THE STATE OF POLICE RETENTION, DEVELOPMENT AND RECRUITMENT IN CONNECTICUT



2026

South Central Chiefs of Police Association

The State of Police Retention, Development and Recruitment in Connecticut

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Message

Policing is a people business, done by dedicated officers serving the community. Policing is an integral part of how we maintain order in society and preserve the legal rights of all people.

For several years, the ability of police departments to re-staff with young, qualified officers has been strained. Moreover, a department's ability to keep and develop those officers so that they can become future leaders in the department is now in doubt.

This report presents the findings of a study that examines why these trends are occurring. While the scope of the study is police departments in Connecticut, similar recruitment and retention issues are being reported elsewhere in the country.

Phases One and Two of the study focus on issues pertaining to retention and development. The objective of Phases Three and Four is to learn more about recruitment.

The report is the culmination of over two years of research. It is only one step in an ongoing exploration of why an increasing number of people do not find policing a desirable career option and what police managers can do to address those concerns. It is hoped that you will find the report informative.



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South Central Chiefs of Police Association, Inc.

Acknowledgements

This report is the result of a multi-faceted research effort, including surveys and numerous interviews.

The research team thanks the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and the South Central Chiefs of Police Association for their support of this project. Our appreciation is also extended to the Chiefs of Police and members of the various police departments throughout the State of Connecticut for their time, energy and thought as we studied the complex problem of police officer retention, development and recruitment.

As would be expected in any endeavor of this scope, the study involved many people. Foremost among them were the research assistants who are in the SCCoP office.

Ava Heath assumed the lead role for much of the data analysis and writing. Her work was instrumental in the presentation of this report.

Elizaveta Rozenraukh reviewed drafts of this report and assisted in the editing process.

Jackie Gonzalez performed research on specific issues as they were discovered. Her assistance with the student interviews that comprise Phase Four was particularly helpful.

Patryk Jaroszkiewicz prepared the survey on job satisfaction and job design and established the network through which responses were received and recorded.

Special gratitude is given to Diana Bunton who reviewed various drafts of this study and whose suggestions were most helpful.

It is through the efforts of this team of dedicated people that the study can be provided to the state's law enforcement community.

Executive Summary

In 2010, South Central Chiefs of Police Association (SCCoP) recruited **1,178** people to the job of police officer in the South Central region of Connecticut. In 2025, the agency recruited **45** people. For the period 2006 – 2020, the mean average of applicants for departments in the region was **707** applicants. From 2021-2025, the mean average decreased to **93** applicants.

This trend is not specific to South Central Connecticut. Rather, it is a problem affecting police agencies nationwide. In its report published in 2025, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) found that there has been a **5.16%** decrease in police department staffing across the country (PERF, 2025). Police officers are departing agencies in large numbers, and the same agencies are unable to hire new officers to replace them. Recognizing that this pattern will be difficult to sustain, the SCCoP conducted this research to better understand the recruitment and retention problem and its implications for law enforcement managers.

The research consisted of four phases with data collected for the period 2019-2023. Phase One focused on retention, including data on the number of retirements and resignations as well as strategies that departments were employing to slow down the rate of departures and replace those that did leave. This survey resulted in thirty-two responses from police departments throughout the State of Connecticut.

The Phase Two Survey also centered on retention and was given to thirty of the police departments who completed Phase One. There were 304 usable responses. The objective of this survey was to measure the level of satisfaction that police officers had with their job. Officers were asked what parts of the job were least and most satisfying. The survey also helped identify whether and how the police job could be redesigned to increase job satisfaction, a factor related to job turnover.

The focus of Phases Three and Four was to learn more about how to positively affect police recruitment. The survey for Phase Three was distributed to applicants of the police job. Respondents were asked what factors influenced them in deciding to apply for a police officer position, which factors most concerned them and whether there was a particular experience they had which attracted them to policing.

Phase Four was a series of focus groups conducted at the University of New Haven Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice. Participants were criminal justice majors with a variety of specific concentrations. Students were asked what they were looking for in a job and what parts of policing were attractive or unattractive to them.

A summary of the study findings is shown below.

Phase One

- There were **859** officers who left the departments surveyed in Phase One during the period 2019-2023. Resignations made up **52.1%** of the departures and retirements made up **47.9%** of those leaving. Of the officers who left, there were **210** officers (**24.4%**) who resigned prior to completing five years of service.
- Data from thirty departments in the state revealed that those departments hired **629** officers, of which **276** officers (**43.9%**) were lateral or comparative hires.
- Fifteen departments reported that lateral/comparative hires exceeded one half of the total hires for that department.
- Eight departments reported that the number of officers leaving during 2019-2023 exceeded the number of hires.

Phase Two

- Officers reported that they are generally satisfied with the work that they do.
- The area of least satisfaction was being able to advance their careers.
- When asked about five core characteristics of the police job (variety of skills used; completing identifiable pieces of work; significance of the work; autonomy in decision-making; feedback on performance), the only significant findings were among different ranks and then, only between detective and patrol officers. Detectives reported greater satisfaction for skill variety, task identity and feedback than did patrol officers.

Phase Three

- A significant factor in an applicants' decision to seek the position of police officer was a previous experience that the applicant had with a police officer where the officer showed compassion and professionalism.
- Applicants also reported that their desire to help others in the community was an important factor.

Phase Four

- Criminal justice students said the important factors in a job that they would seek were supporting their personal development, satisfying their work-life balance needs and meeting their salary requirements.
- Students reported that they were interested in a job that was innovative in the use of selected technology, such as drones. However, the students were skeptical about the application of artificial intelligence to policing, believing that it would dehumanize the police service.

The report cites the following promising strategies to improve retention, development and recruitment in police departments:

- **Employee Assistance Programs and Recognition and Award Systems:** Departments responding indicated implementation of these programs were received positively by employees and could help increase retention.

- **Opportunities for Career Development:** Specialized units can help officers feel more satisfied with advancement and improve officer retention.

- **Mentorship Programs:** Although these programs are difficult to implement, this is helpful in retaining officers. Departments have implemented enhanced FTO programs, and trained police supervisors in mentoring.

- **More Flexible Scheduling:** Generation Z prioritizes work life balance and would rather work longer shifts in a row with more days off when possible. This is difficult to implement but can be useful.

- **Meeting with Personnel:** Supervisors should meet with officers on a regular basis to offer feedback, monitor workplace issues and the feelings of personnel.

- **Improvement of Compensation Packages:** Improving benefits and compensation can draw new recruits to an agency and help keep current employees, but it is only one piece of a multi-faceted and interrelated group of strategies to improve police department staffing.

The report concludes with a discussion and recommendations on moving forward. Among the proposals are use of realistic job previews, further development of mentorship programs, establishing paid structured internships, and creating youth academies. The importance of compensation, work-life balance, and wellness are also discussed.

The final recommendation goes directly to police leaders and encourages them to continue to strive to make their organizations great despite the formidable staffing challenges that are present today. The work of Jim Collins in "Good to Great" is discussed, especially as it applies to police departments in this moment. The report concludes with a series of observations about how Collins' principles can be used today to support police leaders as they navigate this uncertain terrain.

Background – Purpose of the Research

In recent years, there has been no issue confronting police department managers that is more impactful on their organizations than the inability to retain, develop, and recruit qualified police officers. This is true in Connecticut and nationwide.

Recognizing this, the South Central Chiefs of Police Association conducted a study of municipal police departments in Connecticut. The purpose of this research was to gather data that would improve understanding of the factors affecting sworn staffing in police departments in Connecticut and to put forth strategies that can be considered to address these issues. The study was done with the assistance of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association.

There is no single answer. Each department must devise and implement its own comprehensive strategy. This study seeks to provide information to assist Chiefs of Police in their decision-making.

Statement of the Problem

According to data provided by the Police Executive Research Forum (2025), sworn staffing in police departments throughout the United States was down **5.16%** from 2020 levels (See Figure 1; PERF, 2025). This change was especially acute in agencies with 250 or more officers (See Figure 2,PERF, 2025).

In its annual follow up survey (2026), PERF provided additional data on police staffing trends. The number of sworn officers has become relatively steady in 2024 and 2025, although it remains considerably below 2020 levels (PERF, 2026). Police staffing increased in 2026 and is now relatively equal to staffing levels in 2022 (PERF, 2026).

In a survey conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (2024), over **70%** of responding agencies stated that it was more difficult to recruit suitable candidates now than it was five years ago. This study found that agencies in the Northeast were more likely to report an increased difficulty (IACP, 2024).

Data collected for the South Central Connecticut region provides further evidence of this trend (See Table 1). For the five-year period 2011 – 2015, the mean average of applicants for departments in the region was **790** applicants. The period of 2021 – 2025 revealed a significant reduction to **93** applicants.

The retention of officers is equally challenging. Many are leaving departments due to normal retirement cycles. A growing problem, however, is officers leaving within five years of employment. According to the IACP survey (2024), respondents indicated that officers are increasingly likely to resign within those initial years. Monetary compensation, lack of opportunity, and quality of life issues, including work-life balance and officer wellness, were among the reasons most often cited.

In his book on the law enforcement vacancy crisis, Whittington (2025) emphasizes the importance of retention. While acknowledging that money plays an important role in retaining officers, other factors are also important, such as burnout, feeling that the community

underappreciates the work that officers do, feeling distrusted by the community and having concerns over individual wellness.

Retention is directly related to developing officers in a manner that meets both individual and organizational goals. As Whittington states,

> While recruitment grabs headlines and drives social media campaigns, retention ensures agencies maintain experienced officers who embody institutional knowledge, foster community trust, and mentor new recruits. Retaining officers goes beyond simply filling positions and holding on to officers; it's about cultivating an environment that encourages long term commitment, professional satisfaction and loyalty (p.26).

By better understanding police officer retention, development and recruitment in departments in Connecticut, police managers will be able to devise and implement more effective strategies to counteract these negative trends.

FIGURE 1

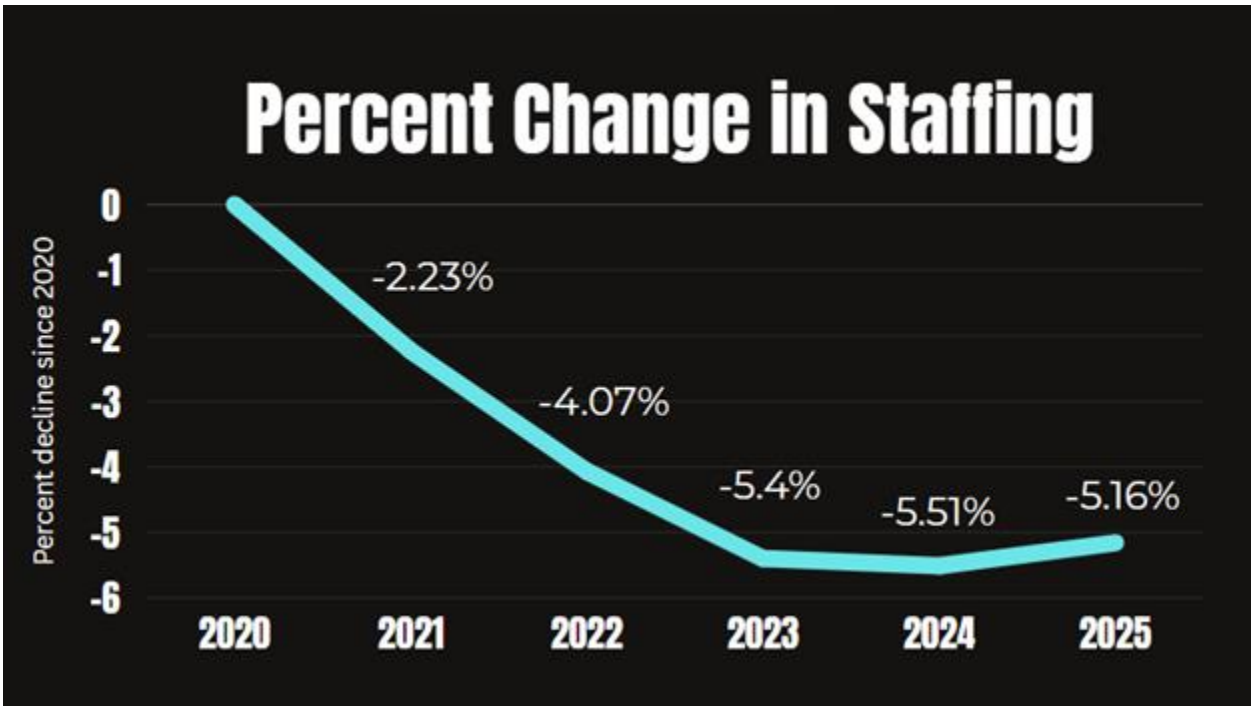

FIGURE 2

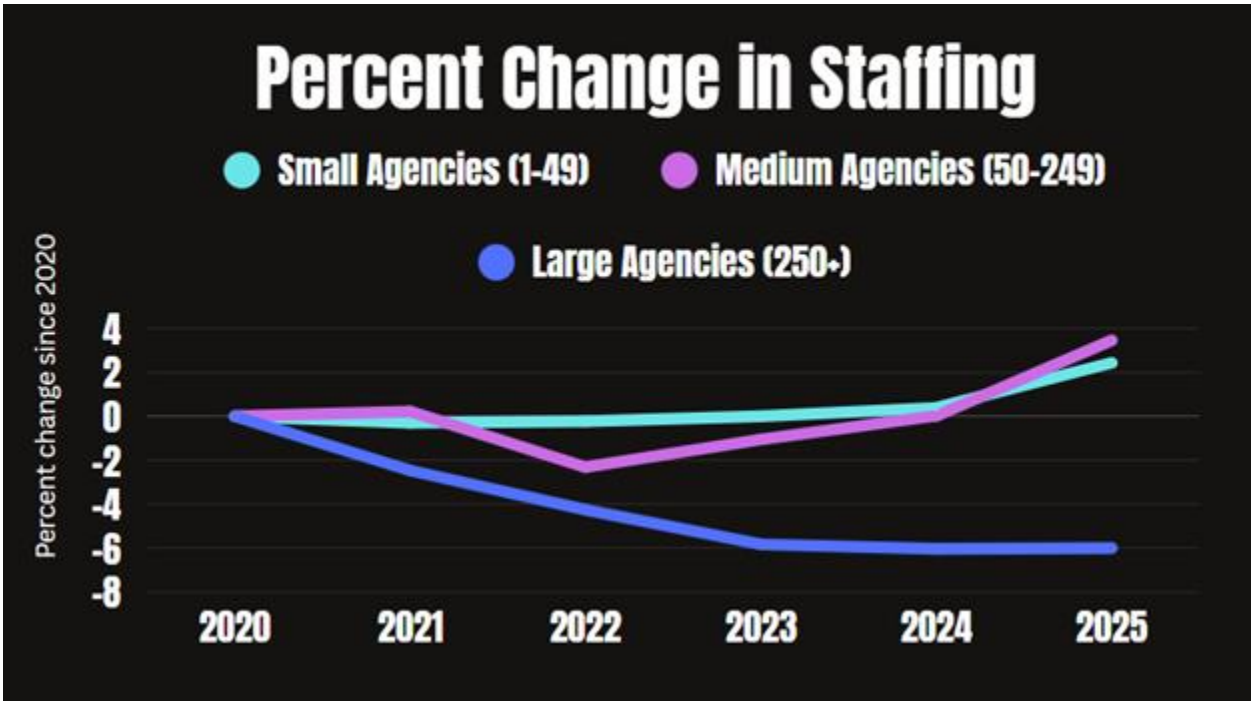

TABLE 1

SOUTH CENTRAL CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION, INC.
RECRUITMENT DATA
2005-2025

2006	687
2007	668
2008	657
2009	750
2010	1178
2011	882
2012	985
2013	848
2014	644
2015	593
2016	863
2017	688
2018	514
2019	317
2020	344
2021	76
2022	179
2023	115
2024	52
2025	45

Methodology

The study was conducted in four phases. Each had its own set of research questions and its own survey instrument (See Appendices A - F).

