

2020

BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Recruitment Analysis

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Professional Standards

Division

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Purpose and Overview of the Year-2020:

Purpose of Recruitment Analysis

Evaluate the success or failures of police officer recruitment. Identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement in the next calendar year.

Recruitment Status

During 2020, the Burlington Police Department experienced significant reductions in staff due to resignations. The majority of departing staff sought employment at other law enforcement agencies, both locally and in North Carolina. Approximately 6 officer positions at all times throughout the year were filled with an officer in training or a police cadet. As a result, the Burlington Police Department functioned with approximately 125 solo police officers throughout 2020 resulting in unfilled positions in a variety of work groups.

Diversification of police officers did not measurably increase or decrease in 2020. However, one significant trend is that the majority of officers who resigned from the Police Department were white. This is consistent with nationwide trends in police departments and the time periods after large-scale civil unrest, such as the summer of 2020 following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Further diversification is needed to best represent the available regional workforce.

Overview and Impact of COVID

There was a global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 coronavirus that forced government closure of businesses and severe reductions of in-person gatherings to maintain public health including schools and job fairs. This severely restricted opportunities for recruitment of new staff members to the Burlington Police Department.

Recruitment Objectives:

Recruitment Objectives

The recruitment objectives of BPD (listed below) were from year 2020:

1. Hiring Process

Provide all the applicants with an equal opportunity for employment, working towards the outcome of a fair and effective hiring process by hiring the most qualified candidate that possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their duties.

2. Agency Sworn Workforce:

Increase the agency's sworn workforce to better represent our service community's racial, ethnic, and gender composition to include a special focus on the categories of Caucasian females, African American males and females, and Hispanic males and females.

3. Minority Applications

Increase the number of minority applicants for the position of police officer each year.

Recap of Last Year's Report Recommendations:

Recommendations for 2020 and Actions Taken

In 2020, BPD and other police departments nationwide faced a very difficult recruiting environment, including a pandemic. This severely restricted opportunities for recruitment of new staff members to the Burlington Police Department. Additionally, throughout the summer of 2020. There were mass demonstrations and calls for police reform in response to severe police misconduct in Minneapolis after a police officer murdered an African American man, George Floyd. The incident was captured on cell phone video by a bystander. The series of events increase scrutiny of police officers nationwide and had apparent negative impacts on both recruitment and hiring at the Burlington Police Department.

As a result of these challenges some of the recruitment plan recommendations for 2020 were not completed. The 2020 recruitment plan recommendations follow, and the outcomes are emboldened.

Youth Activities

Engage youth early in their development in order to create an interest in a policing career. Utilize a variety of programs and attempt expansion to reach more youth.

1. Job shadowing day
2. High school internships
3. College internships and work-study partnerships
4. Continued participation in the Police Explorer Program
5. Continued management of the Junior Police Academy

All in-person youth activities were canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic. The Burlington Police Department did successfully complete three remote projects with Elon University. They consisted of research projects conducted by undergraduate students and did not involve in-person interaction with any Burlington Police Department staff. The resulting research was useful and meaningful for the Burlington Police Department, but did not result in any applications for employment as a police officer.

Comprehensive Marketing Plan

Comprehensive Marketing Plan

Finalize the development of a comprehensive marketing plan with the assistance of available resources, including the City of Burlington Public Information Officer (PIO).

