



*City of Independence*

# Review of Police Hiring and Recruitment

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City of Independence, Missouri

**Report to the Mayor and City Council**

**By: City Management Analyst**

**October 23, 2017**

**Report No. 17-04**

# City of Independence

City Council Office



October 23, 2017

Honorable Mayor and Member of the City Council:

This report was assigned to me by the Audit and Finance Committee in June of 2017 and was initiated pursuant to Chapter 1, Article 43 of the City Code of Ordinances. This report outlines the Police Department's current hiring and recruitment process and makes several recommendations for both short term and long term improvement.

It has become increasingly hard to recruit for the position of police officer. Application numbers have fallen in recent years and within smaller pools of applicants it is even harder to find highly qualified applicants. The Independence Police Department finds itself in a similar position to that of other departments around the country. The department must seek additional information in the form of survey data from applicants and employees about the hiring process the broader views of the department to understand what they can do better to hire and retain the best officers. Second, a comprehensive marketing and recruitment effort would aid the department in raising awareness of the IPD and illustrate the urgency to the effort. Website and other materials should be consistent with the new marketing effort. Finally, opportunities exist to streamline some of the hiring process including specific updates to the job postings themselves. Addressing these issues will put the IPD in a much stronger position to address their recruitment issues.

The Police Chief and his command staff reviewed this report, to provide feedback related to the findings. The draft report was also reviewed by the City Manager and City Counselor, and responses from both are appended. The Audit and Finance Committee has approved the final report and directed the Management Analyst to forward the final document to the full City Council. The cooperation of all those who provided assistance and feedback is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jordan Ellena".

Jordan Ellena  
City Management Analyst

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## Introduction

### Objectives

This audit of the Independence Police Department's (IPD) recruitment process was conducted under the authority of Section 2.11 of the Charter of Independence, Missouri, which establishes the position of City Management Analyst and Article 43 of Chapter 1 of the City Code outlining the primary duties.

This document provides findings based on an evaluation of the IPD's current recruitment and hiring processes and best practices in the field of police recruitment. Performance audits, like this, are intended to provide the City Council, as well as, city staff with an objective analysis of programs, policies, and procedures. Policymakers and managers rely on this information to inform decision making, ensure the organization is publicly accountable, improve performance, and reduce costs.

This audit is designed to answer the following questions:

- What challenges exist to achieving the number of applicants necessary to fill vacant officer positions?
- What changes can be made to the police recruitment process to increase the number of applicants in the short-term?
- How should IPD approach recruitment, long-term, to address the issues causing fewer applicants?

### Scope & Methodology

This audit looks at the IPD's current recruitment and hiring process in an attempt to identify deficiencies that contribute to lower numbers of applicants for open police officer positions. The deficiencies identified have been compared to best practices in the field of policed recruitment and the stated goals of the IPD. Audit methods used include:

- Collection and review of internal and U.S. Justice Department data related to police recruitment and retention.
- Interviews with police and human resources staff tasked with the recruitment and hiring process.
- Review of police recruitment and retention case studies, best practices, and strategies available through industry publications.

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that each audit is planned and performed to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for my findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. The evidence uncovered during this audit provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the objectives. No information was omitted from this report because it was deemed privileged or confidential.

## Background

### Police Recruitment: Nationally

Recruiting sufficient numbers of qualified applicants to meet the staffing needs of an agency is the most fundamental human resource process in a police department. The success of the department's recruitment efforts impacts every other function in the agency.

For years, law enforcement agencies offered what the public viewed as stable and well compensated employment. A readily available workforce enabled many department leaders to ignore the importance of recruitment. Today departments nationwide report having difficulty attracting and retaining sufficient numbers of qualified employees. There are a number of factors both inside and outside the organization contributing to this condition<sup>1</sup>.

