

Police Reform Recruitment Working Group
Meeting Minutes
September 22, 2020

Sgt. Chris Smith-Hughes, Holley Fanin, and Safety Director Ned Pettus joined the call from Columbus Police to discuss their recruitment strategies that have resulted in significant racial diversity in applicants.

Sgt. Smith Hughes, who runs the recruitment team, said he believed the key to recruiting diverse candidates was building, sustaining and maintaining relationships. He began in his role in 2018.

Beyond relationship-building, they have created commercials and partnered with TV and radio media to put out ads.

Additionally, Columbus built a cadet program. Cadets are a civilian position, like an internship. They are paid \$14.45/hr. Holley Fanin, who is also a civilian, runs the program.

They have also partnered with the downtown Columbus high school.

The cadets are very diverse. In 2019, they were 70.5% women and people of color. In 2020, it was 75% women and people of color.

Holley's position was created intentionally as a civilian outside of the chain of command. That took some nepotism concerns out of the process. Her position reports directly to the public safety director.

Director Pettus talked about how support from the very top was critical in doubling their applicant diversity in 10 years. Mayor Ginther made that a goal when he came into office. The process has had ups and downs. They asked the community to be stakeholders and give feedback about how to talk to young people.

The recruitment unit has two full time sergeants plus two more recruiters.

Cadets get 16 weeks of training at the Academy then go into different divisions and different roles depending on the division. They work part time at 35 hours per week.

Columbus's Civil Service process is four phases. They have a multiple choice written exam and oral testing on scenarios. Those two create your score, which places you into a band by percentile. Everyone in a band goes through the process at the same time.

From there, you do a physical fitness test, background investigation and background interview, including a polygraph.

They recruit two classes of 50 each year. They typically get through the 80 percentile band. They typically have 400 to 450 on the list, end up with 100 annually.

They have study session and info sessions with their civil service. They are working on creating a mentorship program through the hiring process based on an LAPD program.

There is also an Explorers program for 14 to 18 year olds.

CPD offers a 100% tuition reimbursement program for Police and Fire. Due in part to that, more than half of their force has a Bachelor's degree, which didn't used to be the case. Columbus State and Franklin University offer credit for CPD training.

Judge Parker asked about Columbus's recruitment podcast. Sgt. Smith-Hughes talked about the "Uncuffed – Real Talk" podcast and how they try to convey authenticity about what the job is.

After the Columbus discussion, there was a recap of the listening sessions on testing and the psychologist and the conversations with Black and female officers.

Chrisondra Goodwine mentioned that she learned that the test designers were not diverse. Also suggested that therapy be offered based off of the psychologists assessments.

The conversation about the diverse officers focused on the belief that they would not say too much that was negative about their experiences since their jobs were important to them. Travis Dunnington noted that the officers all seemed to have in common that they were "natural-born police"

Ofc. Savage talked about her own experience, and how she did not feel that there was systemic discrimination in the department but that there are one-one-one interactions sometimes that feel racially tinged.

- She said she believed that a lot of Black officers were not necessarily interested in rising in the ranks, but liked the jobs where they get to deal with people.
- She also said she thought that sometimes Black officers had the idea that they were discriminated against "placed on them"

After this conversation, the group went through the "buckets" of recommendations that were emerging. They were:

- Dedicated recruitment budget
- Shorten timeline from application to academy
- Address gap from age 18 to 21 in interest in policing
- Address polygraphs
- Address Rule of One

The group suggested that an additional bucket should be establishing goals for hiring, benchmarking how that is going, and creating an action plan and timeline.

Group members were asked to submit other suggestions by email.