Phase 1: Sworn Staffing in Connecticut 2019-2023

- What is the status of the police departments in Connecticut with respect to sworn staffing?
- How many officers resigned? Retired? Were hired?
- How many hires were lateral entries?
- What strategies has the department employed with respect to retention and developing personnel?

Phase 2: Police Officer Retention – The Role of Job Satisfaction and Work Redesign

- What parts of the job do officers find most satisfying? Least satisfying?
- In what ways can the job of police officer be redesigned to increase worker motivation and satisfaction, thereby decreasing the likelihood of turnover?

Phase 3: Factors Affecting the Decision to Apply

- What are the factors affecting the decision to apply to become a police officer? Which factors had the most influence? Which caused the most concern?
- Was there one event in the applicant's life that influenced his or her decision to apply? If so, describe that event.

Phase 4: Feelings of College Students Regarding Careers in Law Enforcement

- Students studying Criminal Justice – What are they seeking in a career? What are their desires, concerns, aspirations, and expectations for working?
- Are there other strategies to attract these students to policing? What can employers do to create workplaces that better fit the needs of Millennial and Generation Z workers?

In order to increase the explanatory value of the research, qualitative methods were used to supplement the data analysis. This was done to minimize the risk of erroneous conclusions and to provide greater context and insight for police managers.

Phase One - Findings

A survey was distributed to all departments in the South Central Connecticut Region as well as police departments elsewhere in Connecticut with whom the office has closely worked (See Appendix A).

There were 44 surveys distributed. The number of respondents was **32** (**72.7%**). There were sixteen departments from South Central and sixteen from other regions. The breakdowns of departments responding are provided in Appendix B.

The size of the departments responding was:

Less Than 40 Police Officers	11
Between 40 – 75 Police Officers	12
Between 75 – 150 Police Officers	6
More Than 150 Sworn Officers	3

Resignations and Retirements

The survey first asked respondents to report the number of resignations and retirements that the department experienced between 2019-2023. Table 2 provides those results.

TABLE 2

Number of Resignations and Retirements

2019 – 2023

	Count	Percent
Total Retirements	412 Officers	47.9%
Total Resignations	447 Officers	52.1%
Total Police Officer Departures Reported from Responding Departments	859 Officers	100%

N = 32

Table 3 reports officers' tenure at the time of departure. Almost one quarter of the officers who departed did not attain five years on the job.

TABLE 3

Tenure at Time of Departure

Departures < 5 Years Tenure	210 Officers	24.4%
Departures 5 – 20 Years Tenure	308 Officers	35.9%
Departures > 20 Years Tenure	334 Officers	38.9%
Departures with Tenure Not Provided	7 Officers	0.8%
Total	859 Officers	100%

N = 32

Most Cited Reasons for Resigning (Rank Order):

1. Move to Another Law Enforcement Agency
2. Seek Career Outside Law Enforcement
3. Family, Personal, Relocating
4. Better Retirement Plan
5. Leaving Workforce Completely
6. Negative Public Image of Policing
7. Concern About Health and Wellness
8. Seek Better Work-Life Balance

Most Cited Reasons for Retiring (Rank Order):

1. Seek Career Outside Law Enforcement
2. Move to Another Law Enforcement Agency
3. Other Reason

Strategies Being Employed to Retain Officers

The survey presented several strategies that previous reports have suggested may have a positive impact on employee retention (PERF, 2019; PERF, 2023). Participants were asked if they have implemented any of these strategies and, if so, to offer a brief description. The responses are given in descending order; programs with the greatest number of positive responses to the least positive responses.

- **Employee Assistance:** Twenty-nine departments have an EAP in place through the municipality or an outside vendor. The remaining three departments stated that the program was not applicable.

- **Recognition and Award Systems:** There were twenty-nine departments who reported that they have an award system in place with most having ceremonies to present awards on an annual basis. Many also have an awards committee to recognize officer achievement. There were three departments who said that no award system exists in their department.

- **Officer Input – Meetings With Personnel:** There were twenty-nine departments that reported having regular meetings with staff where workplace issues were discussed. Most also reported an open-door policy for personnel. Officer input is highly encouraged. There were three departments that stated that this strategy was not applicable.

- **Opportunities for Career Development:** Of the respondents, twenty-nine reported having opportunities for career development, including specialized units. The number and type of specialized units was largely correlated with the size of the department. Low staffing is affecting the ability of departments to maintain these specialized units. There were three departments who indicated that this program was not applicable.

- **Officer Health and Wellness Programs:** There were twenty-eight departments that reported having some form of health and wellness program. Some partner with the community to provide enhanced services. Many have peer support teams. Departments also have various arrangements with mental health professionals, workout facilities and other resources that support wellness. There were four respondents who reported that a formal health program was not applicable for their departments.

- **Monetary Incentives:** There were twenty-one departments who responded that they have offered recent monetary incentives to their officers. This has taken the form of college incentives or tuition reimbursement. Some departments that have defined contribution plans reported strengthening the town's financial match.

  Improvements in the form of contractual raises, increased longevity pay, shift differentials or other compensation were reported by nine departments. For some, this was done in addition to the monetary enhancements described above. There were two departments who reported that they were in negotiations with their respective unions for improvements but that an agreement had not been reached.

- **Mentoring Personnel:** Some departments reported using mentoring strategies for personnel (supervisors trained in mentoring, enhanced FTO programs, programs aimed at career development). There were five who indicated that this program was formally organized and six who stated that this was done informally. Of the respondents, twenty-one said that a mentorship program did not apply to their departments.

- **Flexible Work Hours:** There were eight departments who were able to change the work schedule, or who were just finishing negotiations with their unions to bring this about. The object was to improve work time flexibility; however, this has proven to be difficult. Options included implementation of 4/2 or 5/3 schedules. Many reported options are limited due to collective bargaining agreements and/or resistance encountered in negotiations. There were twenty-four departments who stated that this initiative was not applicable.

The responding departments reported that **912** officers were hired during the period 2019-2023 (See Table 4).

Thirty departments provided data on the number of lateral hires and comparative hires. Two departments were unable to provide that data.

Of the departments that did provide data on lateral and comparative entry, there were **629** total hires, of which **276** officers (**43.9%**) were either hired as lateral or comparative entries. There were fifteen departments where lateral/comparative hires exceeded one half of total hires.

While departments spent a great deal of time and energy recruiting, screening and hiring police officer candidates, for many, they could not compensate for the number of departing officers. Eight departments reported that the number of officers leaving exceeded the number of hires for the five-year period.

TABLE 4

Number of Officers Hired

2019 – 2023

	Count	*Percent*
Total Police Officers Hired (N=32)	912 Officers	-
Total Lateral Hires (N=30)	211 Officers	23.1%
Total Comparative Hires (N=30)	65 Officers	7.1%
Data Not Provided (N=2)	-	-
Total Hires – Department Providing Full Data (N=30)	629 Officers	-
Total Lateral and Comparative Hires of Departments Providing Full Data (N=30)	276 Officers	43.9%
Number of Departments Where Lateral and Comparative Hires Exceeded One Half of Total Hires (N=30)	15 Departments	-
Number of Departments Where Departures Exceeded Hires (N=30)	8 Departments	-

Summary of Findings

The data for this survey reveal that **52.1%** of sworn personnel who left the department during 2019-2023 resigned and **47.9%** retired.

Further, **24.4%** of personnel who left had less than five years of service with their department and **35.9%** had five to twenty years of service. It seems likely that a substantial number of officers from that group also resigned.

The most cited reasons for departing a police department, whether through resignation or through retirement, were to move to another law enforcement agency or to change careers.

Departments in this sample have implemented several different approaches as described in national reports to help retain officers. These efforts have met with varying degrees of success. The most difficult initiatives to implement have been formal mentoring programs and establishing a more flexible work schedule.

Of the thirty-two departments responding, thirty provided data on the number of lateral and comparative hires for their departments. The number of lateral and comparative hires comprised **43.4%** of total hires for those thirty departments.

There were fifteen departments where lateral and comparative hires exceeded one half of total hires. In eight departments, the number of departing officers exceeded the number of officers hired for the five-year period.

Discussion

It seems apparent that maintaining an adequate sworn workforce remains a considerable challenge for many police departments in the state. These retention issues, when combined with the myriad of recruitment issues that departments are facing, are likely to make staffing a critical issue for the foreseeable future.

What are the most frequently used practices to improve retention and career development? Police departments in this sample reported implementing several practices that larger surveys found to be promising, including employee assistance programs, wellness programs and recognition and reward systems. Ongoing meetings with personnel to monitor workplace issues and personnel feelings also had widespread usage. These practices show promise for improving retention.

Police departments in this sample have also used various specialized units to enhance service and increase officer career development. Among these are canine units, school resource officers, regional task forces, and specialized investigative units. The number and type of units are dependent on the size of the department and the nature of the community's criminal activity and service needs. The ability to assign personnel to a specialized unit is dependent on overall organizational staffing.

All departments in the sample reported improving their monetary packages for sworn officers or to be in negotiations to that end. Contractual raises, longevity pay, shift differentials, college incentives and retirement enhancements were all reported. It appears likely that these incentives will have to be continued.

Two retention strategies found to be most difficult to implement were mentoring programs and flexible work hours. Effective mentoring by first line supervisors may be especially important to help retain officers.

Only **25%** of respondents indicated that they have been able to bring about some type of schedule modification to increase work time flexibility. The reason for lack of progress in this area is often reluctance to modify the labor contract.

Some of the most concerning findings are related to the hiring of officers. This survey provides evidence that departments continue to struggle to maintain adequate sworn staffing, and that lateral or comparative officers are increasingly being relied on for staffing. There were fifteen departments that indicated that lateral or comparative officers made up most of their hires for the five-year period.

Eight departments, or one quarter of the sample, reported that the number of officers who left their departments exceeded the number of officers who were hired. Despite continuing efforts to recruit new officers, they have less sworn staff in 2023 than in 2019. Moving forward, this trajectory will likely become unsustainable.

Importance of Communication

Retention is a cornerstone of having a productive workforce, characterized by leadership development and achieving the mission of the organization. An important part of a manager's job is to work with employees to identify how the job can be formed to motivate and satisfy the employee while still attaining organizational objectives.

Schermerhorn suggests that managers continuously work with people to achieve the purpose of the organization (Schermerhorn et al.,1997). They must be good communicators.

A more recent study amplifies the importance of communicating. In 2019, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police published a study entitled "What's the Best Way to Retain Employees?". Some of the recommendations are establishing a positive and healthy work environment that fosters respect; provide pathways to learn and grow; develop trust through open and honest communication; listen to the needs of employees; and being able to communicate to staff the value of their work and how it is linked to the mission of the organization (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2019).

Developing a rapport with employees is essential. Their needs, perspectives and attitudes must be closely monitored and understood. Managers should also recognize that those needs,

perspectives and attitudes will likely change over time and experience. Continuous communication and outreach are imperative.

Historically, one of the most common ways to learn about employee feelings about the job is the exit interview (See Appendix C). While the exit interview can provide useful information, it is often untimely as the employee is already committed to leaving. The questions provided in Appendix C were recently published by the Society of Human Resource Management.

Two methods currently being explored to assess employee fit and promote development and growth are mentorship and career opportunities. Mentorship occurs when one worker offers guidance to another worker, usually of lesser tenure. Establishing a mentorship program is believed to be a promising way to network officers, promote inclusion and foster learning, all of which may act to reduce turnover.

Conversations between managers and employees about the employee's career goals, and how those goals can be aligned with organizational objectives, show similar promise but have not been tested in a police work environment. Each of these methods may help foster commitment to the work and, as a result, help to reduce turnover.

Maintaining strong lines of communication, therefore, is vital to building relationships that can support retention. While this has been empirically studied in other work sectors, more research in policing is needed.

Phase Two - Findings

Rationale

The data from the survey on sworn staffing in Connecticut provide evidence that maintaining a workforce in local police departments that can meet the needs of the community presents significant challenges. Despite the efforts to recruit, train new personnel, and integrate them into the organization, the data reveal that one quarter of those officers leave the department before reaching five years of service. It also seems likely that a substantial number of additional officers are leaving at some point prior to completing twenty years of service.

Replacing officers has become an equally formidable task. The number of lateral and comparative hires comprised **43.4%** of total hires. That is, over **40%** of the persons hired by the departments participating in the survey came from another department. Further, a quarter of the responding departments reported they had less sworn officers in 2024 than they had in 2019.

These findings strongly suggest that more must be learned about how to support officers so they will remain in the department, grow in the job and be productive. One area of inquiry is job satisfaction, or the degree to which one has positive or negative feelings about his or her job (Schermerhorn et al., 1997).

Importance of Having Employees Feel Satisfied with Work

Job satisfaction is a critical element for a person to stay with an organization and to perform well in that job. Job satisfaction affects how people behave at work. These employees who have lower levels of job satisfaction are more likely to be absent from work more often, be less productive and be more likely to leave an organization (Schermerhorn et al., 1997).

When greater turnover of staff exists, more resources (money, time, energy, thought) must be committed to replacing that staff. Costs include recruiting, screening, selecting, training, and socializing new personnel into the organization. Employees leaving also negatively affect institutional knowledge and productivity. While some of these costs may be tempered by innovation and new ideas that may come with replacement workers, it seems evident that high turnover can have a detrimental impact on police organizations.