These challenges have forced departments to take more proactive approaches to marketing and recruitment. Some departments have explored relaxing their more restrictive tattoo/body art, facial hair, and marijuana use rules. Others have looked at compensation and other benefits to see if they align with current expectations about the position. None of these changes have been tried in enough departments or long enough ago to give solid data about their efficacy. This makes the challenge of dealing with recruitment issues one of local experience and local effort. Departments can take suggestions and cues from others but a solution for one department may not fit another.

The recruitment challenge also has impacts on the ability of departments to retain good employees. As competition for police officers increase among departments, retention of those already employed will become an even bigger issue. Moving forward the industry expects to see the competition for police officers to increase on a regional and possibly national level. There will be departments that lose out as their employees leave for other opportunities. Certain departments will find themselves left behind trying to fill their ranks from a dry well of applicants.

### Police Recruitment: Independence Police Department

For IPD, retention of new hires is strong with each class of new officers losing one member (average 0.69 officers per class) over the course of their first three years with the department. The vast majority of the attrition happens within the first year of employment. This reflects the department's feeling that once hired, officers rarely leave IPD for other opportunities. Based on the data compiled below in Table 1 and anecdotal evidence provided by departmental staff, over the last several years the department has seen the total number of applicants for the position of police officer decline, particularly over the last two or three years. Additionally, staff reported challenges connecting with prime candidates in those shrinking pools of applicants. The data in Table 1 supports these observations. In 2015 alone the department had four hiring windows open that resulted in zero hires.

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<sup>1</sup> "Best Practice Guide for Recruitment, Retention, and Turnover of Law Enforcement Personnel," by W. Dwayne Orrick, International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2008

<b>Table 1. Police Hires, Last 5 Years &amp; Retention 1, 2, and 3 Years After Hire</b>						
<i>Job Posting (by requisition number*)</i>	<i>Number of Applicants</i>	<i>Number of Hires</i>	<i>Employed 1 year</i>	<i>Employed 2 years</i>	<i>Employed 3 years</i>	<i>Attrition (after 3 years)</i>
2012061	133	5	4	4	4	-1
2012119	207	7	6	5	5	-2
2013069	234	4	3	3	3	-1
2013149	143	1	1	1	1	0
2014042	102	4	4	4	4	0
2014064	130	1	1	1	1	0
2014098	56	1	1	1	N/A	0
2014146	167	7	5	5	N/A	-2
2015007	104	4	4	3	N/A	-1
2015072	104	2	2	N/A	N/A	0
2015089	76	2	2	N/A	N/A	0
2015109	60	0	No Hires			
2015120	52	3	2	N/A	N/A	-1
20151201	53	0	No Hires			
2015156	50	2	1	N/A	N/A	-1
20151561	60	0	No Hires			
20151562	27	0	No Hires			
2016026	234	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
2016193	89	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
2017070	121	Hiring Process Not Complete				
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2202</b>	<b>53</b>				<b>-9</b>
Data provided by Human Resources Department 8/16/17 * Individual job postings are listed by their requisition number which indicates the year of each posting.						

Another important challenge to consider in the recruitment and hiring of police officers is the high selection, hiring, and training costs. Table 2 below, illustrates that hiring and training of new officers is costly. If a new hire is not retained, the department is effectively out the several thousand dollars it took to hire and train them. If nothing else, this shows a need to maximize the pool of qualified candidates to effectively shrink the potential to hire someone who is a bad fit for the department or profession.

<b>Table 2. POLICE OFFICER HIRING COSTS</b>	
<b>SELECTION AND HIRING</b>	
Polygraph	\$200
Psychological Test	\$225
Drug Screen	\$23

Medical Evaluation	\$71
Back Evaluation	\$20
Hepatitis Vaccination (Optional)	\$88
Building Access Card	\$5
Equipment Expenses (Uniforms, Ballistic Vest, Duty Belt, Gun, Coat, Rain Gear, etc.)	\$7,325
<b>SELECTION AND HIRING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,957</b>

