DCJ Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruitment & Hiring Plan

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:17B-4.10, all law enforcement agencies must establish a recruitment and selection program, with the objective of creating a workforce that reflects the diversity of the population the agency serves. In furtherance of this goal, on December 7, 2021, Acing Attorney General Andrew Bruck issued a *Guideline for Promoting Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruitment and Hiring*, that outlined the process by which each agency shall (1) identify unrepresented groups, and (2) take action to address any underrepresentation. In accordance with these stated goals, the Division of Criminal Justice ("the Division") established the following Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruitment and Hiring Plan.

I.   Program Goals

In order to effectively serve the residents of New Jersey, the Division will strive to create a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve and protect. To that end, the Division has identified several goals for the recruitment and hiring of law enforcement officers who are part of underrepresented demographic groups, including:

1.   The establishment of protocols for demographic measurements of the Division's detective workforce, to be performed on an annual basis.

2.   The establishment of methods and protocols to encourage the recruitment and hiring of underrepresented demographic groups.

3.   Solidifying protocols for hiring, and onboarding candidates in a fair and impartial manner.

4.   The establishment and implementation of recruitment and mentorship programs targeted to underrepresented demographic groups.

5.   Establish protocols for evaluating the success of the program and adjusting, as needed.

II.   Demographic Review & Evaluation

The Division is responsible for conducting investigations throughout the State, therefore our Division's law enforcement staff must reflect Statewide demographic data. To understand if we are meeting that goal, we must first survey and review our detective demographic data in order to identify deficiencies. This evaluation is ongoing, and will be performed using a two-tier system:

Tier I – Evaluation of detective demographics Division-wide, including an evaluation of the current detective staff's self-identified gender, racial, and ethnic demographics.

Tier II – Evaluation and measurement of detective demographics for each Division Office, Bureau, or Unit. The Division is comprised of many Offices, Bureaus, and Units, including the Office of Public Integrity & Accountability, the Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor, the Office of Securities Fraud and Financial Crimes Prosecution, and the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. An evaluation of the demographics within each assigned area must take place to accurately evaluate and determine diversity goals and objectives.

Thus far, the Division can report that as of December of 2021, we employed 200 sworn law enforcement officers, 73% of which identified as male, and 27% identified as female. Additionally, 71% of our officers listed their race/ethnicity as White (as compared to 51.9% of the State census population); 17% as Black or African American (as compared to 12.4% of the State census population); 6.5% as Hispanic (as compared to 21.6% of the State census population); 4% as Asian (as compared to 10.2% of the population); 1% as two or more races/ethnicities (as compared to 3.1% of the State census population); and .05% as American Indian/Alaska Native (as compared to .01% of the State census population).

While additional steps are undertaken to better understand the specific instances in which representation is lacking in the Division, we can see from the data collected thus far that the Division's law enforcement staff underrepresents women, and people of Hispanic and Asian heritage, as compared to the Statewide population. Accordingly, the Division has created the following plan to address those disparities and create a workforce more reflective of our communities.

III. <u>Addressing Underrepresentation</u>

A. Recruitment Efforts

The Division has created its first Community Outreach, Engagement, and Recruitment Unit ("the Unit") to develop, sponsor, and staff outreach initiatives that promote a permanent and meaningful relationship with the communities we serve. One of the Unit's goals is to recruit and hire talent in all of our staffing categories reflective of the diversity of the citizens of the State of New Jersey. To this end, the Division will step up participation in recruitment and professional career fairs, working with bar associations, community stakeholders, and law enforcement professional organizations to attract a greater cross-section of candidates. Additionally, the Division will target our efforts to attract those groups identified as currently underrepresented within the Division, including through outreach to professional organizations such as the New Jersey Women in Law Enforcement, the Hispanic American Law Enforcement Officers Association, the National Coalition of Latino Officers, the New Jersey Asian American Law Enforcement Officers Association, among others.[1]

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[1] The Division also continues to partner and participate in recruitment efforts with other culturally specific professional groups, such as the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, and the Muslim American Law Enforcement Association. While the Division's current composition does not appear to underrepresent any other race or ethnic groups, we need to ensure that we maintain that diversity going forward.

