographic makeup:

White males: 258
White females: 60
Hispanic/Latino males: 16
Hispanic/Latina females: 2
Asian/Pacific Islander males: 6
Black males: 4
Multi-racial males: 2

These numbers break down into the following percentages:

Total males: 81.9%
Total females: 18.1%
White: 91.1%
Hispanic/Latino: 5.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander: 1.7%

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau does not collect or report data for individuals who identify as neither male nor female

Black: 1.1%

Two or more races: 0.5%

In order to reflect the racial/ethnic makeup of the Lincoln community at proposed 2022 authorized staffing, the department would need to employ an additional 10 Hispanic/Latino officers, 11 Asian/Pacific Islander officers, 12 Black officers, 12 Multi-racial officers, and 3 Native American officers. Significant turnover would need to occur for LPD's commissioned staff to reach gender parity with the community, as an additional 119 female officers would need to be employed.

Applicant Demographics

During the three-year period from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2020, 1167 total applications were received for commissioned positions,² reflecting an average of 389 per year. From these applications, 80 officers were hired. Applicants had the following demographic makeup:

Male: 79%

Female: 19%

Not reported: 2.1%

White: 72%

Hispanic/Latino: 11%

Asian/Pacific Islander: 2.7%

Black: 6.3%

Two or more races: 4.7%

Native American: 0.3%

Not reported: 3.2%

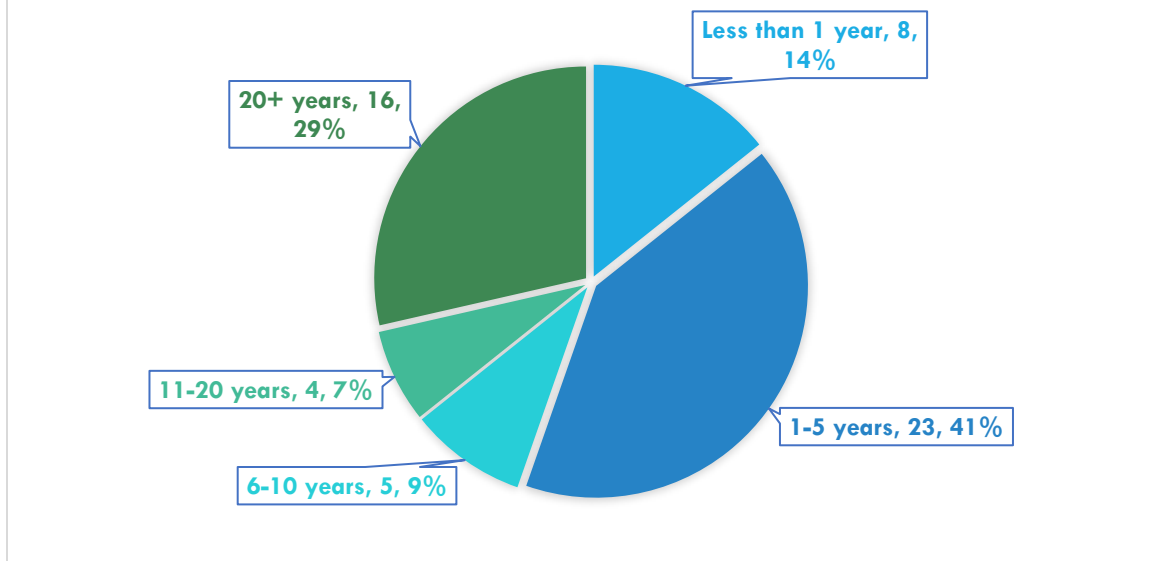
The applicant pool for commissioned positions is more racially/ethnically diverse than the Lincoln community as a whole. This is driven primarily by Hispanic/Latino, Black, and Multi-racial applicants.

Officer Separation

During the three-year period from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2020, 56 commissioned staff separated employment through resignation, retirement, or termination. The average for the three-year period is 19 officers per year however, 2018 saw only 9 separations while each year since has seen more than 20. During this period, the greatest proportion of separations (41%) occurred among officers with 1-5 years of service, as seen in the following chart.

² This number reflects total applications submitted, not individual applicants. The number of individual applicants is likely lower, as some applicants applied multiple times. Due to aggregation and demographic reporting methods used by the City's human resources software, it is impossible to eliminate duplicate applications from this calculation.