<b>TRAINING – NON-POST CERTIFIED</b>	
Cost of academy tuition	\$5,335
Salary during academy - \$19.27 per hour x 1040 Hours (approx. 6 months)	\$20,041
Field Training Program - \$21.20 per hour x 640 Hours (approx. 16 weeks)	\$13,504
<b>TRAINING - NON-POST CERTIFIED TOTAL</b>	<b>\$38,880</b>

<b>TRAINING – POST CERTIFIED</b>	
<b>Field Training Program</b>	
<b>Less than 4 years' experience</b> - \$21.20 per hour x 480 Hours (approx. 12 weeks)	<b>\$10,176</b>
<b>4 or more years' experience</b> - \$23.60 per hour x 480 Hours (approx. 12 weeks)	<b>\$11,328</b>
*Salary costs do not include benefit costs since individual and family plans may vary per individual needs	
*As of 8/2017	
Data provided by IPD	

Finally, Table 3 shows a comparison of entry-level officer salary for local police agencies in Missouri with a population between 75,000 and 124,999. Data indicates that IPD's salary offering is very competitive with departments of similar size. Table 4 compares IPD entry-level salary to those of other departments in the region. Again IPD's salary Compares well to competing departments and agencies.

<b>Department</b>	<b>Minimum Salary</b>	<b>Maximum Salary</b>
O'Fallon PD	\$44,803	\$64,896
<b>Independence PD</b>	<b>\$41,983</b>	<b>\$71,545</b>
Columbia PD	\$38,644	\$56,830
Lee's Summit PD	\$37,143	\$53,543
St. Joseph PD	\$33,500	\$48,600
Bureau of Justice Statistics, LEMAS Data 2013 (Search: local agencies in Missouri with pop. Between 75,000 - 124,999)		

<b>Table 4. Entry-Level Officer Salary (other local agencies)</b>		
<i>Department</i>	<i>Minimum Salary</i>	<i>Maximum Salary</i>
<b>Independence PD</b>	<b>\$41,983</b>	<b>\$71,545</b>
Kansas City MO PD	\$39,984	\$68,340
Grandview PD	\$39,104	\$52,114
Blue Springs PD	\$36,920	-
Grain Valley PD	\$32,873	\$47,556
Bureau of Justice Statistics, LEMAS Data 2013		

## Findings

### Summary

It has become increasingly hard to recruit for the position of police officer. Application numbers have fallen in recent years and within smaller pools of applicants it is even harder to find highly qualified applicants. Those that do exist are the subject of great competition among law enforcement departments. The IPD finds itself in a position very similar to other departments around the country. IPD is ready to make the issue of recruiting a top priority. This shift in attitude will call for some minor adjustments to the hiring and recruitment process as well as some new bold decisions moves going forward.

The department must seek additional data about the hiring process from applicants and the community in order to understand how potential candidates evaluate the opportunity. Additionally, a comprehensive marketing and recruitment effort would help put job postings into context and provide much needed urgency to the effort. Website and other materials should be consistent with the new marketing effort. To offer better customer service through the website, targeted information directed at the priority of officer recruitment should be made clearly available. This includes both websites and other documents having a clean look with high quality video and pictures. Finally, opportunities exist to streamline some of the hiring process including specific updates to the job postings themselves. Addressing these issues will put the IPD in a much stronger position to address their recruitment issues.

## Findings

### Police Recruitment Operates without Data-Driven Decision Making

Over the last four to five years the number applicants for the position of police officer has dropped precipitously from hundreds of applications per posting down to numbers as low as 30. To compound matters, the numbers of ideal candidates are a much smaller fraction of those applicants. Why are there fewer applicants than there were five years ago? The reasons span national and cultural issues as well as department specific or local issues that must be addressed from a place of reality and data.

IPD's drop in applications is not unique. Departments across the nation have reported a shortage of applicants and fierce competition for those candidates that do apply. The IPD experienced the national shifts in the perception of the profession, its dangers, or the way young people perceive job and career

opportunities post the Great Recession. It is within that context and with that data at hand that the department can start to address some of the national and cultural issues.