1. Finalize the target police officer persona - **Amended**
 - a. Create a graphic illustration - **Eliminated. Personnel time and resources diverted to other priorities, specifically website redesign.**
 - b. Distribute within the police department - **Complete**
 - c. Utilize to create marketing material and campaigns - **Complete**
2. Revise the Recruitment Website - **Amended**
 - a. Obtain high-quality images that emphasize a professional police organization composed of a diverse workforce - **Complete**
 - b. Obtain infographics and other imagery to aid in website design - **Complete**
 - c. Revise written content to provide more value to applicants and prospective police officers - **Complete**
 - d. Improve the layout and organic website navigation to convert interest in employment into an application - **Complete**
 - e. Create an employment interest submission with automatic email, text message, and phone call follow-up - **Eliminated. Applications increased substantially in 2020 and reduced the value of developing a system to collect contact information of potential applicants.**
3. Repair or eliminate external links to BPD job postings - **Complete**
4. Conduct an evaluation of workload and responsibilities for a permanent public information officer - **Complete**
 - a. Evaluate successful models for social media engagement by police departments, an important component for community engagement and recruitment
5. Conduct experiments with online marketing to increase website visits and applications
 - a. Facebook ad boosts, pay-per-click advertising (such as AdWords), and search engine optimization (SEO) - **Complete**
6. Teach recruiting techniques to every staff member - **Complete**
 - a. Target persona
 - b. Elevator pitch
 - c. Ride-along
 - d. Follow-up best practices
7. Replace recruitment job fair boards – **Complete**

Finalize Lateral Hiring Program

The restructuring of lateral police officer hiring was approved by the City Manager. Lateral police officers are now hired to a position on the BPD career ladder commensurate with their experience, training, and law enforcement certification.

1. Advertise lateral hiring program - **Complete**
 - a. Media release
 - b. Boost social media to expand exposure to cutting-edge opportunity for lateral police officers
2. Study the results of advertising and revised hiring practice to evaluate if the revised hiring practice results in an increase in lateral police officer applications and hires

The restructuring of the lateral police officer hiring process has increased the likelihood that certified officers will apply and be hired by the Burlington Police Department. The potential compensation is much improved. In 2020 two lateral police officers were hired. A significant amount of advertising occurred, and a large number of applications were received for lateral police officer positions. The other applicants failed background investigations, and many had significant disciplinary history. These limited results suggest that the current lateral employment offering from the Burlington Police Department may not be desirable for currently certified officers from other law enforcement agencies.

Hiring Process

1. Work with the City of Burlington Human Resource Department to identify and implement a system to review the social media profiles of applicants - **Complete**
2. Replace at least 25% of the panel interview teams to continue employee and system development - **Complete**
3. Develop a written standard operating procedure (SOP) to define roles and responsibilities throughout the process – **Incomplete. Components of an SOP, including a publicly available list of automatic disqualifiers from employment and a lateral hiring procedure, are complete. A full SOP remains a long-term objective, but the lack of available staff work hours are a barrier to completion.**
4. Evaluate the adoption of TABE 11/12 assessment to replace the Nelson-Denny assessment - **Complete**
5. Evaluate replacement of the lone BPD polygraph examiner during the FY2021-2022 budget - **Complete**

Report Data:

Evaluation of Agency Sworn Workforce Diversification

Objective: Increase the agency's sworn workforce to better represent our service community's racial, ethnic, and gender composition to include a special focus on African American men, Hispanic men, and women of all races and ethnicities.

Race/Ethnicity	City of Burlington		Available Regional Workforce		Current Sworn (12/31/2020)	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
White	25,242	45%	550047	65%	101	75.9%
Black	16,449	30%	189587	22%	22	16.5%
Hispanic/ Latino	11,196	20%	69149	8%	7	5.3%
Other	2,721	5%	35816	4%	3	2.3%
Total	55,608	100%	844599	100%	133	100%