Applying Extrinsic and Intrinsic Rewards and Their Effect on Behavior at Work

The appropriate allocation of rewards can affect satisfaction as well as performance. Extrinsic rewards are generally given to the employee by the organization. Retirement benefits, organizational policies, or other work conditions that may be valued by the employee may also be considered extrinsic rewards. A drawback to extrinsic rewards is that their effect may be short term.

Intrinsic rewards are also positively valued by the employee but are derived from the work itself. The worker performs the task and receives the reward from doing so. Examples are feelings of achievement, gaining confidence by making your own decisions and attaining personal growth from successfully completing the task. The reward is self-provided; it does not come from an external source. Volunteerism often has this type of reward system. Intrinsic rewards are generally more enduring because they are based on a fundamental value of the worker.

The degree that the employee will become satisfied by the reward systems depends on which extrinsic and intrinsic rewards the person values and on the extent to which these rewards can be provided by the organization or by task performance. An objective of managing is to strive to bring the right blend for each worker while allowing for the mission of the organization to be accomplished.

Redesigning a Job to Improve Motivation, Performance, and Satisfaction: Job Diagnosis and Job Enrichment

While there are several approaches to redesigning a job, enrichment offers the most promise. This approach attempts to build intrinsic motivating factors into work, thereby supporting the person's motivation to do better work (Herzberg et al., 1959). By building responsibility, achievement, autonomy, and growth into work, it is more likely that an employee's needs will be met and less likely that the employee will seek work elsewhere. One pre-condition: The probability of successful job enrichment increases when compensation is competitive and extrinsic rewards are present.

Job enrichment may not apply evenly to all types of work or all job performance and job satisfaction issues. Rather, a more exact prescription must be formulated. This is best done through a diagnostic approach. Hackman and Oldham (1980) developed the job characteristics model for use by managers and consultants to diagnose a job setting and evaluate the potential to be enriched successfully. The model has been found to be valuable in previous research on police personnel (Lurigio and Rosenbaum, 1994).

There are five core characteristics that are important to job design. A job that is high in the core characteristics is said to be enriched.

- **Skill Variety:** The degree to which the job requires the employee to perform different activities and to use different skill sets.
- **Task Identity:** The degree to which the job requires completion of an identifiable piece of work and allows the employee to achieve visible results.
- **Task Significance:** The degree to which the job is important and involves a meaningful contribution to the organization or to society in general.
- **Autonomy:** The degree to which the job gives the employee independence and discretion in carrying out work.
- **Job Feedback:** The degree to which performing work activities provides direct and clear information to the employee about how well the job has been done.

Managers should look at the responses for each core characteristic and assess what changes could be made to the job to increase how employees feel about the core characteristics. Having employees feel better about the core characteristics will improve three psychological states: the experienced meaningfulness of the work; the experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work; and the knowledge of the actual results of the work.

Improvement of these three psychological states will lead to four work outcomes that are important to the worker and the organization: higher intrinsic work motivation; higher quality of work performed; higher satisfaction with the job; and reduced absenteeism and job turnover. Studying enrichment of the job of police officer by using the job characteristics model can provide important information to department managers in trying to identify strategies to address police retention.

The job characteristics model seeks to provide a diagnostic tool for determining the enrichment potential of the job. Moreover, it provides a blueprint for how the work re-design can be sustained. Hackman and Oldham developed the motivating potential score (MPS) to measure the combined effect of the core characteristics in creating motivating potential for the job and bringing about the four important work outcomes. The calculation of the MPS is as follows:

$$\text{MPS} = \left(\frac{Skill\ Variety + Task\ Identity + Task\ Significance}{3} \right) \text{x Autonomy x Feedback}$$

The goal for the job characteristics model is to achieve an optimal match of core characteristics and individual needs. People who have the talent to perform an enriched job will experience more positive feelings while those that do not possess the requisite capabilities will not experience those feelings. The capabilities include growth need strength, having the knowledge and skill to perform an enriched job, and contextual satisfaction, or satisfaction with salary, work life balance, supervision and working conditions. Persons who have positive feelings in these areas are likely to do better with enriched jobs.

The job characteristics model has been tested in a variety of professions and settings and found to be useful. The research further suggests that these effects are more prevalent with workers who have high growth needs. A limitation to job characteristics theory is that data is usually collected through the perceptions of the individual, rather than by objective or independent observation.

Hackman and Oldham found that important work outcomes, including increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover, can be achieved when employees feel better about core job characteristics. Johnson (2012) found support for this in his study of police officer job satisfaction.

For the next phase of this study, a second survey instrument was prepared that focused on gathering data on police officer job satisfaction, job enrichment and job characteristics. The findings of this survey provide further guidance to police managers about redesigning and enriching the job of police officer.

The survey was distributed to municipal police departments throughout Connecticut (N=33). Thirty of the departments participated in the first survey. The remaining three departments were added by the research team based on previous discussions with department personnel.

Based on the data from the State of Connecticut Office of Legislative Research, the departments surveyed had a total of **2,816** officers (Pinho, 2023). The data were collected over several weeks during the late spring of 2025. All responses were anonymous; neither the name of the officer nor the name of the department were requested.

The survey instrument had 60 questions. The data is presented according to demographic variables, job satisfaction variables, job task variables and organizational variables.

Findings

Demographic Variables

The demographic information is comprised of gender, racial/ethnic background, age and education (see Table 5).

With respect to age, the data suggest that the police work force is generally older with **86.3%** responding officers being between 30 and 60 years of age. This finding may be related to the greater reliance on lateral and comparative officers.

The data regarding higher education also suggests a shift. There were **88.5%** of respondents who reported having attended college. Those that graduated from college comprised **60.9%** of the responding officers. The officers in the sample had a strong educational background.

Table 6 presents the data for years in policing, present assignment and present rank. Most of the officers in the sample had served 5-20 years in policing (**57.0%**). There were **28.8%** of respondents who stated they had been police officers for more than 20 years with the remainder (**14.2%**) having served less than 5 years.

Being assigned to the Patrol Division was the most common choice in the sample (**59.9%**). Persons assigned to the Detective Division made up **16.6%** of respondents. The balance of officers in the survey (**24.5%**) came from a range of specialized divisions and units.

With respect to rank, **44.7%** were patrol officers and **13.8%** were detectives. Among those who responded who were supervisors, **10.2%** were corporals, **1.3%** were sergeants and **23.4%** were lieutenants. It is unclear why the number of lieutenants was significantly greater than the number of first line supervisors. Command and administrative personnel comprised **6.6%** of persons responding.

Job Satisfaction Variables

Multiple questionnaire items were used to measure officers' satisfaction with five job facets: achievement, growth, advancement, autonomy, and responsibility. A sixth set of measurements was utilized for overall job satisfaction. The data for each of these facets is presented in Table 7.

To examine the job satisfaction variables more closely, a similar table has been produced that reveals the number and percentage of respondents who gave the highest rating for each survey item. (See Table 8).

Of these dimensions, the variable with the lowest level of satisfaction is advancement. Police officers appear to be more dissatisfied with opportunities for advancement than with any other job satisfaction variable. According to the responses regarding overall satisfaction, however, officers reported general satisfaction with the work they do.

Job Core Characteristics

As stated earlier in this section, employees' feelings about job core characteristics are related to three important psychological states that can bring about improved job motivation and job satisfaction: experienced meaningfulness of work; experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work; and knowledge of the actual results of the work. Improvement in these results is related to reduced absenteeism and job turnover.

Table 9 provides a comparison of the core characteristic scores for this sample with those of a sample of professionals. The norm scores for professionals were obtained from 6,930 employees representing a variety of jobs from 56 organizations throughout the United States (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, P.316).

The data reveal that the core characteristic scores for the target group are not significantly lower than the mean scores for the core characteristics for the norm group. However, the motivating potential score (MPS) for this sample of police officers is substantially lower than the norm group (norm group – 154; target group – 96). The MPS statistic is designed to measure the overall potential of a job to support internal work motivation. Hackman and Oldham (1980 p. 316) state that the job diagnostic survey scores of the target group that are within one standard deviation unit of the norm group suggest an insignificant difference between the two scores. All of the core characteristic scores for this study fell within one standard deviation unit. Thus, although no single job characteristic is significantly lower than the norm, the data suggests that the overall motivating potential for the police job is not strong.

The researchers also explored how rank and tenure affect officers' feelings for job core characteristics. Table 10 and 11 examine the core characteristics for tenure in the department and in policing respectively. There were no statistically significant differences found for any of the core characteristics.

Rank did have a statistically significant effect on skill variety, task identity, and feedback. The significance was between patrol officers and detectives. Detectives are much more satisfied with these core characteristics when compared to patrol officers. This can be attributed to the fact that detectives are more likely to see a task from beginning to end while patrol officers often do not. According to this data, tenure has no effect on officers' feelings about the core characteristics of the police job. Rank has only a moderate effect and then only between detectives and patrol officers.

TABLE 5

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION *

Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Gender		
Male	274	90.1
Female	30	9.9
Racial/Ethnic Background		
White	255	86.1
Black	13	4.4
Hispanic	21	7.1
Asian	3	1.0
Native American	1	.3
Identify with more than one	3	1.0
Age		
20	32	10.7
30	92	30.9
40	96	32.2
50	69	23.2
60	9	3.0
Education		
High School or Equivalent	35	11.5
Some College	84	27.6
College Graduate	127	41.8
Post Graduate Study	58	19.1

* N = 304

TABLE 6

RESPONDENT ORGINZATIONAL INFORMATION *

Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Years in Policing		
Less than 5 Years	43	14.2
5-20 Years	172	57.0
More than 20 Years	87	28.8
Present Assignment		
Patrol Division	181	59.9
Traffic Division	8	2.6
Detective Division	50	16.6
Specialized Investigative Division	9	3.0
Communications	2	.7
Professional Standards	15	5.0
Records/Information Systems	1	.3
Other	36	11.9
Present Rank		
Patrol Officer	136	44.7
Detective	42	13.8
Corporal	31	10.2
Sergeant	4	1.3
Lieutenant	71	23.4
Command/Admin	20	6.6

* N = 304

TABLE 7

MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

FOR THE JOB SATISFACTION ITEMS *

Variable	*Survey Item*	*Description +*	*Mean ++*	*S.D.*
Satisfaction with Achievement	9	Accomplishment I Get From Job	3.18	1.271
	29	Feeling of Accomplishment From Job	4.40**	1.770
Satisfaction with Growth	2	Make Use of My Abilities	3.39	1.206
	8	Try Own Methods of Doing Job	3.35	1.179
	28	Amount of Development From Job	4.40**	1.693
	31	Amount of Challenge in Job	4.81**	1.435
Satisfaction with Advancement	4	Advancement On This Job	3.04	1.250
Satisfaction with Autonomy	3	Make Decisions On My Own	3.64	1.092
	6	Freedom to Use Judgement	3.57	1.124
	30	Independent thought and Action in Job	4.72**	1.624
Satisfaction with Responsibility	1	Responsible For Planning My Work	3.51	1.031
	5	Responsible For The Work Of Others	3.22	1.057
	7	Responsibility Of My Job	3.58	1.072
Overall Satisfaction	25	I Am Satisfied With The Job	4.23**	1.961
	26	I Often Think Of Quitting Job	3.54***	2.099
	27	I Am Satisfied With Work I Do	4.74**	1.833

*N = 304

** Items Measured On A Seven-Point Scale. All Other Items Were Measured On A Five-Point Scale.

*** For Item 26, Reverse Scoring Was Used

+ Description For All Items Has Been Paraphrased

++ For Individual Variable Scales 1 = Most Dissatisfied

For Overall Satisfaction Scale 1 = Disagree Strongly

TABLE 8

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO CHOSE

THE HIGHEST CATEGORIES FOR THE JOB SATISFACTION ITEMS * ++

Variable	*Survey Item*	*Description +*	*Number Highest Categories*	*Percentage Highest Categories*
Satisfaction with Achievement	9	Accomplishment I Get From Job	142	46.7
	29	Feeling of Accomplishment From Job	170**	56.0
Satisfaction with Growth	2	Make Use of My Abilities	175	57.5
	8	Try Own Methods of Doing Job	158	52.0
	28	Amount of Development From Job	161**	53.0
	31	Amount of Challenge in Job	185**	60.9
Satisfaction with Advancement	4	Advancement On This Job	126	41.5
Satisfaction with Autonomy	3	Make Decisions On My Own	202	66.5
	6	Freedom to Use Judgement	194	63.8
	30	Independent thought and Action in Job	198**	65.2
Satisfaction with Responsibility	1	Responsible For Planning My Work	167	54.9
	5	Responsible For The Work Of Others	121	39.8
	7	Responsibility Of My Job	194	63.8
Overall Satisfaction	25	I Am Satisfied With The Job	160**	52.6
	26	I Often Think Of Quitting Job	119***	39.2
	27	I Am Satisfied With Work I Do	198**	65.2

*N = 304

** Items Measured On A Seven-Point Scale. All Other Items Were Measured On A Five-Point Scale.

*** For Item 26, Reverse Scoring Was Used

+ Description Of Items has been paraphrased.

++ For Individual Variables, Highest Categories Are All Levels of Satisfaction.

For Overall Satisfaction, Highest Categories Are All Levels of Agreement for Items 25 and 27 and All Levels of Disagreement for Item 26.

TABLE 9

Core Characteristic	*Professional Norm*	*Service Norm*	*CT Police 2025*	*Standard Deviation*
Skill Variety	5.4	5.0	4.72	1.713
Task Identity	5.1	4.7	4.90	1.572
Task Significance	5.6	5.7	5.49	1.605
Autonomy	5.4	5.0	4.59	1.694
Feedback	5.1	5.1	4.14	1.615
Motivating Potential Score	154	152	96	

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS FOR JOB CORE CHARACTERISTICS*

* Scores within one standard deviation unit of the norm group do not show a significant difference (Hackman and Oldham, 1980).