OFFICER SEPARATIONS 2018-2020



Also of note, the department saw 24 separations between January 1, 2021 and August 1, 2021. If separations continue at the same rate, the department is on pace to lose 41 officers in 2021, an attrition rate of 11.4%.

Key Objectives

The Lincoln Police Department Recruitment Office's key objectives for the plan period include:

Hire more officers from underrepresented communities

The department's applicant pool shows promise for progressing toward a department that better reflects the diversity of the Lincoln community. At current application rates, however, it would likely take several decades for the department to achieve that goal due to existing disparities. To make faster, appreciable progress, the department needs to increase the number of applicants from underrepresented communities.

Hire more female officers

The Lincoln Police Department's commissioned staff is currently 18.1% women. Though higher than the national average of 12%, this is still much lower than the proportion of the Lincoln community made up of women. Current application rates are likely to maintain, but not significantly change the current

KEY TAKEAWAY

THE CURRENT APPLICANT POOL DEMOGRAPHIC MAKEUP IS INSUFFICIENT TO MAKE APPRECIABLE PROGRESS TOWARD DIVERSIFYING LPD

gender makeup of the department. Additionally, the department's commitment to the 30x30 Initiative, which aims to see recruit classes made up of 30% women by 2030, is unlikely to be met with the current gender makeup of applicants.

Develop and implement effective, modern recruiting practices

The Recruitment Office will work to implement and adapt practices which, based on quantitative measures, are likely to be successful in light of current societal realities. These practices may be adopted from other government agencies or the business world, or may be newly created.

Build and strengthen community partnerships

The Recruitment Office will work with other teams to attend relevant community events in order to reach all parts of the Lincoln community, as well as build relationships outside of Lincoln to create previously untapped talent streams. These actions will benefit the department by not only reaching potential applicants, but by building the department's positive image as a whole.

Quantitative Measures of Success



Without data you're just another person with an opinion.

W. Edwards Deming



In order to evaluate and improve the department's recruitment practices, it is necessary to collect and analyze data at various stages. Without this valuable information, we have no true way of knowing whether our practices are effective or a waste of resources, and we risk falling into the trap of "that's the way we've always done it." Care should be taken to select appropriate metrics and benchmarks for the specific practice being assessed rather than relying on a single "one size fits all" approach such as applications generated.

Internal Data Tracking

The Recruitment Office will regularly collect and analyze data on both applicants and newly hired recruits/officers. This data will be collected by anonymous surveys and will be retained by the Recruitment Office. Some survey questions will be the same for both applicants and new hires, while some will be different. The collection of data for both groups will allow us to identify which, if any, recruitment techniques tend to attract successful vs unsuccessful applicants.

Applicant Survey

The applicant survey, which is given on test days, will gather general information about why individuals chose to pursue a career in policing, what reservations they had, and what general communication methods are likely to reach them. They will also be asked several questions about what drew them to LPD specifically. The survey uses a combination of multiple choice and free answer questions.

New Hire Survey

Newly hired recruits and officers will be surveyed at orientation or early in the academy as time allows. They will again be asked general questions about why they chose to pursue a policing career and what reservations they had. New hires will also be asked about what influenced them to apply to LPD specifically, what ultimately caused them to accept a job with us, and how they feel the hiring process can be improved.

External Data Tracking

Interview Now

The Lincoln Police Department recently purchased access to Interview Now, a prospect/applicant tracking and communication software. As part of the initial communication, the software gathers information about how the potential applicant was recruited. The software offers analytics and cost analysis that can be used to help guide recruiting strategies.

NeoGov

Since 2015, the City of Lincoln has used NeoGov as its application and hiring management software. NeoGov includes an analytics module which can be used to create basic, anonymized reports on applicant groups, including demographic information. These reports can be used to look for potential adverse impacts within the hiring process. Much of the information used by NeoGov to generate certain reports is entered by City Human Resources (HR). As such, it is important that the Recruitment Office work with HR personnel to ensure the data being entered is accurate in order to generate accurate reports. Historical applicant data since implementation in 2015 can also be accessed if needed.

Hiring Practices

In July 2021, the Lincoln Police Department implemented a new, modernized hiring process with the intent of removing unnecessary barriers for applicants, thereby increasing the size of the department's pool of qualified applicants. Although the modernized process is still in its infancy as of the writing of this plan, the changes appear to have had the desired effect. The new process is expected to take 2-3 months for an applicant to complete, a significant improvement over the legacy hiring process, which took up to 7 months.