**Available regional workforce includes the counties of Alamance, Guilford, Caswell, Orange, Chatham, and Randolph*

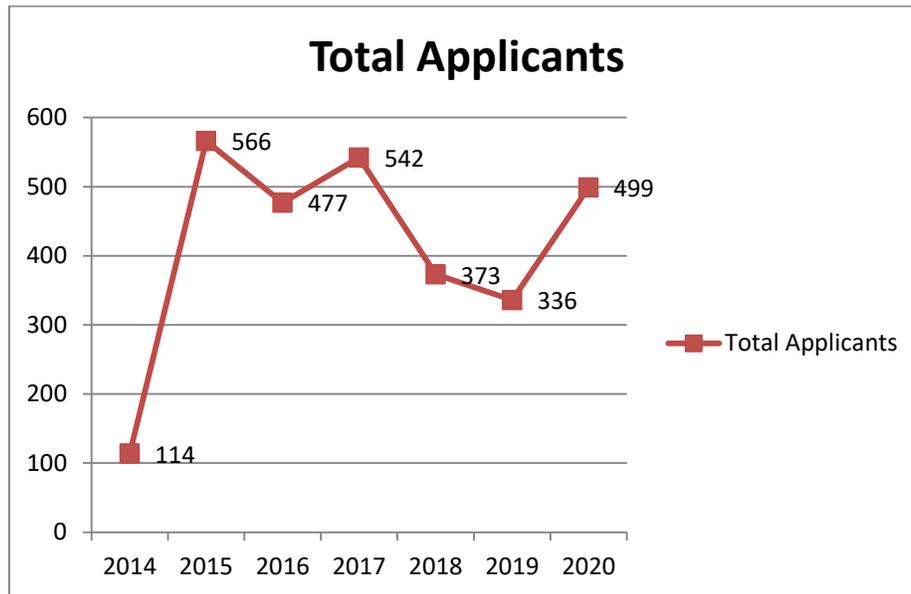
Race / Ethnicity	2019 Sworn (12/31/2019)		2020 Sworn (12/31/2020)			2019 Female Sworn (12/31/2019)		2020 Female Sworn (12/31/2020)		
	Population	%	Population	%	Change	Population	%	Population	%	Change
White	109	77%	101	75.90%	-7%	20	14%	17	13%	-15%
Black	22	15%	22	16.50%	0%	6	4%	7	5%	17%
Hispanic/ Latino	8	6%	7	5.30%	-13%	2	1%	1	1%	-50%
Other	3	2%	3	2.30%	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Total	142	100%	133	100%		28	20%	25	19%	-11%

During 2020 the majority of police officers leaving BPD sought employment at other law enforcement agencies and were white (7% of all white officers left BPD in 2020). There was a 6% overall reduction (9 officers) in officer staffing by the end of 2020 compared to the end of 2019. There was an 11% total reduction (3) in female officers and most were white. Overall, women comprised 19% of BPD sworn staff at the end of 2020 compared to 20% at the end of 2019. This remains a substantial improvement over the 12.6% nationwide gender distribution of women in sworn law enforcement positions.

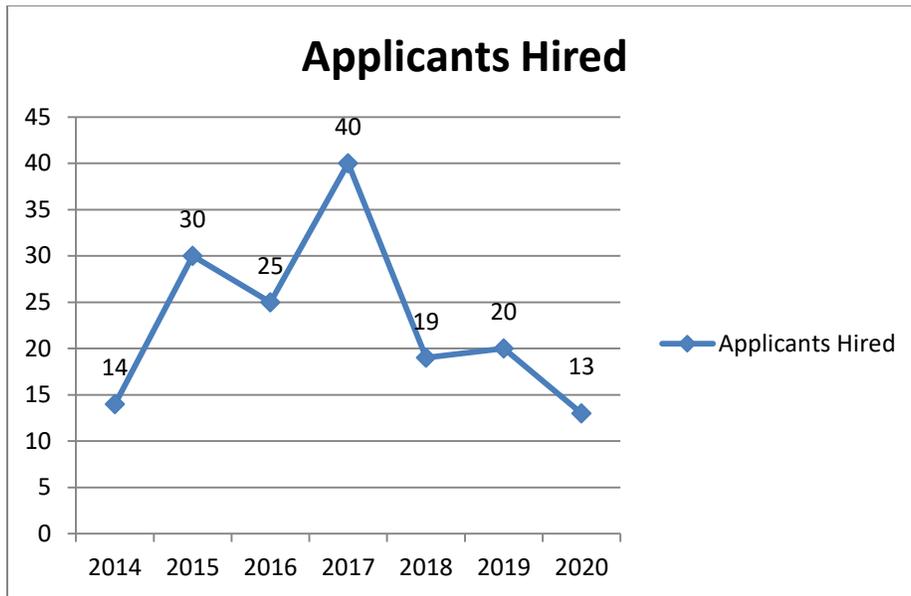
There are significant challenges to current and future retention of police officers due to a variety of personal and agency factors that exceed the scope of this analysis. These factors negatively impact recruitment.