TABLE 10

TENURE IN DEPARTMENT BY CORE CHARACTERISTIC

Core Characteristic	*Survey Item*	*Tenure*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*F Value*
Skill Variety	Variety in Job	Less than 5 Years	4.48	1.719	1.243
		5 – 15 Years	4.59	1.798	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.20	1.666	
	Use Complex Skills	Less Than 5 Years	5.10	1.325	.751
		5 – 15 Years	5.10	1.629	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.84	1.659	
	Job is Simple and Repetitive	Less than 5 Years	3.84	1.864	.912
		5 – 15 Years	3.44	1.851	
		Greater than 15 Years	3.63	1.921	
Task Identity	Identifiable Piece of Work	Less than 5 Years	4.13	1.708	1.831
		5 – 15 Years	4.61	1.582	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.56	1.656	
	Finish Piece of Work	Less than 5 Years	5.11	1.484	.287
		5 – 15 Years	5.11	1.596	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.95	1.632	
	Do Not Do Entire Piece of Work	Less than 5 Years	3.10	1.375	.194
		5 – 15 Years	3.01	1.562	
		Greater than 15 Years	2.94	1.542	
Task Significance	How Significant is the Job	Less than 5 Years	5.41	1.687	1.389
		5 – 15 Years	5.31	1.609	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.98	1.778	
	People Affected by Work	Less than 5 Years	5.69	1.272	1.490
		5 – 15 Years	5.72	1.406	
		Greater than 15 Years	5.38	1.576	
	Not Significant in Broader Scheme	Less than 5 Years	2.72	1.743	.482
		5 – 15 Years	2.45	1.688	
		Greater than 15 Years	2.52	1.723	
Autonomy	Autonomy in Job	Less than 5 Years	3.87	1.708	.509
		5 – 15 Years	4.13	1.601	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.00	1.625	
	Denies Initiative	Less than 5 Years	3.61	1.706	2.257
		5 – 15 Years	3.05	1.573	
		Greater than 15 Years	3.24	1.696	
	Independence Doing Work	Less than 5 Years	4.62	1.614	.217
		5 – 15 Years	4.47	1.716	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.44	1.847	
Feedback	Feedback From Work Itself	Less than 5 Years	3.59	1.616	.037
		5 – 15 Years	3.61	1.582	
		Greater than 15 Years	3.66	1.557	
	Job Tells Me How I Am Doing	Less than 5 Years	4.28	1.380	.741
		5 – 15 Years	4.05	1.637	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.30	1.697	
	Few Clues About How I Am Doing	Less than 5 Years	4.13	1.431	2.278
		5 – 15 Years	3.71	1.767	
		Greater than 15 Years	3.52	1.793	

N = 304

* = Statistically Significant

TABLE 11

TENURE IN POLICING BY CORE CHARACTERISTIC

Core Characteristic	*Survey Item*	*Tenure*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*F Value*
Skill Variety	Variety in Job	Less than 5 Years	4.67	1.614	1.021
		5 – 15 Years	4.50	1.829	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.26	1.689	
	Use Complex Skills	Less Than 5 Years	5.28	1.260	.874
		5 – 15 Years	5.02	1.654	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.90	1.597	
	Job is Simple and Repetitive	Less than 5 Years	3.67	1.728	.072
		5 – 15 Years	3.55	1.909	
		Greater than 15 Years	3.61	1.918	
Task Identity	Identifiable Piece of Work	Less than 5 Years	4.53	1.594	.453
		5 – 15 Years	4.36	1.604	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.57	1.711	
	Finish Piece of Work	Less than 5 Years	5.23	1.493	.355
		5 – 15 Years	5.06	1.618	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.99	1.578	
	Do Not Do Entire Piece of Work	Less than 5 Years	3.09	1.324	.235
		5 – 15 Years	3.05	1.544	
		Greater than 15 Years	2.93	1.551	
Task Significance	How Significant is the Job	Less than 5 Years	5.70	1.489	2.095
		5 – 15 Years	5.15	1.726	
		Greater than 15 Years	5.10	1.706	
	People Affected by Work	Less than 5 Years	5.84	1.153	1.355
		5 – 15 Years	5.66	1.453	
		Greater than 15 Years	5.44	1.519	
	Not Significant in Broader Scheme	Less than 5 Years	2.47	1.638	.473
		5 – 15 Years	2.66	1.780	
		Greater than 15 Years	2.45	1.670	
Autonomy	Autonomy in Job	Less than 5 Years	4.44	1.548	1.966
		5 – 15 Years	3.86	1.599	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.02	1.685	
	Denies Initiative	Less than 5 Years	3.19	1.607	.062
		5 – 15 Years	3.23	1.646	
		Greater than 15 Years	3.29	1.699	
	Independence Doing Work*	Less than 5 Years	5.09	1.250	3.134
		5 – 15 Years	4.36	1.728	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.40	1.866	
Feedback	Feedback From Work Itself	Less than 5 Years	3.98	1.535	1.446
		5 – 15 Years	3.50	1.610	
		Greater than 15 Years	3.60	1.550	
	Job Tells Me How I Am Doing	Less than 5 Years	4.53	1.351	2.020
		5 – 15 Years	3.98	1.590	
		Greater than 15 Years	4.26	1.683	
	Few Clues About How I Am Doing	Less than 5 Years	4.00	1.480	.619
		5 – 15 Years	3.75	1.727	
		Greater than 15 Years	3.65	1.786	

N = 304

* = Statistically Significant

Organizational Variables

The survey also asked officers about their feelings regarding two organizational variables: schedule and mentorship.

Schedule was included because it is one factor in achieving a work-life balance. Schedules with more days off and more flexibility may contribute to improving work-life balance.

Items 57 and 58 of the survey instrument requested information on officers' work schedule. More than half (**57.2%**) reported working a "five on, two off" schedule. The "five on, three off" work schedule is worked by **25%** of survey participants and **17.8%** of respondents have the "four on, two off" schedule.

Officers were also asked to identify change in work schedule that would increase their job satisfaction. Just under half (**49.3%**) indicated that they were satisfied with their present work schedule. Approximately one quarter of respondents (**25.4%**) said that changing schedules to either the "five on, three off" schedule or the "four on, two off" schedule would be more satisfying for them. The final group of respondents (**25.3%**) preferred working a longer day with additional days off.

Mentorship is also thought to be an important factor. Providing guidance to mentees may help to make work more satisfying and meaningful, which will contribute to reduced turnover.

The survey asked officers if they had a mentor during their careers. Almost half (**45.4%**) answered that they had received guidance from a mentor. The remaining officers (**54.6%**) had not been mentored.

When asked to describe their experience with a mentor, slightly under one quarter of respondents (**23.0%**) stated it made them feel good to have a partner to help navigate their career. An additional **17.6%** said that the mentoring relationship was a great experience and that both persons learned and grew in their work.

The third choice, that the relationship was valuable but that both parties grew apart and the mentorship dissolved, was selected by **5.4%** of participants. An additional **2.4%** of those responding reported having had a mentor but that the relationship was of little value and that they rely on their own judgement. The remainder of the respondents (**51.7%**) indicated that mentorship was not applicable to them in their police career.

Several persons who completed the survey provided additional comments for the mentoring questions.

- "My mentor at my previous department helped me navigate my career and pushed me to use my talents and skills."
- "I had several mentors, senior officers who guided me in the early and middle stages of my career, who were invaluable to me."

- "Mentors were extremely valuable in the hiring process."
- "Mentoring has been good. It has definitely benefitted the mentee and made me feel better about the job as a whole."
- "I have only heard a few times from officers how I have been a positive impact."
- "It is an ongoing relationship – ebbs and flows."

Summary of Findings

During Phase Two, the research team investigated the effect of job satisfaction and job design on the potential of police officers to leave their positions. If police managers can take steps to make the job more satisfying, the likelihood of employees wanting to leave may be reduced.

One way to improve job satisfaction is through job re-design, especially enriching the job. Job diagnosis using the core characteristics model (Hackman and Oldham, 1980) is a viable way to see the degree to which the job of police officer is amenable to being re-designed and, if so, what the new job design might be.

In Phase Two, four sets of variables were analyzed: demographics, job satisfaction, job core characteristics, and organizational.

A large percentage of respondents (**86.3%**) said that they were thirty years of age or older. An even larger percentage (**88.5%**) reported having attended college with **60.9%** stating that they hold a college degree.

Data was also collected pertaining to officer tenure, assignment and rank. Most of the officers surveyed (**57.0%**) said that they had served 5-20 years in policing. An additional group (**28.8%**) served more than 20 years and **14.2%** served less than five years.

Patrol officers were the largest group of participants (**59.9%**). Detectives (**16.6%**) and various special assignments (**24.5%**) made up the balance.

With respect to rank, **58.5%** were non-supervisory, either as patrol officers or detectives. First line supervisors made up **11.5%** of respondents. Middle managers consisted of **23.4%** of those who responded, slightly more than twice the number of first line supervisors. The balance (**6.6%**) were senior command or department administrators.

Of the five job satisfaction variables investigated (achievement, growth, advancement, autonomy and responsibility) autonomy was the variable with the greatest number of "satisfied" or "very satisfied" selections. Officers were satisfied with their ability to make decisions on their own and to use independent judgements on the job.

The most dissatisfaction was reported with opportunities for advancement. A large number of officers believe that their chances to advance their careers to another desired position are not high.

There were five job core characteristics investigated in this study: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and job feedback. The data from the police target sample were compared to a norm group of professional workers. The difference in core characteristic scores for this sample of police compared to the professional workers was not statistically significant. For each of the five job core characteristics, the responses by police officers in the sample did not differ from the other professionals in a meaningful way.

This did not appear to be true for the motivating potential score of the police job. The MPS for police was 96 while the professional norm group was 154.

No statistically significant effect was identified when the effect of tenure was examined.

Rank did have a statistically significant effect on skill variety, task identity and feedback for detectives when compared to patrol officers.

Overall, tenure and rank were found to have little effect on officers' feelings regarding core characteristics.

Two organizational variables were examined: schedule and mentorship.

Most officers reported working a "five on, two off" schedule (**57.2%**). The remainder (**42.8%**) worked either a "five on, three off" schedule or a "four on, two off" schedule.

Approximately one half (**49.3%**) of the sample population said that they were satisfied with their present schedule. Approximately one quarter (**25.4%**) stated that the alternative schedules "five on, three off" or "four on, two off" would be more satisfying. The final cohort (**25.3%**) preferred a more radical change, including working a longer day with additional days off.

Regarding mentorship, slightly less than half of the respondents said that they had a mentor in their careers. Most who had experienced being mentored said it was a good experience to have someone help navigate their work and that they had grown in their job.

Discussion

In Phase One, researchers found that police departments were increasingly reliant on lateral and comparative entry officers for staffing. This factor may help explain why the average age of officers has risen. Officers with previous experience elsewhere are more likely to be older, especially if they retired from their prior department.

Officers from other departments often bring a mix of positive and negative effects to their new department. These officers bring experience and can act as mentors for young officers. For those who were previously supervisors, lateral officers can also provide support and guidance to supervisors and possibly administrators in the new department. Further, there is ease of entry. The screening and training for laterals can usually be expedited.

There are drawbacks to lateral entries, however. They may have come from a department with significant differences in organizational culture than the department to which they are transferring, frequently resulting in statements like "that's not how we did it where I come from". It can be hard to adapt to a new culture and may result in conflict or dissatisfaction.

Police managers need to recognize that lateral entry officers may bring both advantages and disadvantages. In the short term however, it is likely they will remain a main source of candidates for the police officer position.

As promotional test providers, it is common for the SCCoP to see only a fraction of eligible officers compete for promotional positions. This holds true for first line supervisors and middle management positions and, increasingly, other positions as well. Reasons often heard include union protection, ability to work overtime, family schedules and family responsibilities. For first line supervisor, a main reason is that candidates are not willing to accept the responsibilities of supervising others.

Officers declining to take promotional examinations but then being dissatisfied with opportunities for advancement positions seems to be contradictory. This is an important question for further research. To learn more about this, the team posed this question: What would have to happen in your career for you to feel that you were advancing in a way that aligns with your personal goals?

In Phase One, we spoke about the importance of communication and developing a rapport with employees. Advancement seems to be a subject where ongoing communication would be important. Managers must continuously seek to find common areas that are both goals of the employee and objectives of the organization. Aligning these is a precursor to increased productivity, improved satisfaction of the employee and less likelihood of turnover. It will be increasingly important as both employee and organizational goals change and new alignments become necessary.

Police managers must be continually aware of the need to support the motivation and satisfaction of the members of their organizations. This is important not only to foster an organization that better serves the community but also to increase officer job satisfaction which previous research demonstrates is related to employee turnover.

The findings of this study suggest that incorporating work features of investigative work into the patrol officer's function may hold promise. One way to do this appears to be allowing patrol officers more latitude with investigations, including evidence gathering and investigative follow-up, thereby strengthening the skill variety, task identity and feedback aspects of the job.

Practically, however, this is a challenge for police administrators. Staffing shortages often mean patrol officers spend less time on investigations so they can respond to additional calls. The findings of this study support the need for developing additional innovative approaches in how to better utilize police resources.

These findings further suggest that job redesign by itself is limited in the impact it can have to reduce turnover. An approach where other strategies are used in combination with job redesign may increase overall effectiveness.

The results of the study present a mixed picture of how officers feel about their work schedule. Previous studies suggest that work schedule can be an important determinate of feeling about work-life balance (PERF, 2019).

The present research does not show any clear pattern with about one half of respondents satisfied with their present work schedule, about one quarter preferring to work longer days with more days off and about one fifth selecting the "five on, three off" schedule as their preference. One explanation is that how an officer defines work-life balance is very much an individual decision. What works in one department may not work in other departments and what works for one officer may not work for others. Work-life balance may also vary over time.

The common theme may be for communities to have general guidelines in their labor agreements that allow for organizational needs to be met while maximizing flexibility and input into officer's schedule (See PERF Report, 2019, p. 55). That is, to let each community define and implement what is a good fit that maintains public safety yet improves officer satisfaction.

Mentorship is consistently referenced in the literature. It is a method to provide comfort, support, guidance and empowerment to employees at all levels of an organization and can be especially helpful at the critical mid-career phase (5 – 14 years) when symptoms of burnout and thoughts of leaving are often a part of an employee's thinking (Whittington, 2025).

Having a mentor can be most beneficial during challenging times. A good mentorship relationship can provide valuable growth opportunities to both mentor and mentee (Whittington, 2025).

In the present sample, slightly over half of the respondents reported not having been involved in a mentorship. This finding indicates that police executive managers must be better trained in what mentoring can provide to members of the organization and how to implement and grow mentorship programs.

Phase Three - Findings

For Phases One and Two of this study, the focus was on retention. The research team looked at the sample of local police departments in Connecticut to see how they were faring in their efforts to retain a qualified work staff and replace officers who decided to leave. The team also examined job satisfaction and job design to see if those areas of work offered clues as to how officer retention could be improved.

Phases Three and Four emphasized recruitment. In Phase Three, researchers investigated factors affecting applicants' decision to apply to become a police officer. Specifically, what factors had the most influence on that decision and which may have caused the most concern? Further, applicants were asked if there was one event in their life that greatly influenced their decision to apply and, if so, to describe that event and its impact.