Qualifications

The Lincoln Police Department adheres to, but does not exceed, the statutory and regulatory standards for police academy admission as outlined by the Nebraska Crime Commission and the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center (NLETC). These standards include both minimum qualifications and automatic disqualifiers.

Minimum Qualifications

Applicants must meet the following minimum qualifications in order to be eligible for hire as a police trainee:

- Age 21 prior to academy completion
- U.S. Citizenship
- High school diploma or GED
- Ability to read, write, and understand English at the 11th grade level as demonstrated by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
- Must obtain a Nebraska driver's license prior to starting the academy

Automatic Disqualifiers

The Nebraska Crime Commission and the NLETC require that all applicants "possess good character as determined by a thorough background investigation." Although other information may be considered in determining an applicant's character, the following factors result in automatic disqualification:

Criminal History

- Conviction or pardon of a crime punishable by imprisonment for 1 year or more (including Class 1 Misdemeanors)
- Conviction of any crime involving the threat or actual use of violence which would constitute a Class 1 Misdemeanor in Nebraska
- Conviction of any crime involving the threat of or actual sexual assault or abuse
- Conviction of any crime of physical violence or sexual abuse against a child
- Conviction of any crime of domestic violence
- Conviction of criminal violations with such frequency as to indicate a disrespect for the law and the rights of others

Traffic History

- Conviction of DUI or an equivalent crime in the past 2 years
- Conviction of traffic violations with such frequency as to indicate a disrespect for traffic laws and disregard for the safety of others within the past 3 years

Personal History

- Punitive discharge from the US armed forces
- Subject to a protection order prohibiting the possession of a firearm
- Denial, revocation, or suspension of peace officer certification in any jurisdiction
- A past indicative of incompetence or neglect of duty
- A past indicative of physical, mental, or emotional incapacity

Drug Use

- Pattern of substance abuse
- Use of marijuana or other forms of cannabis for any reason, regardless of legality, in the past 2 years
- Use of illegal drugs other than marijuana in the past 5 years

Additional Note

Although not automatic disqualifiers, special attention should be paid to the following:

- Charges filed for any of the above offenses which were later reduced or dismissed prior to conviction
- Repeated police contacts where it is likely one of the above offenses occurred, but charges were ultimately not filed
- Pending prosecution for any offense
- Active protection orders, regardless of firearm restrictions



KEYS TO SUCCESS
FLEXIBILITY, SPEED, AND EFFICIENCY IN THE
HIRING PROCESS ARE CRITICAL TO
APPLICANT RETENTION

Application and Hiring Process

The new, modernized Lincoln Police Officer application and hiring process consists generally of four steps. In order to streamline the process and reduce the compounding effects of unconscious bias, the number of people in the decision-making chain should be limited and decisions should be made at the lowest possible level. Consultation with the Chief should be limited to actual hiring decisions, i.e. issuance of a conditional or final offer of employment, or removal from hiring consideration for a reason other than a previously defined automatic disqualifier.

Step 1: Application

Applicants begin the hiring process by submitting an online application (open year-round) through the City of Lincoln website. Once the application has been received, a preliminary screening for automatic disqualifiers will be conducted. The screening will consist of a review of the application,

LPD local records, and potentially NCIC/NCJIS criminal and driver histories. All applicants who meet the basic admission criteria will advance to Step 2.

Step 2: Assessment

Applicants advancing to Step 2 will be contacted by Education & Personnel staff and scheduled to participate in the three-part assessment battery. The assessment will take place over 1-2 days and will consist of:

- **Written Examination (TABE)**

Applicants who provide proof of having previously achieved a passing score on the TABE (11th grade level or higher) will be exempt from this portion of the assessment and will be asked to arrive after other applicants. Applicants who achieve a passing score on the TABE will immediately move on to the Physical Ability Test. Transportation to and from the testing site will be provided by LPD. Applicants who do not achieve a passing score will be dismissed and provided information on retest/reapplication procedures.

- **Physical Ability Test**

The Physical Ability Test consists of five events, with scoring bracketed by age and gender.