The department and the city have much less data on the local and departmental issues affecting recruitment. Without at least some baseline data about IPD's applicants, their perceptions about the hiring process, and where they come from; any local issues will be hard to diagnose and correct. This data needs to be collected by many levels of the organization including: human resources, IPD, and by public information officers/public relations professionals to inform future decision-making. Without the appropriate data any fixes to the hiring process, additional recruitment programs, and any concerted marketing efforts directed at recruitment will be made in the dark. They may help the situation but may not address clear underlying issues if they are not uncovered.

### **Department Lacks Coordinated Marketing and Recruitment Outreach Effort**

When the IPD posts a job for the officer position, that posting goes out into the crowded world of job boards and postings. There is very little to differentiate IPD from any other department with only a job posting and description. No department or company can fully convey what a position is like or all of the benefits and advancement opportunities in a single job listing. Additional information and context must be provided; especially when overriding forces like generational difference in perception of policing exist. The IPD, like many other departments, have not yet created this greater context for the posting or fanfare about the exceptional career opportunities and benefit package offered through employment as an Independence police officer. Furthermore, citizens of Independence and surrounding communities are not aware that the department has made recruitment of new officers a priority or the kind of person who would make a good officer. To most, it is simply another job posting for a position that they don't really know much about and seems potentially dangerous.

Context for these job positions and increasing awareness of Independence as a destination could be accomplished through a coordinated marketing and recruitment outreach effort. As of the writing of this report, IPD is in the beginning stages of developing and implementing an integrated recruitment campaign. This coordinated marketing and recruitment effort should do a number of things including: address the public's knowledge gaps about the profession, highlight benefits, address incorrect assumptions, and provide additional information that gives a fuller picture of the position offered in Independence. As mentioned above, this marketing and outreach effort should be shaped by insights from data specific to IPD's applicants and the community.

One additional point, related to any future marketing and outreach effort, many police departments utilize their organizational values as the basis for both marketing and recruitment efforts. The department's current stated common values are integrity, service, and character. It is however unclear how or if this statement of value is systematically incorporated into daily operations, or if it is used as part of the recruitment process. The department should evaluate if these should be part of the recruitment messaging going forward as part of the marketing and outreach effort.

### **Police Website Could Better Serve Recruitment Efforts**

Currently, the most forward facing asset used by the IPD in the effort to recruit new officers is their website. As is the case with many other departmental websites, the IPD's provides good basic information about the department, valuable crime statistics, and recruitment specific information. However, the website is visually complex, being too text heavy with very few pictures or videos, preventing customers from quickly finding what they are looking for and has numerous links to outdated information.

With respect to police recruitment and other job listings, the website has two separate sections dealing with the topic both with different but good information. There are no links from one to the other, so an interested party could miss some of the information. The page listed as "Career Opportunities" is a link on the left side of the page and available from any other page within in the department's site. The other called, "Police Officer Recruitment Information", is found under the Current Issues section only available through the main landing page of the police website. Like the other departmental pages, these too are heavy with text. Finally, there is no supplemental documentation, something like a PDF, which an interested party could download or print for reference about the hiring or recruitment process.

As part of the coordinated marketing and recruitment effort currently underway, the department plans to address issues specifically related to their recruitment webpages. They are currently leaning toward implementing a new recruitment webpage developed on a different platform that would address the look and content issues. This move is important but should be in concert with updates to the rest of the department's website to remove outdated material and simplify the look of some of the pages. Additionally, the marketing and recruitment message identified by the department should be included throughout the department's many webpages. Ease of use and a consistent message within a website is important to delivering a good customer service experience and will help eliminate any barriers the website would pose to recruiting the most qualified candidates.