One of the responsibilities of the SCCoP is to provide recruitment and entry level testing services for departments in the region. For Phase Three, a questionnaire was given to each person who participated in the examination process during the data collection phase of this study (N = 345). A copy of this survey is provided in Appendix E.

There were two items in the survey, each with a series of choices following that item.

To what extent did the following factors influence your decision to become a police officer? (16 Choices)

Please state the degree that the following factors concerned you as you were deciding to apply to become a police officer. (13 Choices)

Data of this type are referred to as ordinal data since there is a ranking or order. To find the average of responses for each choice, the preferred statistic is the median.

The results of the survey are presented in Tables 12 and 13.

In order to help increase the explanatory value of the findings as well as to better describe their context, the final question of the survey was:

Please describe one event in your life that had great influence on your decision to become a police officer.

The most popular responses were grouped and are included in this report. Examples of specific responses for each grouping are provided.

TABLE 12

To what extent did the following factors influence your decision to become a police officer? *

Statement	*Median*
An opportunity to serve the community	5.0
An opportunity to be involved in teamwork	5.0
An opportunity to develop my problem-solving skills	5.0
A variety of work assignments	5.0
An opportunity to work with youths	5.0
An opportunity to work with various ethnic groups	5.0
A past positive experience with a police officer+	5.0
Advancement in investigative and/or management positions	4.0
An opportunity to enforce the law	4.0
The retirement plan for the position	4.0
An opportunity to change policing	4.0
The medical benefits for the position	4.0
An opportunity to use computer technology in innovative ways	4.0
Job provides a desirable work-life balance	4.0
The salary for the position	3.0
What I have learned about police from the news	3.0

*N = 345

+N = 159 (New Question Added During Data Collection Phase)

TABLE 13

Please state the degree that the following factors concerned you as you were deciding to apply to become a police officer. *

Statement	*Median*
Being able to grow and meet my career goals	3.0
An opportunity to change policing	3.0
The retirement plan for the position	3.0
Job provides a desirable work-life balance	3.0
The medical benefits for the position	3.0
The danger of the job	3.0
Being able to pass the training academy	3.0
Fitting into the culture of the police department	2.0
Belief that police are trusted by citizens	2.0
The negative public image of police	2.0
Personal health and wellness (substance abuse, PTSD, officer suicide, etc.)	2.0
Belief that compensation will not give you the lifestyle you desire	2.0
New policing guidelines in response to recent challenges in policing+	2.0
Health risks of policing (COVID, etc.)	1.0

*N = 345

+ N = 158 (New Question Added During Data Collection Phase)

The final question on the survey was:

Please describe one event in your life that had great influence on your decision to become a police officer

The responses were varied but generally came under the following themes.

I have family and friends who are police officers

- *I don't have one event, rather a handful of accounts shared by family and loved ones that dedicated their lives to serving. In all accounts, they positively speak of the teamwork, fun and rewarding career it's been for them. That motivates me equally in knowing that the greater reward is the community impact.*
- *Growing up around family and friends who worked in law enforcement. Then working at a location where a lot of police officers come in and getting the chance to speak with them about the career.*
- *I have several friends who are police officers and to learn about their impact on the communities that they work in. I have a ton of respect for them and how they approach life and try to make a positive difference.*

Officers showed professionalism in road accidents

- *Seeing a car accident on the highway and the police were first respondents. They were able to bring control to the area in little to no time and prevented further casualties. Being the person to provide help when it's needed was the high motivational factor pulling me to the force.*
- *A family member had gotten a TBI after a terrible motorcycle incident. The police officers that witnessed the scene also came to the hospital to offer assistance to my family during that moment.*
- *My wife and children were involved in a motor vehicle accident and the officer at the scene was professional and compassionate to the situation.*
- *I witnessed a large accident with motor vehicles and I had a very positive interaction with law enforcement that day and admired how they handled the situation.*

School Resource Officers

- *My high school SRO had a big influence on me wanting to become a police officer. He would meet me every morning with smile and tell me that I would be something great one day.*
- *Resource officers being present at school and in the community always brought a sense of safety and reassurance.*
- *Growing up, I didn't have much of a support system. I had a tough time in school until the SRO at my high school really pushed me academically, and going to class. Without him I don't think I'd be where I am today.*

Change things in policing/community

- *A great influence is the positive impact that a police officer can have in their community. To change the narrative for the greater good.*
- *One event in my life that had great influence on my decision to become a police officer was growing up in my neighborhood and wanting to be the change in the community that is needed.*
- *I want to work for a city and help the community and show that not all police officers are bad.*
- *After seeing the media strongly against officers, especially with the ongoing protest, I want to make a change and be there for my community.*

Former Security Officer

- *Being an armed security officer, I have met a great deal of police officers who are genuine and really care about their community. Knowing police officers gives the profession a great deal of influence. Some of the greatest people in the world come from this profession.*
- *Working in the security field and getting a sense of helping others. Working alongside the local police department.*
- *I have been working with security team for five years as a volunteer. Being a police officer will channel a path to my career goal.*

Abusive Childhood Situations

- *When I was a child my mother was a victim of domestic abuse. I couldn't do anything since I was so young. Now I want to be able to protect people from situations like that.*
- *When the police came to my home when I was young for a domestic violence issue. They made me feel safe and gave me hope that everything would be okay. My desire is to put that feeling back into the community, amongst other great things police officers do day in and day out.*
- *My mother being physically abused. I wanted to stop it but I was only a small child. I believe the officers could've handled the situation better.*

Pulled Over

- *I was once pulled over for speeding on the highway. It was my first time being pulled over alone and I was very nervous but the officer told me it was okay to be nervous and treated me fairly.*
- *When I was 18 I got pulled over for the first time and it was extremely pleasant. He took the time to talk with me about the job.*
- *I got pulled over for speeding. I was leaving my first job and already late for my second job. The state trooper was so polite, understanding, and cool that it made me feel much better, even in a negative situation.*

Ride-Along

- *I went on two ride alongs and I enjoyed my experience. It made me want to pursue this as a career.*
- *I participated in a ride-along. The first call sent 2 officers to the hospital to subdue the suspect. However, I noticed the teamwork and professionalism of the NHPD squad and was highly impressed. Moreover, it was an example of how committed to public safety NHPD is which I commend.*
- *One event that had a great influence on becoming a police officer is when I did my ride along. Being able to be involved in the community and seeing people be familiar with her and safe with her from children to adults spiked my interest.*

PAL/ Police Explorer

- *I was in P.A.L. when I was a kid and I've always look(ed) up to them! I like being held to a higher standard.*
- *I always wanted to be a police officer since I was a kid. I was in the explorers program in my neighborhood and I've had positive influences with the officers that looked over us and I liked the bond they shared with one another, protecting, serving, and having a positive impact on the community they worked with.*
- *My time in the police explorer program.*

Summary of Findings

The data for this survey reveals that the following factors had great influence on applicants' decision-making to become a police officer:

- An opportunity to serve the community
- An opportunity to be involved in teamwork
- An opportunity to develop problem-solving skills
- A variety of work assignments
- An opportunity to work with youths
- An opportunity to work with various ethnic groups
- A past positive experience with a police officer

- Advancement to investigative and/or management positions
- An opportunity to enforce the law
- The retirement plan for the position
- An opportunity to change policing
- The medical benefits for the position
- An opportunity to use computer technology in innovative ways
- Job provides a desirable work-life balance

- The salary for the position
- What I have learned about police from the news

These findings suggest that the desire to help people is a strong motivator to consider a career in law enforcement. Further, seemingly any situation where there is a positive interaction with a police officer, whether at an incident or through a social setting with officers who are friends, may trigger those feelings.

In sum, positive experiences with the police are a powerful motivator to be open to policing as a career. These findings support what is often stated: empathy, respect, genuine communication and compassion resonate with people, even for those who are subject to enforcement. Many times, it is not the outcome of the incident that helps form a person's feelings; rather, it is the process. The findings support that procedural justice and fair treatment of people is an effective recruitment strategy.

Implications for Recruitment

It seems apparent that maintaining an adequate sworn workforce remains a considerable challenge for many police departments in the State of Connecticut and in other states. The recruitment issues that departments are facing are likely to make staffing a critical issue for the foreseeable future. The results of this survey suggest some directions that department administrators may take to strengthen their recruitment efforts.

The people who are applying feel strongly about community service. This finding supports the idea that "not everyone is down on police". Rather, the police service needs to focus on messaging that will move others to value public service and consider a service career. One way to develop an effective message is to gain understanding about the audience to which it is directed. What can be said or done to move people toward this career, especially Generation Z and Millennials, when there are so many messages in public discourse that run counter?

Further support is found with the responses to the final survey question. Participants provided a number of responses, grouped around the following central themes:

- Family and friends are police officers, and they had substantial influence on me.
- Officers who show professionalism in a variety of incidents had a positive impact.
- People still value having a positive impact on society
- Being introduced to policing, especially at an early age, will increase the understanding of young people regarding the positive impact that police can have in society.

Second, positive interactions with the public are vital. Managers who emphasize community orientation and strong interpersonal skills are helping their departments to draw in new potential officers.

Thirdly, outreach to young people helps to create positive attitudes that can last to adulthood. These are critical in the application process.

Outreach To Middle School and High School Age Persons

An action to consider is to engage people at a younger age. Departments should consider outreach to persons at middle school and high school age. This can take the form of a school resource officer, a police cadet or explorer program or some other initiative where there is a higher level of interaction between officers and young people.

Two police organizations, International Association of Chiefs of Police and Police Executive Research Forum have found considerable evidence that these programs can be effective. They build positive relationships with young people that can help overcome community skepticism of the police. Programs such as these also allow police departments to observe and evaluate young persons as potential applicants later in life. Further, they allow departments to develop important skill sets among the cadets and interns, including team building and critical thinking.

Municipal police departments should support youth academies, PAL Programs, cadet programs, ride-alongs and similar programs to foster relationship building with youth in the community. Anything that may help reach hearts and minds about careers in policing should be explored and supported.

The survey also provides support for the premise that any interaction between the police and the public may result in a lifelong feeling about police officers.

When designing and implementing this type of program, it is critical to recognize that outreach work is not a good fit for everybody. As the IACP report stated, “the most important factor in all our recruitment efforts is selecting the right people to do formal recruiting” (IACP, 2024).

Importance of Mentoring Recruits

Departments should focus on officers who have effective interpersonal skills and positive feelings about the job.

Both the IACP and PERF reports emphasized the importance of departments mentoring recruits during the recruitment phase and continuing mentorship during the training phase. A sample of responses from the IACP survey (P 7) includes:

“The process for hiring needs to be more personalized. Applicants need weekly (at least) updates on their status, and want multiple sit-downs to talk about their concerns about the job, etc. My captain handles these like colleges scouting for athletes – sitting down at kitchen tables

and talking to spouses and even parents about how we train and prepare officers, etc. This generation expects personal attention, or they will move on."

"We assign one officer/mentor to each candidate, so they are in constant contact during our process to answer questions or provide updates."

"Our recruiters visit our candidates in the academy on a weekly basis as a quasi-mentorship program to provide ongoing support. That contact catches the attention of non-sponsored recruits who seek employment opportunities".

The PERF Report echoed the importance of mentoring.

"Mentorship is essential during this period, especially for officers whose family or community might not support the decision to join policing".

The SCCoP survey offers some areas where mentoring may be particularly helpful. Those areas where respondents cited moderate concern include:

Being able to grow and meet my career goals

An opportunity to change policing

Job provides a desirable work life balance

Being able to provide guidance to recruits as they navigate the process of integrating into policing. Departments should strongly consider fostering an environment where mentorship of recruits is supported.

Importance of a Satisfying and Fulfilling Workplace for Current Officers

Earlier in this report, examples were provided of candidates' responses when asked to describe an event in their life that had great influence on their decision to become a police officer. Most of the responses involved a positive interaction with an officer that in some way impressed the candidate. The interactions varied: friends or family, scene of an incident, school resource officer, department ride along, PAL or explorer program.

A main ingredient for this type of positive experience is that the officer with whom the positive interaction occurred, is satisfied with his or her work and can convey that to the candidate. Managers must do what they can to support job satisfaction among sworn officers.

Phase Four - Findings

In the fourth phase of the survey the research team wanted to better understand the values and expectations of young workers. The team sought answers to the following questions:

- What are young people seeking in a career? In a workplace?
- What are their desires, concerns, aspirations, and expectations for working?
- What are effective strategies to attract persons to policing when those persons are entering the workforce?
- What can employers do to create workplaces that better fit the needs of Millennial and Generation Z workers?

According to the most recent PERF study on recruitment and retention, Millennials (born 1981-1996) and Generation Z (born 1999-2012) will make up over **60%** of the workforce in the coming years. The authors found that these workers care about work-life balance, innovative use of technology and employer reputation. The PERF report states further that these values need to be addressed by prospective employers if younger workers are to be recruited and retained.

The current study is to investigate these issues further in Connecticut. The research team held a series of discussion groups with students studying criminal justice. There were five groups over two days totaling 54 interviews. Of those interviewed, females numbered 34 (**63%**) and males numbered 20 (**37%**). By year in school, 34 (**63%**) identified as seniors, 3 (**5.6%**) as juniors, 14 (**25.9%**) as sophomores and 3 (**5.6%**) as freshman.

Each student was advised of the purpose of the survey and provided with data on the percent change in staffing in police departments (PERF, 2025) as well as the number of applicants for police officer positions through the South Central Chiefs of Police Association, Inc. for the period 2006-2025. The questionnaire is included in the report as Appendix F.

The guide questions that were used will be stated followed by a description of the responses that were received.

1) When I seek my next position, the most important factor for me will be:

1. The Amount of Money the Position Pays
2. Work Life Balance – How well the position fits with other things in my life
3. Personal Development – How well the job fits with my career and life goals
4. Innovative Use of Technology
5. Reputation of Organization – Would I be proud to work here
6. Opportunity to Do Work That is Meaningful to Society

Students were asked to rank these six factors with "1" being most important and "6" being the least important.

The most important factor was **Item 3, Personal Development, (2.46)**. Students felt that the job must allow them to develop and to move forward on their individual career path, whatever that might be. One student stated:

> "I put this choice because of how well the position fits my career and goals is important. Finding one that fits with what I want to do in my career is something I'll be looking for".

The second most valued factor was **Item 1, The Amount of Money the Position Pays (2.67)**. Throughout the discussion, pay was a leading indicator of whether young people would be attracted to the position.

The third most valued factor was **Item 2, Work-Life Balance (3.00)**. The comment below represents the general feelings of the people in the discussion groups.