- Vertical jump
- Push ups – 60 second maximum effort
- 300m sprint
- Sit ups – 60 second maximum effort
- 1.5 mile run

Applicants who achieve a passing score (as outlined by NLETC for the applicant's age and gender) will be scheduled for an interview time and released. Select applicants such as those from out of the area will be offered same-day interviews, while most will be scheduled for the following day. Applicants who do not achieve a passing score will be dismissed and provided information on retest/reapplication procedures.

- **Panel Interview**

Applicants will participate in a structured interview with a panel of 3 evaluators. The interview will consist of previously defined general interview and scenario-based questions. Applicants will be assigned numerical scores in each of 8 categories based on their answers during the interview. The interview panel will make a recommendation to the Education & Personnel captain as to whether the applicant should advance to Step 3. The final decision whether to remove applicants not recommended for advancement will be made by the Chief. The numerical scores could be used to lessen the decision-making burden by setting a pre-defined cutoff and automatically disqualifying applicants whose average score falls below this threshold. All applicants will be notified within 10 days of assessment whether they are

advancing in the process. Applicants who do not advance will be provided information on retest/reapplication procedures.

Step 3: Background Investigation

Applicants who advance to Step 3 will be contacted by Education & Personnel staff and provided a link to the online Personal History Statement as well as supporting documents that must be completed. The Personal History Statement will serve as the basis for a full background investigation. Applicants will be advised that failures to disclose information or dishonesty will result in removal from the hiring process. After the completion of the background investigation, all information from the hiring process will be reviewed and a hiring decision will be made.

Applicants eligible for a conditional offer of employment will move on to Step 4. Applicants not eligible for a conditional offer will be notified by Education & Personnel staff and will be advised of when they will be eligible to reapply.

Step 4: Post-Offer Testing

Applicants advancing to step 4 will be placed in the hiring eligibility pool and, if open positions exist, may receive a conditional offer of employment.³ Those who receive and accept a conditional offer of employment will be scheduled for a medical exam, psychological exam, and polygraph. Applicants who successfully complete all 3 evaluations may receive a final offer of employment.

Initiatives



If better is possible, good is not enough.

Benjamin Franklin



In order to achieve the Recruitment Office's strategic goal and key objectives, new initiatives should be explored and undertaken. While ideas for new initiatives should never be rejected outright, care should be taken to ensure that the initiatives in which we continue to invest time and resources are performing as desired and expected. This section should not be construed as limiting

³ Once the department achieves full staffing, an objective applicant ranking system will be developed. If the number of applicants in the eligibility pool exceeds the number of open positions, the rankings will be used to determine which applicants receive conditional offers.

or as an all-inclusive list, but as a jumping off point to build a foundation for the future of our recruitment and hiring practices.

Hiring Practice Initiatives

Delayed Hire Program

Oftentimes, interested potential applicants are unable to attend the next academy session due to a military or college commitment. Currently, those individuals must wait to apply until after the start of the next academy session. This increases the chances of losing these potentially excellent candidates to other agencies or professions. The department should implement a Delayed Hire Program, similar to the Marine Corps Delayed Entry Program. Under this program, successful applicants would be offered a job with their hire being delayed for up to 12 months, allowing them to finish their military or educational commitment and guaranteeing them a job on completion.

Bridge Hire Program

Although the modernized hiring process significantly reduces the time an applicant must wait between applying and receiving an employment offer, some individuals will still have a several month lag time between receiving a final offer and starting the academy. In order to help mitigate this lag time and provide new hires the opportunity to become acclimated to the department's culture, the department should formalize a Bridge Hire Program. Under this program, participating individuals will be hired as Police Trainees and begin their employment prior to the start of the academy, performing various duties throughout the department. Program participants could be scheduled for hire dates either individually when they accept a final offer of employment, or as groups with 1-2 predetermined bridge hire dates between academy sessions.

Expedited Lateral Training Process

Already certified officers coming to LPD from other departments provide several tangible and intangible benefits. Lateral officers typically require a shorter training time before being released to solo patrol than a new recruit, and typically offer a greater overall boost to the Department than a new recruit due to their prior policing experience. Lateral officers also increase the diversity of thought and experience within the Department as a result of having experienced different procedures and methods of policing. In addition to the other lateral incentives offered by the Department, an expedited training process is a major draw for experienced officers who are looking to move to a new agency.