### **Hiring Process Efficient but Opportunities for Improvement Exist**

The hiring process for a police officer begins with a job posting on the city's website. These postings are also shared via job search websites such as "Indeed". Recently, all city job postings have been shared widely through social media like Facebook. For noncertified officer openings the department reports that posting are generally open on average for 2-3 months and sometimes longer depending on quantity of applications. These noncertified officer postings are timed so that the department can get through the hiring process and hires can attend an upcoming police academy class. Academy classes are held approximately three times a year (typically spring, summer, and fall).

Recruitment for POST certified officer can presumably happen whenever positions are open. However, when this review began in July of 2017, there was no current job posting for either certified or noncertified officers despite open positions in the department. This compounds the challenge in recent years where the number of officers leaving has outpaced the number of new hires.

To apply for a position, an interested party must complete the online application and a personal history information packet. The personal history packet is not available online and an applicant must physically

bring it to the department. For applicants outside the area they can make arrangements to email or fax this document. This extra step is inefficient and a solution should be implemented to allow applicants to complete and submit online. After all appropriate application materials are received, it is reviewed quickly and preliminarily qualified candidates are invited to sit for the written test. These tests and the physical test are both scheduled for the same day. Completed tests are sent off for grading and take about a week to return. Sending the tests off for grading ensures transparency and impartiality in the results and there is no evidence that this delay has an impact on candidates dropping out of the process. However, staff indicated there are many vendors and options available for administering the written test. Some offer shorter or even immediate results for the applicant. These may be options for the future.

Another round of cuts is made to the applicant pool following the results of the written and physical exams. Those making it through are then invited to participate in an oral board panel. Following the oral board conditional offers of employment are made to qualified candidates within 48 hours. In some cases, if the candidate is very strong, conditional offers are made immediately after the oral exam to try to lock them down. It is important to note that a conditional offer is contingent on (passing the polygraph test and an in-depth background check). Those accepting conditional offers are then scheduled to sit for a polygraph test. According to staff, the entire process usually takes between six and eight weeks. This timeframe could cause some issues hiring the best qualified candidates. If a candidate has multiple offers this delay could mean the IPD loses out to another agency. An in-depth background check is also performed (during this time). The department currently has one staff person managing the entire hiring process. This slows down the process in some respects and puts the department at risk of having that institutional knowledge exit the department. In the long term it seems that efficiencies to the hiring process, as well as additional staff could speed up these the process. It is important to get applicants to the point where they are officially hired and being paid as an officer recruit position so as not to lose them to another agency. A candidate is only officially hired after passing those important hurdles.

### ***Job Postings for Police Officers Must Evolve***

Job postings for the position could use an upgrade to give a better description of the opportunities offered through employment with the IPD. For example, there is no discussion of the advancement opportunities within the department or any of the additional benefits of the job, like the cost of equipment or reimbursement of educational expenses. In general the job posting does nothing to differentiate the department from any other. Some of this can be done through the website and additional information provided to them. However, if an applicant compares an IPD posting to another is there anything that stands out about the IPD opportunity offered? Job postings for officers should have a target audience in mind. Postings for new recruits should be crafted in a way that considers what motivates millennials to pursue a career, while postings for POST certified officers should focus more on the benefits package or similar.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report and an understanding of the IPD's current priorities, the following recommendations are respectfully submitted. It is the Management Analyst's intent that these recommendations provide actionable solutions to the specific deficiencies identified in the current police recruitment and hiring process.