> "The most important thing is my family. While I want to do something that is meaningful and I do care about money, the important thing for me is to spend time at home. I don't want to do a job that is so exhausting I don't spend time with my family".

The fourth most important factor was **Item 6, Opportunity to Do Work That is Meaningful to Society (3.15)**. This factor was closely aligned with the first three.

> "I want to be proud for whom I am working and have the same goals as the organization. Even if they have certain views I do not agree with, I want to be proud and not embarrassed or hear it from other people".

While students felt strongly that the four items described above are important to them when seeking their next job, some divergence was reported for the next factor. **Item 5, Reputation of the Organization was the fifth most valued factor (3.89)**. Personal development, pay, work-life balance and doing meaningful work were widely seen as more important parts of work in the survey.

The research team was surprised that **Item 4, Innovative Use of Technology, was a distant last among the six factors (5.87)**. Many expressed frustrations with technology, especially when it de-personalizes policing. Students stated:

> "They are letting a computer program dictate it. In a field like law enforcement, which is person on person driven, taking the person out of the equation is not good".

> "People are deterred due to the reputations of policing, automation takes away personability in law enforcement. People who are more well informed, AI facial recognition has bias, it is not always accurate and people will not trust the technology in its use".

"Dehumanizing. Why are people turning into data. These moments of human connection, we are not machines we are people. We don't need the data. Building connection is more important. I am not good with technology, policing in general is an in person job. I want to see it (A.I.) automatically detecting license plates. You do not have to type and drive".

"I think that one of the biggest pull[s] was the human connection in it. I was in forensic science but changed for that. You are taking away from trust in communities and training people to not be able to talk and not be able to communicate or share in the field, which takes away from the community that should be being built by the police and in the community".

"For me my whole life technology has been there, so there is a constant shell around me, and I can't do much without it. If it comes down to it and something happens in the field and we don't have technology, what do we do?"

"The technology is innovating and going above, they have to adapt or get lost. What is innovative four years ago is not innovative now".

2) Are you considering becoming a police officer?

The research team asked survey participants if they were considering becoming a police officer.

The follow-up discussion to this question was particularly illuminating. Many were not considering policing as a job due to their preference for other careers (ex: attorney, victim advocate). Of those that were considering law enforcement, there was a general preference for federal service or the state police over local police. While this trend is not new, students stated that local police are more likely to be disrespected and distrusted. There was some feeling, however, that recent portrayals of federal law enforcement might negatively affect those agencies as well.

Public distrust remains a key factor. Students felt the job of policing was not respected by the public. They felt further that there is a stigma from their peer group around joining the police force. The participants emphasized that more outreach and better communication is needed for trust building. This is especially true with the influence of social media on the public image of the police.

3) What aspects of the police job most attract you?

The general feelings of the students interviewed is that they wanted a career that would be personally fulfilling and meaningful to the greater society. Many students felt that a career as a police officer had potential to meet those wants but that there needed to be changes with respect to building trust with the community and with accountability.

> "For me, when it comes to disadvantaged people, I want to impact someone's life in a good way. Police officers have a bad reputation because they negatively impact people's lives. When they do positive things, it can help change the reputation".
>
> "…I don't want to work for a police department if I know the officers aren't respected by the community. I want to be a positive impact…"

A number of students expressed reservation about the influence of electronic messaging and artificial intelligence are having and will have on policing. They saw this as depersonalizing policing at a time when greater interpersonal communication is needed to help mutual understanding and rebuild trust.

An exception to these general feelings about technology, however, was the promise of drones and how they can be used to assist officers. One student said,

> "When I was doing my internship in Delaware, they had drones and bomb experts that use drones. I am interested in that and while now I want to do K-9, I might want to do drone".

Another student also expressed interest in the technology aspects of law enforcement.

> "I know the state police use different training with drones and analyses going into cyber security crimes. It is interesting to me".

The students seem to be advocating for a balance between personalized policing and technology, one where technology does not supplant officers but rather supports them.

4) What aspects of being a police officer do you find least attractive?

There was a wide spectrum of responses to this question, ranging from compensation issues (pay, medical benefits, retirement) to the distrust that exists between the police and the community to work life balance to the job of police officer does not align with personal goals. Police managers have input on a limited number of the issues mentioned, often through participation in labor negotiations.

The state of distrust that exists between the police and the community was frequently mentioned. Several students called for more outreach by police departments. The majority of students felt that incidents where there are allegations of excessive force further harm the police image, foment distrust and result in greater personal stress on the officer. Several students also felt that public perceptions of a lack of accountability for police further erodes trust. Combined, these factors serve as deterrents for attracting new officers.

A corollary to the distrust issue is the personal wellness of the officer that is affected by the increased stress. This was seen as another detriment to the job.

Yet another issue reported in the responses was the perceived lack of advancement in policing and how this conflicts with individual aspirations, and the ability to implement new ideas.

> "For me personally, I enjoy having goals and expectations for myself. If I am not able to meet them, there's nothing there for me personally".
>
> "I think people go in thinking that they want to move up and when they can't move up, then that's a disappointment".
>
> "I think being stuck in one place… It's discouraging to stay in one place. My goal is to continue to advance".

6) What is the one thing you would want to see happen to make the job of police officer more attractive?

There was a range of answers for this question. A number of respondents said fostering a better work-life balance, including more flexible scheduling. Many of those interviewed were concerned about not being able to spend enough time with family. Others spoke about being able to "disconnect" from the stress of the job. The following statement was common among interviewees.

> "A better work-life balance toward better wellness. Develop a good mental state to go on the job. Officers need to take a break and spend time with friends and family. They need to get away from the stress and take time to spend with loved ones".

A second area was creating better trust between the police and the community, especially through outreach.

> "Increase the trust and support of law enforcement and minimize brutality and bias".
>
> "More focus on community and connecting with civilians".
>
> "Doing more community outreach and connecting with them not only through policing but through interactions, holding events with children and showing people that they are safe and you can go to the police".

Managers must also focus on pay and benefits. The responses in the study suggest that while better pay is not a cure all, it supports personal financial stability, and it is an important ingredient in the overall mix of steps that can be taken to improve retention and recruitment. As one student stated:

> "Better pay or compensation for the work that officers do. The job is so dangerous and there's so many risks and I don't think they get paid enough".

Other areas included better education and training for officers and having a workplace that is open to new ideas and supports fairness.

7) Would it be helpful for police departments to establish cadet or internship programs to bring in more young people and mentor them about policing and career choices? Why?

If so, what is the right age for young people to enroll?

Would a paid and structured police department internship be attractive to you?

In its initial report on police recruitment, PERF (2019) described departments creating a "farm system" to introduce young people to policing and to encourage them to consider being police officers in the future. Often, these efforts take the form of explorer or cadet programs. Internships, including paid internships, offer another option for managers. Internships may also provide another way to strengthen mentoring programs.

The student interviews conducted for the present research offered mixed support for the findings in the PERF report. Some students stated that cadet programs and internships would be beneficial.

> "It would be beneficial to better understand departments. The program should be offered before social media and news shape a person's views. A freshman in high school might be a good age. I think most are unpaid, which is difficult and unrealistic for people".

> "I agree with cadet and internship programs. Building off previous points, how I phrase it is peaking behind the curtain, seeing what police really do, including patrol work to address crime. But they also do wellness checks, community outreach, hands on work. Law enforcement personnel are civil servants and establishing these programs for young people would be beneficial. I believe 18 and up for internships. That is the age where you begin to lock in and consider career choices. For a cadet program, 12, 13 or 14 would be good for that".

Others expressed reservations regarding how internships are structured.

> "I got it through my cousin. I was moved from place to place until they figured out my assignment. The ride alongs were amazing but in my first couple weeks, they didn't know what to do".

The consensus of respondents was to have cadet or explorer programs for people in their early teens. Internships should be for students at least 18 years of age.

There were two significant qualifiers reported for internship programs. The first is that the internship must be properly structured. The role of the intern and the tasks to be performed (ex: crime analysis, patrol ride alongs, assist with investigations) should be defined so that there is benefit for the department as well as personal development for the student. A short position description may be helpful to clarify the intern's duties.

The second qualifier is that the department should consider paid internships whenever possible. This is not only helpful for the student but also shows commitment by the department; it is willing to invest to attract the best candidates.

Discussion and Recommendations

Police Chiefs in Connecticut and throughout the country are facing increasing challenges in staffing their departments. The purpose of this research was to gather data that could shed light on how the staffing problem could be more effectively addressed. A series of research questions were posed that were considered relevant to the staffing issue. Through four phases of data collection that included several surveys and multiple interviews, information that could help provide answers to those questions was developed.

In the final section of the report, the study team will discuss its findings and consider implications for police managers and human resource professionals. The discussion will also include recommendations about actions that can be taken and what future research might look like.

There is No Easy or Quick Solution to the Problem of Adequately Staffing Police Departments

Whether one looks at the staffing data provided by national police organizations or the data collected for the South Central Connecticut Region, there is mounting evidence that the difficulty experienced by police departments today in retaining, developing and recruiting personnel is not an outlier but rather a paradigm shift. People no longer find the job as desirable as they did in earlier time periods. While the exact reasons for this are unclear, the impact is significant and immediate.

It is imperative to continue to research the questions surrounding this phenomenon to be better able to understand the causes and to provide guidance for new solutions. Staffing issues are likely to remain for the foreseeable future.

Lateral Entry Officers Are Taking on Increasing Importance

The data from the study show that over forty percent of the persons hired during the time period investigated were lateral entries, that is officers who transferred from other departments.

Lateral entry officers bring important advantages to departments during this staffing crisis. They are trained and have previous work experience so they can be inserted more readily into depleted patrol shifts and can quickly work independently. These officers also bring specialized expertise that is seldom found in new officers that have just graduated from the police academy.

There can be problems, however. Many lateral entry officers are at the later stages of their careers and have a different mindset than a new recruit. They may also bring aspects of the organizational culture of their previous department that are not a good fit for their new department. Police managers may have to retrain new lateral officers to achieve a better fit and have the lateral officer work within the new department's policies.

Managers may also encounter issues of personnel fit for lateral entry officers regarding special assignments and promotions. Is it better to assign a new lateral entry officer to a specialized

position because that officer has experience or expertise in that area? Or will that choice create backlash from other officers who have been in the department longer and who believe they should be given the specialized assignment or promotion? And, if the latter is true, will that exacerbate job dissatisfaction or lower morale in the department?

There are some factors that must be weighed when staffing a department. It may be that lateral officers offer the best choice because the number of other applicants is too low. And the choices made will vary among departments. Whatever the decision-making process, managers must be clear about the advantages and challenges of reliance on lateral officers and have a plan for how those challenges will be addressed.

Police Executives Must be Attentive to Officers Low Job Satisfaction Regarding Opportunities for Advancement and How Work Re-Design Strategies Can Be Used to Improve Satisfaction and Reduce Turnover

The findings of the study show that there is a lower level of satisfaction with being able to advance in policing. While overall job satisfaction was relatively strong in this sample, officers felt that the advancement opportunities afforded them in their departments should better align with their personal career objectives.

It is recommended that police and human resource professionals review the role of advancement in their organizations. Generally, advancement is thought of as moving to a higher rank. In Connecticut, anecdotal evidence suggests that the dissatisfaction stems largely from the nature of the work to be done in a new rank (e.g. not desiring to have supervisory responsibility) and how the new position will affect my work life balance (e.g. competing for a supervisory position that likely will entail an extended period on a new shift). Many officers do not want these job aspects, believing that they outweigh ascension in the department. Instead, they prefer to remain in their present position and work extra duty to increase their compensation.

What can be done to counteract these thoughts? An initial step might be to assess who you are looking for in an ideal officer. As Whittington (2025) posits, agencies must consider the qualities, skills and values that make up their ideal recruit and who will pursue the department's mission and the community's goals. These officers should be able to show commitment to those ends and understand their role in helping the department achieve them.

Efforts should be made to measure the candidate's commitment and concurrently, his or her growth needs during the stages of screening. This can be done through selected written exams with personality measurement components. Insight into a candidate's growth needs can also be gained through appropriately structured oral interview questions. If candidates' responses suggest a lack of interest in being promoted or in growing toward new responsibilities, it would be helpful to know this early on in the hiring decision making process.

Another step that can be taken is to develop strategies that empower police officers. The findings of this study provide further evidence that officers are satisfied when higher levels of

autonomy are present in their job. Officers like to use independent judgements on the job. To the extent that this can be provided, officers generally feel better about the job. Improving feelings of autonomy as well as task identity and feedback may not only increase feelings of job satisfaction but also, because officers would then feel better about the job they held, it may help offset negative feelings about perceived lack of advancement opportunities.

Police and Human Resource Managers Should Consider Using Realistic Job Previews in the Recruitment Process to Increase Employee Retention

A Realistic Job Preview (RJP) is an approach to recruitment where the candidate is presented with a comprehensive and honest look at the rewards and challenges of the job and the organizational culture so the candidate can decide if this job is a good fit for his or her needs. In essence, the RJP attempts to match the applicants' expectations with the realities of the job. Use of the RJP can result in hiring candidates who are more likely to stay with the department, especially in the short term, and who will be more engaged with the job.

Departments can conduct a Realistic Job Preview through a variety of means. Two methods are videos and candidate job observation. A narrated video where employees describe the job is one methodology. The video should be concise, well produced and provide a realistic description of the job.

Job observation can also be helpful. With this tool, candidates experience the job close up, often "shadowing" a current employee. This can be a valuable way to "feel" the job and what it entails and can be helpful in determining if the job is right for the candidate. Cadet/explorer programs, internships and similar initiatives may be helpful in this regard (See Below).

The Realistic Job Preview appears to offer several benefits. A reduction in turnover is likely due to the matching of candidates' expectations with the reality of the job. This is especially true for officers on the job for only a few years. Departments should be honest about the job of police officer in their communities as well as provide an accurate description of the organizational culture. If the employer-employee relationship is a mismatch, it is better for this to be discovered prior to a large investment of time, energy and money on recruiting a person with a low likelihood of success.

Second, a reduction in turnover may be realized from improved job satisfaction. Employees who understand the rewards and challenges of the job and who find those aspects of the job to be fulfilling are better suited to be satisfied with that job.

A drawback of the RJP is that it will lead to fewer applicants. Typically, this results from applicants discovering earlier on that the job is not for them. For the employer however, RJP will often result in better hiring decisions and increases the likelihood that the persons hired will be engaged employees who are more likely to develop as productive members of the organization.

A final benefit pertains to the reputation of the department. In today's world of policing, transparency with the community and trust building initiatives are highly sought outcomes. By giving community members an honest assessment of the police job, a department builds that reputation among the people it serves.