KEY TAKEAWAY

EXPANDED HIRING OPTIONS REDUCE THE RISK OF LOSING QUALIFIED APPLICANTS TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR PROFESSIONS

The Department currently offers an expedited training process for Nebraska certified officers which has proven fruitful in recent years. Due to NLETC requirements for reciprocity certification, the Department is unable to offer the same incentive to officers certified in another state. Currently, out-of-state lateral officers must either attend a full basic academy session at LPD or pay to attend a reciprocity course at NLETC followed by in-house training at LPD. In order to increase our ability to attract experienced officers, the Recruitment Office and the Department should work with NLETC to explore options for allowing LPD to conduct in-house reciprocity certifications and offer an expedited training process to certified officers from other states.

Recruitment Practice Initiatives

Talent Streams

In order to have a pool of viable candidates ready to fill the department's hiring needs, the Recruitment Office and the Department as a whole should maintain talent streams in the same manner that a business maintains revenue streams.

Digital Talent Stream

Due to the highly digital nature of the modern world, job seekers often prefer to search for and communicate with potential employers digitally. As a result, it is critically important that both the Recruitment Office and LPD as a whole have strong, but distinct digital presences. For the Recruitment Office, this presence includes assets such as the joinlpd.com website, recruitment videos, and social media accounts. Best practices and evidence from both corporate and police recruiting point to the critical role social media plays and the importance of having a distinct recruitment social media presence. The current City social media policy presents significant challenges to the Recruitment Office's ability to effectively use social media as a recruitment tool. The Department and the Recruitment Office should continue to work with the City to find and implement agreeable solutions and increase the Recruitment Office's effectiveness.

Short-Term Talent Stream

The short-term talent stream is the core of recruitment and consists of individuals who are currently ready to apply or will be ready within approximately the next year. This talent stream would include sources such as LPD's internship program, the Department of Defense SkillBridge program, career fairs, and ride along programs. Some of these programs will be discussed further later in the plan.

Long-Term Talent Stream

In order to develop interest among future potential applicants, the Department and the Recruitment Office should leverage youth relationship-building assets such as the Explorer program, community events, and school outreach.

Branding and Marketing

Branding and marketing efforts will serve to increase general awareness of the Lincoln Police Department as an employer, and may boost the image of the Department as a whole.

Business Cards and Email Signatures

Business cards and email signatures are some of the Department's most visible branding assets. In order to leverage these assets, a recruitment specific tagline such as "Always Hiring | www.joinlpd.com"

should be added to the face of all Department business cards. The tagline should also be added to all department employees' email signatures. The addition of the tagline to business cards and email signatures is an inexpensive way to promote the department's recruitment efforts and increase exposure in and around Lincoln.

Marked Cruiser Graphics

The designated business card/email tagline should also be added as a decal to all marked cruisers. If greater visibility is desired, select cruisers could also have custom wraps applied to either the back window (SUVs only) or the full vehicle. Our cruisers are constantly in the public eye, and thus provide an excellent marketing opportunity.

Dedicated Recruiting Vehicle

Special police recruiting vehicles have become extremely common, and offer an opportunity for highly visible advertisement. The Department should allocate a dedicated vehicle for recruitment use. This vehicle should be able to comfortably transport both people and cargo, as the Recruitment Office frequently needs to transport equipment for testing or public appearances, and at times may need to transport applicants. The vehicle should also be easily recognizable as a police cruiser. The Chevrolet Tahoe, Dodge Durango, and Ford

Officer Nathaniel Grimm #1847

Recruitment Coordinator | Drug Recognition Expert



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POLICE

Education & Personnel Unit

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Always Hiring | www.joinlpd.com



Expedition are ideal in these respects. The recruiting vehicle's graphics should make it easily recognizable as a Lincoln Police cruiser, but should be eye-catching and stand out from other marked cruisers.

Free/Earned Media and Marketing

The Department and the Recruitment Office should take advantage of every opportunity to broaden awareness of the Lincoln Police Department and build its image. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, speaking engagements such as professional conferences and community groups, collaboration with news media on projects that will highlight the Department, submission of articles written by members of the Department for publication, and speaking or teaching in college classes.

Paid Media and Advertising

Paid advertising has long been used as a marketing strategy both in business and police recruiting. The Recruitment Office and the department should use paid advertising both to attract applicants for specific positions and to build general awareness of the Department. The use of non-traditional advertising strategies should be explored, and care should be taken to focus on cost effectiveness over raw price.