Evaluation of Minority Applications

Objective: Increase the yearly number of minority applicants for the position of police officer.



In 2020, BPD drastically increased the number of total applicants for police officer. The only significant change was increased paid social media advertising (Facebook) that was specifically designed to increase police officer applications. However, the increase in applications did not increase the number of qualified applicants that were hired to be police officers. As previously mentioned, there were significant macro impacts to police hiring in 2020 from the global COVID-19 pandemic and increased scrutiny of police officers following the murder of George Floyd that make it unclear whether social media advertising is effective at increasing applications from qualified prospective police officers or not. The financial investment in social media advertising is small and should continue to determine whether it is an effective tool to hire more police officers.



The ratio of applications required to hire one police increased substantially in 2020. BPD needed 42 applications to hire 1 police officer compared to a need for 17 applications to hire 1 police officer in 2019. Throughout 2020 it remained critically important to evaluate the qualifications of applicants for employment as a police officer. Thorough background investigations were completed and many candidates throughout the year were identified as being unsuitable. Most surprising was the group of applicants for the lateral police officer position. An extremely high percentage of these applicants had significant background problems that made them unsuitable for employment while others applied when they were not certified police officers. Other applicants failed to complete parts of the application process and still others appeared to be applying from locations across the United States with no true interest in joining the Burlington Police Department as a police officer. It is common knowledge that in the Internet age job applications are submitted to maintain unemployment benefits. Unemployment in 2020 was exceptionally high due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors combined resulted in the processing, review, and elimination of hundreds more unsuitable applicants from the hiring process.



Analysis of 2020 sworn officer applications compared to 2019 sworn officer applications reveals applications from all race, ethnicity, and gender groups increased. There was a 54% increase in White applicants, a 43% increase in Black applicants, a 26% increase in Hispanic applicants, a 100% increase in American Indian/Asian/Pacific Islander (Other) applicants, and a 38% increase in female applicants.

Hiring ratios (Hired/Total Applications) fell predictably due to the substantial increase in applications but with increases only from unsuitable applicants.

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Sworn Officer Selection						
Race/Gender	Applications Received			Applicants Hired		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
White non-Hispanic	204	177	273	10	11	9
Male	170	140	229	8	6	8
Female	34	37	44	2	5	1
Black non-Hispanic	135	118	169	7	8	3
Male	96	90	126	6	6	2
Female	39	28	43	1	2	1
Hispanic-Latino of any race	25	34	43	2	1	1
Male	18	27	31	1	1	1
Female	7	7	12	1	0	0
Other	9	7	14	0	0	0
Male	7	7	13	0	0	0
Female	2	0	1	0	0	0
Total	373	336	499	19	20	13

Findings:

Recruitment

During 2020, there were extremely difficult and unexpected challenges for recruitment and hiring. These factors compounded with traditional retention challenges such as workload imbalance and concerns about equitable pay led to significant reductions in staffing at the Burlington Police Department. Ultimately all retention challenges are also recruitment obstacles as each agency competes for the same limited pool of qualified applicants.

Recruitment of staff remains a part-time responsibility for the Administrative Lieutenant, recruitment committee, and BPD Recruitment Specialist Angela Satterfield. The Administrative Lieutenant primarily focuses on system improvements, procedural updates, organization of recruitment committee efforts, and follow-up telephone calls to the best potential lateral police officer applicants. Angela is highly motivated and a vibrant recruiter for BPD. She remains active with recruitment, particularly from ACC BLET. During 2020, she coordinated attendance and participation in physical training with cadets among other recruitment activities. This has proven to be a highly effective strategy that generates 1-3 applicants per class. The substantial increase in the number of applicants in 2020 was both an improvement and a problem as it created additional administrative challenges for staff to process nearly 500 applications. This led to predictable increases in staff work hours to complete scheduling, background investigations, and the review of substantial quantities of data to determine whether an applicant was or was not qualified. During 2020 the work hours required to complete background investigations exceeded the amount of work hours available from the part-time background investigator during a short period in late 2020. Two patrol sergeants were tasked with completing portions of background investigations while they were on transitional duty. This situation may occur in the future.