Another of our key goals for the new Unit is to grow the Division's presence within the various communities throughout New Jersey by strengthening existing relationships and building new connections. To accomplish this, members of the Unit will work with community stakeholders to participate in live programming, service events, and the distribution of educational materials statewide. At the same time, Unit staff will work with these community groups to recruit new culturally diverse applicants, and identify barriers to underrepresented groups seeking to obtain careers in law enforcement.

Finally, the Division will take steps to ensure that recruitment materials reflect the Division's goal to promote and honor diversity, and are distributed and advertised statewide. This includes advertising available positions through social media, job fairs, and at community events. Additionally, the Division will ensure that the individuals attending recruitment events and conducting applicant interviews project the Division's goal of creating a diverse and inclusive workforce.

B. Candidate Selection Process

The selection and onboarding processes are critical elements of creating and maintaining a diverse detective workforce. Our process consists of a multi-tiered evaluation system that begins with the evaluation of resumes by a committee of detectives from all Bureaus, Unit and Offices. The selection committee is comprised of detectives from all genders, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, all detectives within the Division, including those on the selection committee, must undergo periodic training on cultural diversity and implicit bias. To ensure that the selection process is inclusive and absent of bias, we utilize standardized application forms, interview questions, and evaluation criteria across the Division and in all of our Offices.

The multi-tiered candidate selection process begins with a Tier I telephonic interview to ensure candidates meet the basic requirements. It also includes questions concerning special skills, such as proficiency in foreign languages, and certifications from the Police Training Commission ("PTC") or other entities. Basic requirements for non-PTC certified candidates consist of the following:

1. must possess a bachelor's degree;
2. have three years of full-time work experience; and
3. successfully complete a pre-qualification physical assessment test ("PQT').

If a candidate meets these requirements, they will advance to Tier II of the process, which involves a panel interview consisting of two Lieutenants and/or Sergeants and one Deputy Attorney General. Efforts are made to ensure that panels are diverse, and standardized questions are free of implicit bias. Candidates are evaluated on a standard form that rates an applicant's qualifications for the position in categories such as experience, interest/enthusiasm, and presence/poise. Candidates are then scored by all of the interviewers on a recommendation scale, ranging from "Strongly Against" to "Strongly Recommend." Candidates that receive at least two "Strongly Recommend" from the panelists are scheduled for a Tier III interview with at least one Commanding Officer, and one Executive Staff member. The same standard evaluation forms are

used for the Tier III interviews.

If an applicant passes this stage of the process, they move onto a background check conducted by our Internal Affairs Bureau, which is the last stage of the hiring process. If issues are identified during the background check by our Internal Affairs staff, records are reviewed by the Chief of Detectives for a final determination regarding employment.

C. Mentoring Program

For candidates from underrepresented groups that are not selected for employment, or need assistance with meeting the requirements for employment, the Division will offer a Mentorship Program. The Mentorship Program will consist of periodic sessions (four per year), aimed at helping with resume writing and enhancing interview skills. A select group of detectives, under the umbrella of our Onboarding Committee and/or the Community Outreach, Engagement, and Recruitment Unit, will assist with identifying candidates from underrepresented groups and will refer them to the Mentorship Program. Additionally, if the area in which the candidate is deficient relates to physical training, the candidate will be referred to a PQT test prep program, to meet with and/or be evaluated by physical training staff at the Division's Training Academy.

IV. Monitoring Progress

With the implementation of this plan, our application process will now include optional demographic questions that captures information to assess diversity among applicants. The questions will capture the following data to be self-identified by the applicant:

1. Race:
   a. American Indian or Alaska Native
   b. Asian
   c. Black or African American
   d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   e. White
   f. Two or more races
   g. Other
2. Ethnicity:
   a. Hispanic or Latino
   b. Non-Hispanic or Latino
3. Gender:
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Non-binary

With this data collection, the Division can assess whether our applicant pool is reflective of the diverse workforce we seek to achieve. The Division will also evaluate the success of our hiring plan annually, after the submission and publication of our law enforcement demographic data. This evaluation will identify if disparities are reduced, and if the Division does not see the desired results, we will re-evaluate, modify, and revise our strategies.