Actions and Programs

Recruiting Team

The Department should create a designated team of 6-10 trained recruiters. The officers selected to the recruiting team would hold this position in addition to their primary job responsibilities, similar to other teams and committees LPD currently maintains as a collateral assignment. Responsibilities for these recruiters would include giving presentations, attending recruiting events, assisting with developing recruiting materials and strategies, and assisting with applicant assessments as needed. The team would be led by the Recruitment Coordinator under the supervision of the Personnel Sergeant.

Citizen Ride Along Program

There is no better way to gain an understanding of the true nature of police work than by participating in a ride along. The Department should change the current practice of requiring most ride along requests to be initiated by an officer, and begin allowing citizens to request ride alongs themselves. This change would require some policy changes and the creation of a vetting process for citizens wishing to participate in the program. The expansion of the ride along program would not only serve as a recruitment tool, but would also benefit the Department as a whole by increasing transparency and allowing the citizens we serve to gain a better understanding of policing through firsthand experience.

DoD SkillBridge Internships

The Department of Defense SkillBridge program allows servicemembers preparing to leave active duty the opportunity to participate in apprenticeship and internship programs while still on active duty. This program provides an excellent opportunity for the Department to recruit military veterans and give them an opportunity to experience LPD's culture firsthand through an internship. As of the writing of this plan, only 5 police agencies participate in the program, and only 1 offers an internship option (the others use the program exclusively as a funnel to their academy). SkillBridge internships would be overseen by the Recruitment Office and would be limited to a set number at any given time. Individuals selected to participate would be encouraged to take part in the application and selection process during their internship. SkillBridge would likely serve primarily as a conduit for attracting veterans interested in commissioned positions, but could also be used as a tool to recruit dispatchers and professional staff, as several military occupational specialties parallel similar jobs in the Department.

Traveling Assessments

Substantial talent and diversity that could be beneficial to the Department exists outside the immediate Lincoln area. In order to expand our potential applicant pool and provide more opportunities for these individuals to join our Department, we should begin periodically conducting applicant assessments outside of Lincoln. The Recruitment Office will identify destinations that are likely to be the most fruitful in order to better concentrate our efforts. These destinations will likely include specific military installations and colleges/universities.

Employee Recruiting Incentive

The Recruitment Office believes that our own employees are our best recruiters. In order to leverage our current employees and incentivize them to assist in finding our future officers, the Department should begin a referral incentive program. Under this program, current employees who refer/recruit an individual who is ultimately hired by the Department would receive either a financial or time off incentive.

Career Fairs

Although they are plentiful, career fairs tend not to be a particularly effective or efficient way to find prospective police applicants. The Recruitment Office should attend a limited number of career fairs, and ensure that the selected fairs are actually effective at producing applicants.

Hire for the Future

The Lincoln Police Department is unique as a hierarchical organization in that all commissioned leadership positions other than the Chief of Police are filled exclusively from within the agency. As a result, shortsighted hiring practices and decisions based solely on filling academy seats would be untenable. We must keep in mind that we are hiring not only today's patrol officers, but tomorrow's sergeants, captains, and assistant chiefs.

Furthermore, due to the length of time necessary to hire and train officers, hiring only enough recruits to reach authorized staffing will ensure that the Department is never fully staffed. In order to mitigate this, the Department should formalize a policy of hiring to fill future vacancies in addition to current vacancies. This could be accomplished by establishing a designated hiring level above authorized staffing or, preferably, by excluding recruits in training from calculations of commissioned staff numbers. Historically, the Department has been permitted to hire 10 officers and 2 dispatchers above authorized staffing, though no formal policy or agreement has been enacted. The formalization of this practice would ensure that it can be continued into the future.

Command Staff Awareness

Recruitment is a key factor for the future of the Department. Accordingly, all members of the command staff should be fully aware of the Department's current recruitment situation. To achieve this, regular recruitment updates should be provided at command staff meetings.

Community Partnerships



Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police...