The recruitment team remains an engaged component of BPD recruitment. Additional staff were added to the team in 2020 while others rotated away from the assignment. Their activities were limited, but successfully targeted in 2020 to recruitment of BLET cadets (resulting in more applications and 2 additional police officer hires from spring 2020 ACC BLET). Recruiters were also actively tasked with contacting individual applicants for police officer positions submitted on Neogov, the hiring and application website for the City of Burlington. This is a very labor-intensive process requiring the administrative Lieutenant to make direct assignments for individual recruiters to contact individual applicants. The applicants being contacted are those that live locally or have some other connection to becoming a police officer in Burlington. There is insufficient staff available to contact every applicant, particularly those applying from other areas of the country with no local connection and no policing experience.

Such applicants appear to be applying to meet other personal requirements rather than seeking actual employment.

The primary method of recruitment for BPD police officers remains personal contact with a BPD employee or an online job advertisement, particularly the City of Burlington website. These two methods should continue to be the focus of improvements to recruitment efforts in 2020 and beyond.

Personnel

The current staffing for hiring is sufficient to maintain or exceed the hiring rate experienced in 2020. The recruitment specialist and background investigator are performing at a very high level. The breadth and depth of background investigations has noticeably improved over the last year and now includes an even more detailed review of social media accounts. The assignment of a full-time recruiter should be considered in 2021, particularly after the resolution of the COVID-19 pandemic when in-person recruiting will resume. Additional dedicated work hours are required to actively contact and encourage applicants through the hiring process. Substantial additional funding for advertising has been approved for 2021 and will be included in detail in the 2021 recruitment plan.

Training

Staff have received appropriate training and maintain sufficient expertise to be successful. Staff have received training on equitable hiring and other best practices throughout the year. Most of these have been through meetings of the recruitment committee and have included lesson plans and resource documents provided by the Human Resource Department of the City of Burlington.

Fiscal Component

The main expenditure in 2020 was social media marketing on Facebook to increase exposure to job opportunities at the Burlington Police Department. Significant funding will be required for more substantial advertising, such as radio or billboards.

Policy, Procedure, and Technology Review:

Policy/ Procedure

The BPD directive on recruitment was reviewed and requires no revision. However, in 2021 the hiring and recruitment policies and procedures will be evaluated and merged into Lexipol manual, labeled 1000 Recruitment and Selection. All Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Accreditation standards will be in compliance with the new manual.

Technology/ Software

The recruitment and hiring process continues to utilize Neogov to receive and process job applications. Neogov is a City of Burlington procurement and is a high-quality tool for BPD. The recruitment specialist is well-versed in use of the software and has received formalized training. During 2020, additional tweaks to the software were made by the City of Burlington Human Resource Department. They have improved the effectiveness of the application process for applicants interested in becoming police officers.

No software for recruitment or hiring was purchased in 2020.

Recommendations for 2021:

Recommendations for 2021

The recruitment objectives will remain for 2021 and along with tactical recommendations to pursue those are outlined in the 2021 Recruitment Plan.

1. Hiring Process

“Provide all the applicants with an equal opportunity for employment, working towards the outcome of a fair and effective hiring process by hiring the most qualified candidate that possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their duties.”

2. Agency Sworn Workforce

“Increase the agency’s sworn workforce to better represent our service community’s racial, ethnic, and gender composition to include a special focus on the categories of Caucasian females, African American males and females, and Hispanic males and females.”

3. Minority Applications

“Increase the number of minority applicants for the position of police officer each year.”

4. Capture fiscal data for outreach and advertisements in 2021 and include details and future recommendations in the next annual review.