### Short-term

1. **A perpetual job posting (or pre-application form) for the position of police offer should be instituted.** The relatively short window of time that each job posting is available limits the pool of applicants to those who happen to see the posting during that time. A perpetual job posting in conjunction with a concerted marketing and recruitment effort would maximize the pool of candidate and allow the department to identify highly qualified individuals in a timelier manner.
2. **Consider ways to expedite the overall hiring process.** The entire hiring process takes between six and eight weeks. The department has made this work but a quicker turn around would help ensure a more efficient hiring process. Additionally, other departments nationwide are developing recruitment units. These units help to get the word out about job opportunities and could help alleviate some of the strain of having one staff person managing the entire hiring process within the department.
3. **Initial written exams for new recruits should be scheduled on a regular basis.** For efficiency and candidate planning purposes, the written exams for new recruits should be scheduled at the beginning of the year to coincide with the traditional start of police academy classes (3 per year). This should be the minimum frequency. If the department wanted to be more aggressive, testing could be scheduled more regularly in order to begin the process with highly desirable candidates identified by the perpetual job posting.
4. **Develop a referral/recruitment program to incentivize current officers and/or other departmental employees to identify and recruit new officers to IPD.** The department should determine the type of incentive that would best motivate employees to participate (examples: money, laptops, game systems, or additional time-off). The best implementation of a program would reward a recruiter up front for a successful hire and then complete the incentive after the new employee finished some predetermined work milestone (example: 1 year of service). Because of the needs of the department this program should be targeted at the recruitment of both new recruits and POST certified officers.
5. **A coordinated marketing and recruitment effort for IPD should be implemented.** As of the writing of this report, the department is undertaking a new marketing effort that is intended to raise the profile of the department with the community and potential new hires. This effort will create additional context for the positions posted and educate the public on the benefits of employment with IPD. This coordinated efforts should incorporate the following:
  - Identification of IPD's organizational values

- Use those values throughout the marketing effort and in job postings and position descriptions
  - Update/implement a new website for recruitment purposes
  - Develop new informational documents, brochures, and other marketing tools
6. **Collect data from applicants, recruits, current and recently separated employees about their views on the recruitment and hiring process.** Data can be collected through the application process, surveys after hire, surveys after separation, and via follow-up for anyone who falls out of the recruitment process. The collected data will help the department identify strengths and weaknesses in the process and empower data-driven decisions about the process moving forward. This recommendation is specific to the IPD but similar benefits would be seen if this were implemented citywide.

## Long-term

1. **Develop a relationship with the Independence School District Career Academies program and provide opportunities to students and graduates from their program in criminal justice.**  
Two potential examples:
  - Provide a program where high school graduates work (full-time or part-time) in civilian jobs within the department while they wait to become eligible to sit for POST certification. Young people in this program would gain experience within the department and build a lasting relationship there.
  - Provide experiential learning opportunities for both high school students in the program and college students through internships and other hands-on opportunities with the department.
2. **Explore a sign-on bonus system for in-career or POST certified officers hired by the department.** An increasingly competitive hiring market calls for innovative solutions in the hiring process. A sign-on bonus would make the offer of employment with IPD very attractive and could be structured in a way that also incentivizes the hire to stay for a period of time or forfeit the bonus. Obvious costs associated with such a program could be mitigated by the finite number of positions available and the time for each payout.
3. **Explore opportunities to add more flexibility in a job offer. Specifically, flexibility on the number of vacation days, implementation of employee comp-time, and additional incentives for new officers with 5-15 years of service.** When hiring in-career or POST certified officers, with between 1-4 years of service, the department would be in a better position to recruit if the department had the flexibility to offer additional days of vacation or work flexibility through comp-time. For officers with 5-15 years of service, the ability to could hire individuals in at an increased level (which does not currently exist in their work agreement) would serve as better incentive.

## Appendix A: City Counselor's Response

# City of Independence

## MEMORANDUM

Law Department

DATE: September 18, 2017

TO: **Jordan Ellena, Management Analyst**

FROM: Dayla Bishop Schwartz, City Counselor *DBS*

SUBJECT: **Report No. 17-04**  
**Review of Police Hiring and Recruitment**



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I have reviewed the draft report for Report No. 17-04, Review of Police Hiring and Recruitment. I am of the opinion that there is nothing contained within the draft report that would expose the City to a lawsuit. Furthermore, it is my opinion that the draft report would not qualify for an executive session discussion before either the Council Audit and Finance Committee or the City Council.