Departments and human resource officials considering the use of Realistic Job Previews should also consider using multiple formats concurrently to create the most accurate message and have that message reach the largest number of people. Further, RJPs should be utilized early in the recruitment process. Lastly, while transparency is important, recruiters should have a balance between positive and negative messaging. The last message from the employer should be a positive influence on the candidate.

Understand the Importance of Mentorship: Consider a Mentorship Program in Your Department

Throughout the report, reference has been made to the importance of mentorship. Providing guidance to candidates and to officers on the job is increasingly seen as needed to help people be successful along their career pathways. This can be in the form of outreach to students at school; to assisting candidates with information on the screening process for police officers; to career counseling for officers at various career stages.

Department administrators should consider staff training in how to develop, implement and evaluate a mentorship program. The training should include identifying objectives of the program, identifying potential groups of mentors, selecting and preparing mentors and choosing a mentorship model such as one-on-one mentoring. Moreover, the training should cover the matching of mentors and mentees, promoting the program among members of the organization and providing ongoing support. As always with management, the program should be rigorously evaluated to measure attainment of objectives and gain insight on corrective methods.

Once the training is complete, a mentorship plan should be formulated and enacted.

To help ensure that a mentorship program attains the best fit in a department, consideration should be given to hiring a professional consultant, preferably one who has understanding of quasi-military organizations and police culture. Consultants can help design the program and assist with implementation, including how to select the right mentors. An important element of a program is to increase understanding of today's multi-generational workers.

Creating Opportunities for Young People to Learn About Policing and Public Safety: Cadet/Explorer Programs, Internships and Youth Academies

In its initial study of the workforce crisis, PERF (2019) found that departments throughout the country are working to reach out to younger people (14-21 years of age) to begin to teach them about policing and the job of police officer. PERF quotes former Chief of Police Michael Yankowski as referring to this strategy as creating a 'farm system' that entails a substantial time

commitment and that allows departments and potential candidates to work together and learn from each other (PERF, 2019). Often, these initiatives take the form of cadet or explorer programs.

It is recommended that police departments in Connecticut consider establishing a program for young people. The advantages include getting to know the potential officer candidates to see if they might be a good fit for policing and for them to get to know the police job to see if it is a good fit for their needs. Cadets and explorers provide a candidate stream for police officer, a stream where the candidates already have considerable knowledge about the profession. As cadets become more experienced and better trained, they will be able to take on more tasks, thereby freeing up officers for other assignments.

Cadet or explorer programs may be done solely by the department or in partnership with an outside agency or high school. Liaison with an outside agency should be done by officers who strongly believe in cadet programs, including new younger officers. This study suggests that officers believe they are making a difference. Identifying these officers and then using them as liaisons for cadet programs will reinforce a positive message.

If a complete cadet program is not feasible, Chiefs of Police might consider outreach initiatives that are shorter in duration but can be effective. If your department utilizes interns, it is advisable to pay the interns and to have a structured internship where the work plan for the intern is developed prior to his or her selection. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that interns desire a meaningful work experience that facilitates personal growth as well as one where they are compensated.

Another option is to build a short-term citizens youth academy. These types of academies might only last a week or two but can be very influential for young people. Appendix G is an enrollment poster for a youth academy in the Town of Orange. In this program, the town's youth service and public safety agencies are partnering to present a public safety academy where people in high school can learn about careers in the police and fire services, including hands on training. As the poster states, this experience will not only teach people about a career in public safety but also foster teamwork and problem-solving skills.

An important aspect of these initiatives is to introduce young people to public service and the rewards that await those who help others. To convey this message to a young mind contemplating life choices can make a real difference.

Work With Municipal Agencies and Community Groups to Improve Officer Compensation, Work Life Balance and Wellness

During interviews with criminal justice students, it was frequently mentioned that increasing pay, improving work-life balance and being attentive to officers' physical, emotional and professional wellness are essential to fostering interest in the police job.

Making the police job better in those respects will require a team effort. Chief elected officials, boards of finance, human resource professionals and legal counsel all play a role in setting levels of pay, negotiating work schedules and providing wellness programs. Police executives should continue to educate these officials about retention, development and recruitment issues in law enforcement and the importance of these issues to public safety. As with other issues, communication, understanding and collaboration are needed to bring about positive outcomes.

The community also plays a role. There must be ongoing networking with community leaders to build trust and rally support for the changes needed to improve retention, development and recruitment. When people trust your organization and are satisfied with its performance, you have a stronger base upon which to garner support for other innovations.

The Workforce Crisis is Testing Police Leaders: Some Thoughts on Achieving Greatness in Your Organization in the Present Workforce Environment

Police leaders have a vision of what they would like their department to become. The current times, however, are providing significant challenges, possibly unprecedented challenges, to achieve those visions. The lack of qualified new officers and the feelings toward work of those that have positions in the department are significantly impacting organizational development.

In thinking about these issues, the research team considered how the work of Jim Collins might be applicable. In his seminal work "Good to Great" (Collins, 2001) and his sequel "Good to Great in the Social Sectors" (Collins, 2005), Collins provided ideas for how leaders can move their organizations toward greatness. In 2007, PERF published "Good to Great Policing: Application of Business Management Principles in the Public Sector" (Wycoff et al., 2007), which discussed how Collins' ideas might be useful to Chiefs of Police.

Collins cited seven findings of great business organizations (Collins 2005).

1. **Self-Effacing Leaders** – Driven to achieve professional success but remaining humble and willing to accept responsibility for failures.

2. **Assemble the Right Team, Then Decide Direction of Organization** – Self-motivated people driven to produce the best results.

3. **Determine Your Present Reality** – You cannot make the right decisions to move forward if you are not truthful about where you presently are.

4. **Hedgehog Concept** – What is my organization best at? What is the one thing that this organization can do better than others to help people?

5. **Create a Culture of Discipline** – Relentless focus on achieving what you do best. Right people in organization are self-disciplined to achieve core mission.

6. **Understand How to Use Technology** – How can technology be used to achieve core organizational mission?

7. **Flywheel Concept** – Recognize that achieving greatness takes time and combined efforts.

Policing is an inherently people business. To be successful, departments desire their officers to have strong interpersonal skills, be oriented to community service, have skills for solving problems and make decisions based on sound rationale. Moreover, Police Chiefs want officers to be self-motivated and to aspire to positions of greater authority and responsibility.

With this in mind, how can a police leader achieve greatness, however that may be defined in his or her community, in an environment where retention, development and recruitment present such formidable challenges? PERF (2007) provides a comprehensive discussion of how Good to Great principles can be applied to policing (Wycoff et al., 2007).

This research serves to continue that discussion with the following observations.

- Police leaders today must be constantly aware of how the decisions they make to reduce crime and ensure public safety in their communities will affect their workforce. They must balance whether a decision today can be sustained by the workforce both today and tomorrow.

- Leaders should recognize that building a strong command staff is essential. Mentorship, executive development training and participation in significant decisions are key factors in organizational success in the present as well as developing successor leaders for the future. Attributes to look for in potential "Level Five" leaders are self-reflection, being humble, and having demonstrated mentorship and integrity.

- A new challenge in 2026 is how to get the right people in the right seats when so few people want to even board the bus as recruits and so few officers seek promotions. It is critical for police leaders to re-visit retention strategies for police officer. Chiefs should consider creating a strategic plan for talent management that tracks officer development while with the agency. Data to be collected and analyzed would include specialized training received, performance in specialized assignments, higher education achieved and demonstrated leadership with department initiatives. Chiefs are limited in what they can do to persuade people to advance in the organization. But the effort is imperative.

Ongoing communication with talented officers and supervisors through career conversations may be helpful.

- Additionally, police leaders should re-visit the department's promotional process to identify modifications, if any, to address today's issues of retention and development. Promotional test components, weights, and passing levels are areas of focus. Collaboration with unions and municipal human resource or civil service departments will be necessary. The key objective is to develop the best system to measure candidates' competencies in the skills most important for successful performance in that job and to assess character traits, such as integrity and work ethic.

- One of the most important steps moving forward is for police leaders to constantly innovate in how they recruit and select new candidates for police officer. This study has highlighted concerns of young people regarding the profession: compensation, work-life balance, alignment with personal goals, public distrust.

  Two of Collins' principles seem to come into play here: getting the right people on the bus and confronting the brutal facts. As stated earlier, the evidence to date suggests this is a long-term trend. The recent uptick in recruitment may or may not indicate a shift; further data will be needed.

  Chiefs of Police must staff their departments with the most qualified individuals they can find at that moment. The work to improve recruitment and selection must be relentless. Every Chief should be open to new ideas and should collect data to see which new approach has helped to bring in candidates that have contributed to the department's success.

- It is important to understand the brutal facts about police recruitment. According to the survey by IACP (2024) a majority of Police Chiefs throughout the country feel that recruitment is more difficult now than five years ago. The latest survey by PERF (2026) revealed that total staffing remains below 2020 levels although staffing did improve to become slightly above 2022 levels. Hiring continues to be a critical challenge for many departments. Police leaders are heavily dependent on overtime, which tends to lead to burnout and retention issues. In Connecticut, staffing shortages also lead to increased reliance on lateral transfers.

  These conditions show little sign of abating. The evidence is growing that these trends are long-term trends. Police leaders must recognize staffing as a critical issue for the organization and commit people and innovation to coping with it. It will require decision makers to be disciplined, but it is an imperative of our time. Many police agencies feel

that they are competing against each other for talent. This study focused on a broader view; attracting top young talent to a career of service. Officers everywhere must work every day to inspire young people to consider careers that support the common good. This effort will require leadership and discipline but its worth to the society is clear.

- There are mixed findings regarding technology as an accelerator to help bring about greatness in a police agency. A number of police departments in Connecticut use unmanned aerial systems (UAS) for special services, such as SWAT operations or missing persons. Some departments are also beginning to use UAS to assist patrol as first responders. In these areas, technology is being used to strengthen police safety.

  There are downsides to technology applications, however. The college students that were interviewed for this report expressed skepticism about artificial intelligence in policing. Many felt that it was a deterrent to recruiting new candidates.

  Several departments in Connecticut have implemented technology systems such as license plate readers and speed cameras to enhance traffic safety. Some of the police departments have had to rescind or modify the implementation of these systems in the face of pushback by the public and concerns about privacy.

  A department contemplating a major technology innovation should have a clearly defined set of goals, a clear system design, a well thought out implementation strategy and a strategy for evaluation. With the knowledge that technology is being used to support the achievement of organizational objectives (Hedgehog Concept) and with good planning, technology can have a positive impact on the organization.

- Collins' concept of a flywheel captures the essence of this study. The teamwork needed to push the organization toward its goals and to create a momentum for change that can survive personnel changes, even at the Chief of Police level, is a critical component.

Retention, development and recruitment are vital to this effort. The goals must have input and support from the command staff. Once this happens, the Chief must work to develop his or her staff to prepare them for senior leadership roles and then retain them in the organization to allow for succession. With this in place, it is more likely that a new direction can be sustained despite the inevitable change of senior police executives.

This paper explores ways that retention and development can be accomplished. The organization must care for and invest in its people. They need to buy into the new direction that the top executives have set the organization. As Collins found, only that level of commitment will bring the organization to the next level of achievement.

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Appendix A

SOUTH CENTRAL CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION, INC.

POLICE OFFICER RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT

SURVEY

This survey is designed to better understand the issues that police managers are facing as they attempt to retain and develop police officers. The results of the survey will be distributed to all participants.

Please answer the following questions about staffing in your department for the **five-year period January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2023**.

Staff Hired

How many sworn officers are in your department?

Less Than 40 _____ 40-75 _____ 75-150 _____ More Than 150 _____

How many officers were hired by your department during the five-year period? _____

Of the officers hired, how many were lateral candidates? _____comparative candidates? _____

Of the officers hired, how many were: Male _____ Female _____

Of the officers hired, how old were they at the time of hiring?

20-25 _____ 26-30 _____ 31-35 _____ 36-40 _____ 41-45 _____ 46-50 _____ 51-55 _____

Of the officers hired, what was the candidate's education level at the time of hiring?

High School _____ Some College _____ Four Year Degree _____ Post Graduate _____

Resignations/Retirements

What was the number of resignations that occurred during the five-year period?
____retirements_____

Of the officers who left, for how long were they with your department?
Less Than 5 years _____ 5 years to 20 years _____ More Than 20 years

Why are officers leaving? For the officers who resigned or retired and for whom exit interviews were done or further information was obtained, please indicate the number of times that each of the following reasons was cited. If the officer cited more than one reason, please indicate all that apply.

Resignations

Seeking Career Outside Law Enforcement _____

Move to Another Law Enforcement Agency_____

Reasons Outside of Job (Family, Personal, Relocating)_____

Leaving Workforce Completely_____

Desiring to Make More Money in Another Position_____

Desiring to Have a Pension or Better Retirement Plan_____

Negative Public Image of Policing_____

Concern About Personal Health and Wellness_____

Need a Job with a Better Work-Life Balance_____

Other_____

Retirements

Career Burnout_____

Relocation_____

Seeking Career Outside Law Enforcement _____

Move to Another Law Enforcement Agency_____

Reasons Outside of Job (Family, Personal, Medical)_____

Leaving Workforce Completely_____

Other_____

Strategies to Improve Personnel Retention and Development

Nationwide, there are several strategies currently being evaluated by researchers that are thought to impact personnel retention and development. In the space below, please describe what your department does for the strategy listed and the change that has resulted. If you have not used this strategy, please state "Not Applicable".

Program to Mentor Personnel_____

Monetary (Raises, Bonus, Paying for Higher Education, etc.)
_____

More Flexible Work Hours-Schedules_____

Meeting With Personnel to Discuss Job Satisfaction_____

Development of Officer Health and Wellness Programs_____

_____

Greater Officer Input in Workplace Conditions _____

_____

Creating Opportunities for Career Development (Detective, Specialized Units, etc.)
_____

Recognition and Rewarding Achievements
_____

Employee Assistance Programs
(EAPs) _____

_____

Other
_____

_____

Officer Feelings on Promotions/Special Training/Special Assignments

Have you had a promotional exam during the period? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, for officers who were eligible to be promoted but who opted out, how many cited the following reasons for not seeking promotion?

_____ Candidate not wanting increased responsibility at work

_____ Pay differential is unattractive

_____ Unable to change schedule due to other personal/family responsibilities

_____ Unable to devote the time needed for test preparation

_____ Other (please explain) _____

Have you sent officers to attend specialized training (Ex: canine, accident reconstruction) or specialized assignments (Ex: SRO, task forces) during the period? Yes_____No _____

If yes, for officers who were offered specialized training or assignments but declined, how many cited the following reasons for declining?