Sir Robert Peel



In order to ensure viable candidates are continuously entering the Department's talent streams, external partnerships are indispensable. The Department and the Recruitment Office should work to continuously build and maintain relationships with community organizations, Lincoln area schools, colleges and universities, and the US military. These relationships should include appearances by the Recruiting Team at community events and military Transition Assistance Program events. Our partnerships with educational institutions should be leveraged to include on-campus appearances both in and out of classroom settings. Officers should take every available opportunity to appear in classes as a guest speaker or guest instructor, and should be encouraged to coordinate with the Recruitment Office, as every class appearance is a recruitment opportunity.

Citizen education about the policing profession is also a useful tool for both recruitment and transparency. The Recruitment Office should provide support as needed for the Department's existing educational programs such as the Explorer Post and Citizen Academy.

Budget Allocation

In order to support the Department's hiring goals and accomplish the Recruitment Office's strategic goal and key objectives, a designated recruiting budget is necessary. These funds could be used for training, marketing, travel, equipment, and other necessary expenditures to support the work of the Recruitment Office and Recruiting Team.

Progressive and Innovative Policies

Today's potential applicants, particularly those who belong to groups currently underrepresented in policing, want to work for an organization that values and supports the equal treatment of all people, both internally and externally. This support can be seen through the implementation of policies and support for law changes that protect underrepresented groups. By taking steps to make changes internally and to support social changes, the Lincoln Police Department can come to be recognized as an ally by historically marginalized and underrepresented groups who often see policing as a profession where they may not be supported or welcome. The Department should regularly consider whether the potential exclusion caused by a policy is worth the harm it seeks to prevent. In order to support the implementation of progressive and innovative policies, the Recruitment Office will periodically provide reports on policies and/or practices that have been identified as potentially creating barriers to entry for applicants or creating stumbling blocks for recruitment. The Lincoln Police Department's ability to be forward thinking and efforts to enact progressive and innovative policies is not only a social imperative, but will, in and of itself, be a valuable recruitment tool.

Employee Retention

While retention is not expressly a responsibility of the Recruitment Office, it is directly related to recruitment. The cheapest, most effective, and most efficient way to fill a position is to retain the employee currently in the position. When an experienced employee leaves the Department, we suffer a loss in terms of the knowledge and experience possessed by that employee in addition to the explicit time and financial cost to hire and train a replacement.

Currently, our officer attrition exceeds our ability to hire and capacity to train new officers. In order for the Recruitment Office to achieve its strategic goal of reaching full staffing and allow for the ability to increase the size of the Department to meet the needs of our citizens, changes must be made to address retention. We should strive to make LPD a "destination department"

where home-grown officers stay until retirement and significant numbers of lateral officers seek to finish their careers, rather than seeing officers begin their careers here only to transfer to another department as we currently see happening with increasing frequency.

In order to uncover and address the factors leading to potential retention issues, the Department should better formalize the exit interview process. Exit interviews should include specific reasons the employee is leaving the department and any specific recommendations the employee has for improvement. Additionally, the Department should begin conducting retention interviews with mid-career employees to identify the reasons employees choose to stay at LPD and expand upon these “bright spots” as well as identifying areas for possible improvement. To encourage openness in both the exit and retention interviews, they should be conducted by the Education & Personnel Unit rather than a member of command staff, as employees may be more comfortable speaking frankly with a peer.

By addressing employee concerns and improving working conditions, the Department stands to not only improve retention, but also recruitment. Our employees are our best recruiters, and happy employees will not only be more likely to recruit others to work at LPD, but will also help build the Department’s reputation as a great place to work.

Progress and Plan Updates

This plan will be updated at least annually during the plan period. Updates will include progress toward achieving the strategic goal and key objectives, lessons learned, recommendations for improvement, and new actions taken since the previous update. To better track progress and changes, updates will be made as an addendum to the end of the document rather than by changing the body of the plan itself.

Summary

To ensure success in reaching our goals of full staffing and a more diverse department, we must commit to implementing and sustaining the practices and initiatives outlined in this plan, as well as tracking which are successful and which are not. We must also continue to explore new strategies in order to remain relevant as a prospective employer. We must maintain an active community presence and promote a positive image of the Department. We must allocate sufficient resources to allow us to research and develop cutting-edge recruitment methods that promote employee involvement in the recruitment process and allow us to provide a modern, high-touch recruitment experience for potential applicants. The Department and the City must commit to prioritizing police recruitment, and support that commitment through actions, not just words. Our goals are achievable if we follow evidence-based practices and continue to develop our recruitment program with an eye to the future.