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## Appendix B: City Manager's Response

*City of Independence*

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September 20, 2017

**TO:** Jordan Ellena, Management Analyst

**FROM:** Zachary C. Walker, City Manager

Thank you for the opportunity to review your audit of the Independence Police Department's recruiting process. This matter has become especially critical in recent months as the department reached 17 vacant police officer positions. As you state, this dynamic is due in part to a larger national trend, but I believe your report makes several suggestions about our local recruitment practices which should prove useful. At the most basic level, the report quantifies the critical importance of making informed recruiting and hiring decisions by sharing the selection and hiring costs.

As you have been preparing this audit, the department has concurrently been working to increase the pool of applicants to fill vacant positions. Many of the strategies employed are ones you touch on in your audit. For example, you mention many police departments nationwide are exploring relaxed qualifications and standards. Though we remain committed to enforcing high ethical and professional standards for our law enforcement personnel, the police chief has recommended, and I have supported, amending our drug disqualifier provision to lower the past illegal use of marijuana from five years to three years.

The audit further indicates a more proactive and modernized approach is necessary to effectively recruit police officers in today's human resources arena. I could not agree more, and am pleased with the new, dynamic approach being employed by IPD. Examples include purchasing advertising space on the IndeBus, purchasing an All-Terrain Vehicle outfitted with IPD branding and technology for use at community events like the Santa-Cali-Gon Festival, retention of external marketing assistance to develop a recruitment campaign, utilization of the City's electronic billboard at the Silverstein Eye Centers Arena to promote careers in law enforcement with IPD, planning of a "community day" at the Arena to promote careers in law enforcement with IPD and foster enhanced community engagement, and a statewide recruitment effort which includes establishing relationships with law enforcement academies and degree programs. I have also asked the police chief to consider an Explorers program for youth to get better acquainted with a law enforcement career.

The police chief has provided me with a weekly update on these activities, as well as the results they have yielded. As of the September 12 report, the department was down to 12 police officer vacancies. Another applicant had been hired, and one additional applicant had just passed their POST test. Moreover, the POST-certified job posting generated 59 applications, and further

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testing will occur September 23 for potential job offers. As your report shows, the number of applicants can vary widely. One instance showed a swing from 27 to 234 total applications in consecutive recruitments. As such, I feel we must strive to also ensure the quality of applicants is strong, not just the sheer quantity.

As a final note on your recruitment recommendations, I am concerned with the recommendation to incentivize the recruitment and retention of police officers. Specifically, you suggest either giving cash incentives or items of some monetary value, such as a gaming system. This incentive could have the unintended consequence of promoting favoritism or furthering nepotism within the department. Though I agree with your premise, I believe this needs additional consideration before implementing.

Also, while I agree with your recommendation to make our job postings more dynamic and relevant, I must do so within the restrictions of the Work Agreement with the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 1. Article 9 of our Work Agreement provides for the FOP to review and weigh in on job descriptions, though I have no doubt they too see the value in enhancing and modernizing our job postings to stay relevant to today's applicant. In that same vein, while I agree in concept with the recommendation to afford greater flexibility in making job offers, such as increasing leave accruals, we must do so within the boundaries of our Work Agreement and our Personnel Policies and Procedures. I very much agree the applicant of the future will place a premium on different compensation and benefit items, such as leave accruals, than may have been valued in the past. Our organization must adapt to these changing values to stay relevant and recruit talent.

Finally, I share your perspective that we must continue to make better use of technology to bring greater efficiencies to our hiring processes, including automating as many of the processes as possible. You point out non-certified officer positions are open for two to three months, but I am curious how that compares to other peer agencies. Moreover, you note the entire hiring process can take between six to eight weeks to complete, and again I am curious how that compares to our peers. While we continuously strive to bring greater efficiency to our organization, we should ensure we never sacrifice effectiveness for the sake of efficiency, especially when recruiting and hiring law enforcement personnel who are sworn to protect and serve our citizens.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review this report and for the enlightening findings and recommendations you share. I look forward to working with the police chief to begin or continue implementing these suggestions immediately.



Zachary C. Walker  
City Manager

/lc