



Date: June 1, 2022

To: Chief Reeves

From: Investigator Citta

Subject: Recruitment and Retention

It is no secret recruiting quality people into the profession of law enforcement is more difficult now than maybe at any other time in our history. Agencies across the country are brainstorming to find new techniques and new ways to recruit suitable applicants and retain their officers.

Nationwide, departments are operating at 93% of budgeted capacity (CNN). In 2020-2021, agencies across the country saw a 5% decrease in hiring, an 18% increase in resignations, and a 45% increase in retirements compared to 2019-2020 (PERF). The North Platte Police Department is competing against agencies all over the country, faced with the same small applicant pool and recruiting challenges.

"You do not have to lower your standards to increase the size of the pool." (Graham). We must revamp our approach to recruiting and retaining our valuable current employees. It is possible to attract people whose characteristics and qualities are what the profession demands, integrity, honesty, compassion, active listening, and good communication skills. Applicants with these qualifications exist, and by moving away from the way we've always recruited, we can grow our applicant pool and attract quality people to our profession and our department.

Law enforcement officers have become our own worst enemies in recruiting and promoting our profession. Most in this profession would argue we have the best jobs in



the world, yet due to recent events, many no longer want to see their family and friends go into this profession and serve their communities. In a room of 90 law enforcement officers, only three to four would advocate for their families to enter this profession (Marvel & Fields).

Changing our narrative and culture is where we need to improve recruiting. Every officer in the department needs to become a recruiter. The best recruiter is our patrol officers out in the community, encouraging others to apply. We also need to improve our communication throughout the application process.

The generation of applicants we see now have grown up always having information at the tip of their fingers, and communication is instantaneous. When they have a question, they can almost always access an immediate answer. We need to adapt to what our applicants know.

Recruiting is closely tied to retention; once you attract the right people, you need strategies to keep them in place (Perry). Improving communication with applicants is an easy but crucial first step to creating a positive, long-lasting relationship. According to an article published by Police Chief Magazine, applicants have stated lack of contact with the agency as an obstacle (Langham). As expressed in the article, maintaining rapport shows the department's interest in the applicant and makes the applicant feel they are entering a welcoming workplace.

Maintaining communication is as easy as a quick phone call, text message, or email. The contact can ensure the applicant is prepared for testing, answering any questions the applicant might have about testing or interview days, or just general conversation about how the applicant is doing and how they are feeling about the



process. This contact is an excellent first look for the department into the applicant, their personality, communication skills, and preparedness.

The current generation is also thoughtful in their employment. Millennials appear to have returned to traditional family values and thus, cherish time away from work. Millennials are money-conscious and financially driven (Langham). Being involved in the decision-making process within the department is also essential and attractive to millennials (Langham).

This is an excellent reason why it is so important to have every officer in the department as a recruiter. Applicants want to know the department's benefits and how that will work into their family lives. This is best conveyed by a line officer working the street and providing those details and offering their experiences.

It is crucial with this approach that the department give officers the tools and knowledge about departmental benefits to answer the appropriate questions and have the information for applicants.

By maintaining better communication with our applicants and changing our mindset to having all our officers be recruiters while on the job, we can increase our applicant pool without lower our standards.



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