_____ Candidate not wanting increased responsibility

_____ Pay differential is unattractive

_____ Unable to change schedule due to other personal/family responsibilities

_____ Unable to devote the time needed for training

_____ Lack of interest in training

_____ Other (please explain)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS SURVEY.

SCCJA is considering a follow up survey to all officers in your department to learn how each feels about working as a police officer. The survey would be completed anonymously. Please indicate if you would like your department to participate in that survey.

Yes, we would like to participate _____

No, we will not participate at this time _____

Appendix B
Responding Departments (Phase 1)

South Central Region

Ansonia
Clinton
Derby
Guilford
Hamden
Madison
Meriden
Milford
Naugatuck
New Haven
North Branford
North Haven
Orange
Seymour
Wallingford
Woodbridge

Fairfield-Western Regions

Danbury
Fairfield
New Canaan
New Milford
Newtown
Redding
Watertown
Wolcott

Capital Region

Avon

Bristol

Coventry

Hartford

Plainville

West Hartford

Eastern Region

Ledyard

Waterford

Appendix C
Exit interview Questions

The questions below are examples of questions that can be asked during an exit interview.

--What factors contributed to your decision to leave?

--Is there anything that could have been done to prevent you from leaving?

--What is one thing that you would change in the department to make it a better place to work?

--How did you learn about the opening for your new position?

--What specific aspects of your new job did you find appealing?

--How satisfied were you with your experience with this department?

--Was the training that you received of sufficient quality for you to perform well?

--What did you most like about the department? What did you like the least?

--Would you consider returning to the department in the future?

--Would you recommend a friend or family member to work in the department?

--Were you and your supervisor able to work together effectively?

--Did you receive timely feedback from your supervisor?

--Please describe your feelings about the overall management style of the department.

Appendix D
Phase 2 Survey

Police Officer Job Satisfaction

All survey responses are being treated confidentially; please do not reveal your name or department.

* Indicates required question

Section I

1. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The chance to be responsible for planning my work.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

2. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied
- Other:

3. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The chance to make decisions on my own.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

4. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The chances for advancement on this job.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

5. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The chance to be responsible for the work of others.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

6. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The freedom to use my own judgment.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

7. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The responsibility of my job.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

8. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The chance to try my own methods of doing the job.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

9. *On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .* *

The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job.

Mark only one oval.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

Section II

This part of the questionnaire asks you to describe your job, as objectively as you can.

Please do not use this part of the questionnaire to show how much you like or dislike your job. Questions about that will come later. Instead, try to make your descriptions as accurate and as objective as you possibly can.

10. How much **autonomy** is there in your job? That is, to what extent does your job permit you to decide **on your own** how to go abut doing the work? *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Little: the job give me almost no personal "say" about how and when the work is done.
- Slightly little
- Somewhat low
- Moderate: many things are standardized and not under my control, but I can make some decisions about the work.
- Somewhat high
- Significant
- Very much: The job gives me almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is done

11. To what extent does your job involve doing a **"whole"** and **identifiable piece of work**? That is, is the job complete piece of work that has an obvious beginning and end? Or is it only a small **part** of the overall piece of work, which is finished by other people or by automatic machines? *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Little: My job is only a tiny part of the overall piece of work; the results of my activitys cannot be seen in the final product or service.
- Slightly little
- Somewhat low
- Moderate: My job is a moderate-sized "chunk" of the work; my own contribution can be seen in the final outcome.
- Somewhat high
- Significant
- Very much: My job involves doing the whole piece of work, from start to finish; the results of my activities are easily seen in the final product or service.

12. How much **variety** is there in your job? That is, to what extent does the job require you to do many different things at work, using a variety of your skills and talents? *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Little: the job requires me to do the same routine things over and over again
- Slightly little
- Somewhat low
- Moderate variety
- Somewhat high
- Significant
- Very much: the job requires me to do many different things, using a number of different skills and talents.

13. In general, how **significant** or **important** is your job? That is, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people? *

Mark only one oval.

- Not very significant: the outcomes of my work are NOT likely to have important effects on other people
- Slightly little
- Somewhat low
- Moderately significant
- Somewhat high
- Significant
- Highly significant: the outcomes of my work can affect other people in very important ways.

14. To what extent does doing the job itself provide you with information about your work performance? That is, does the actual work itself provide clues about how well you are doing - aside from any "feedback" co-workers or supervisors may provide? *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Little: the job itself is set up so I could work forever without finding out how well I am doing.
- Slightly little
- Somewhat low
- Moderately: sometimes doing the job provides "feedback" to me; sometimes it does not.
- Somewhat high
- Significant
- Very much: the job is set up so that I get almost constant "feedback" as I work about how well I am doing.

Section III

Listed below are a number of statements which could be used to describe a job.

You are to indicate whether each statement is an **accurate** or an **inaccurate** description of **your** job.

Once again, please try to be as objective as you can in deciding how accurately each statement describes your job - regardless of whether you like or dislike your job.

15. The job requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

16. The job is arranged so that I do NOT have the chance to do an entire piece of work from beginning to end. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

17. Just doing the work required by the job provides many chances for me to figure out how well I am doing. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

18. The job is quite simple and repetitive. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

19. The job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well the work gets done. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

20. The job denies me any chance to use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

21. The job provides me the chance to completely finish the pieces of work I begin. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

22. The job itself provides very few clues about whether or not I am performing well. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

23. The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

24. The job itself is NOT very significant or important in the broader scheme of things. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

Section IV

Now, please indicate how you personally feel about your job.

Each of the statements below is something that a person might say about his or her job. You are to indicate your own personal **feelings** about your job by marking how much you agree with each of the statements.

25. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Disagree Strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree Slightly
- Neutral
- Agree Slightly
- Agree
- Agree Strongly

26. I frequently think of quitting this job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Disagree Strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree Slightly
- Neutral
- Agree Slightly
- Agree
- Agree Strongly

27. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Disagree Strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree Slightly
- Neutral
- Agree Slightly
- Agree
- Agree Strongly

Section V

Now, please indicate how **satisfied** you are with each aspect of your job listed below.

28. The amount of personal growth and development I get in doing my job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Extremely Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Slightly Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Slightly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Extremely Satisfied

29. The feeling of worthwhile accomplishment I get from doing my job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Extremely Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Slightly Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Slightly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Extremely Satisfied

30. The amount of independent thought and action I can exercise in my job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Extremely Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Slightly Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Slightly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Extremely Satisfied

31. The amount of challenge in my job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Extremely Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Slightly Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Slightly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Extremely Satisfied

Section VI

Listed below are statements that a job holder might use to describe feelings toward the job.

You are to indicate whether each statement is an accurate or an inaccurate description of your job.

Again, please try to be objective in deciding how accurately each statement describes your job, regardless if you like or dislike your job.

How accurate is the statement in describing your job?

32. I generally feel a high level of anxiety and stress from the job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

33. Th job of police officer plays a critical role in reducing crime. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

34. I became a police officer to help others and serve the community. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

35. I have found immediate supervisors to be my most important resource in helping me do a better job. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

36. Despite comments that cast policing in a negative light, I believe that officers are making a positive difference. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

37. I am most satisfied with my job when I like the people with whom I work. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

38. Of the skills that a supervisor must have, being a good coach has the greatest effect on motivating people to perform well. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

39. Whether I am at the department or at home, I often feel tension about work. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

40. As a police officer, I have a higher chance of being injured than other jobs. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

41. I get regular feedback from my supervisor about my performance. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

42. I believe wellness programs are more important for police given the risks of the job and the constant stress. *

Mark only one oval.

- Very Inaccurate
- Mostly Inaccurate
- Slightly Inaccurate
- Uncertain
- Slightly Accurate
- Mostly Accurate
- Very Accurate

Section VII

The following section contains questions about yourself. Please fill in the blank or circle the appropriate number number for each question.

43. What is your age? *

44. What is your gender? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

45. What is your racial/ethnic background? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ White
- ◯ Black
- ◯ Hispanic
- ◯ Asian
- ◯ Other:

46. What is the highest educational level you have completed? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ High School, Graduate, or Equivalency
- ◯ Some College (Up to 60 credits or Associate's Degree)
- ◯ College Graduate (Bachelor's Degree)
- ◯ Post-Graduate Study

47. How many years have you been a police officer overall? *

48. How many years have you been a police officer with this department? *

49. What is your present assignment? *

Mark only one oval.

- Patrol Division
- Traffic Division
- Detective Division
- Specialized Investigative-Street Crime, Narcotics, Special Victims, etc.
- Communications
- Professional Standards
- Records/Information Systems
- Other:

50. How many years have you been working at your present assignment? *

51. What is your present rank? *

Mark only one oval.

- Patrol Officer
- Detective
- Corporal
- Sergeant
- Lieutenant
- Command/Administrative

52. How many years have you held your present rank? *

53. If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be? *
(Select only one)

Mark only one oval.

- Increase my compensation (Salary and Benefits)
- Improve my retirement plan
- Have a more flexible schedule
- Increase the public's trust of the police
- Change the culture of police organizations
- Increase wellness programs (COVID, PTSD, suicide prevention, etc.)
- Be better able to grow and meet my career goals
- Other:

54. Research is showing that mentoring can be a helpful tool in facilitating individual growth and supporting job satisfaction. * Have you had a mentor in your career?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes *Skip to question 59*
- No *Skip to question 43*

55. Have you been a mentor in your career? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes *Skip to question 60*
- No *Skip to question 43*

56. The sworn strength of my department is: *

Mark only one oval.

- Less Than 50 Officers
- Between 51 and 150 Officers
- Greater Than 150 Officers

57. My present work schedule is: *

Mark only one oval.

- 5 on, 2 off
- 4 on, 2 off
- 5 on, 3 off

58. A change to my work schedule that would increase my job satisfaction is: *

Mark only one oval.

- Work a longer day with more days off in between cycles (Example: work 3 twelve hour days, then 3 days off)
- Change to a 5 on, 3 off schedule
- Change to a 4 on, 2 off schedule
- I am satisfied with my present schedule

Section VIII

59. If yes, please select **one choice** below that would best describe your experience. *

Mark only one oval.

- It made me feel good to have a partner to help me navigate my career
- It was valuable but we grew apart and the mentorship dissolved
- It was a great experience...we both learned and grew in our work
- It was of little value. I have gone through my career relying solely on my judgment
- Other:

Section IX

60. If yes, please select **one choice** below that would best describe your experience. *

Mark only one oval.

- It made me feel good to have a partner to help me navigate my career
- It was valuable but we grew apart and the mentorship dissolved
- It was a great experience...we both learned and grew in our work
- It was of little value. I have gone through my career relying solely on my judgment
- Other:

Appendix E
Phase 3 Survey

This office is conducting a survey of applicants to learn more about the reasons that people decide to apply to become a police officer. While this is NOT a part of the application and it will have NO EFFECT on your test score, your honest response would be appreciated. Please circle the appropriate number for each item.

To what extent did the following factors influence your decision to apply to become a police officer?

	No Influence		Moderate Influence		Great Influence
1) A past positive experience with a police officer	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2) An opportunity to serve the community	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3) The salary for the position	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4) The medical benefits for the position	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5) An opportunity to change policing	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6) What I have learned about the police from the news and the media	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

7) Job provides a desirable work-life balance 1 2 3 4 5

8) Advancement to investigative and/or management positions 1 2 3 4 5

9) The retirement plan for the position 1 2 3 4 5

10) An opportunity to develop my problem solving skills 1 2 3 4 5

11) An opportunity to work with various ethnic groups 1 2 3 4 5

12) An opportunity to enforce the law 1 2 3 4 5

13) An opportunity to be involved in teamwork 1 2 3 4 5

14) An opportunity to use computer technology in innovative ways 1 2 3 4 5

15) An opportunity to work with youths 1 2 3 4 5

16) A variety of work assignments 1 2 3 4 5

Please state the degree that the following factors concerned you as you were deciding to apply to become a police officer.

	Was Not Concerned		Moderate Concern		Great Concern
1) The danger of the job	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2) Belief that police are not trusted by citizens	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3) Health risks of policing (COVID, etc.)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4) The medical benefits for the position	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5) An opportunity to change policing	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6) Being able to advance through the ranks	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7) Job provides a desirable work-life	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8) Belief that compensation will not give you the lifestyle that you desire	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9) The retirement plan for the position	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

10) Fitting into the culture of a police department 1 2 3 4 5

11) The negative public image of the police 1 2 3 4 5

12) Being able to grow and meet my career goals 1 2 3 4 5

13) Personal health and wellness (substance abuse 1 2 3 4 5
PTSD, officer suicide, etc.)

14) New policing guidelines in response to recent 1 2 3 4 5
challenges in policing

Please describe <u>one event in your life</u> that had great influence on your decision to become a police officer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

SURVEY-DEPARTMENT STAFFING

Appendix F
Phase Four Survey

WHEN I SEEK MY NEXT POSITION, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR ME WILL BE:

(Please Rank: 1 Most Important to 6 Least Important)

The Amount of Money the Position Pays _____

Work Life Balance – How Well the Position Fits With Other Things in My Life _____

Personal Development – How Well the Job Fits With My Career & Life Goals _____

Innovative Use of Technology _____

Reputation of Organization – Would I Be Proud To Work Here _____

Opportunity To Do Work That is Meaningful To Society _____

ARE YOU CONSIDERING BECOMING A POLICE OFFICER?

Yes _____

No _____

Not Sure _____

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE POLICE JOB MOST ATTRACT YOU?
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

The Ability to Help Others _____

Use New Technology, Including Drones and AI _____

Opportunity To Help Build Community Trust _____

Pathway to Becoming An Investigator _____

Opportunity to Work With Disadvantaged People _____

It is a Career That is Respected _____

It is Important to Reduce Crime _____

WHAT ASPECT OF BEING A POLICE OFFICER DO YOU FIND LEAST ATTRACTIVE? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

The Job is Too Stressful _____

Poor Work-Life Balance _____

Low Chance of Meeting Career Goals _____

Lack of Work Schedule Options-Low Flexibility _____

Insufficient Compensation (Pay, Benefits) _____

I Would Find Police Patrol Dissatisfying _____

I Do Not Want To Be Distrusted by Public _____

The Job is Too Dangerous _____

Low Chance to Implement New Ideas _____

AS YOU WERE GROWING UP, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAD THE MOST IMPACT ON YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING POLICE OFFICERS? (CIRCLE ONE)

News media reporting on events involving the police

Television shows

Information on the Internet

Social Media

Personal experience with a police officer

Witnessing another person's experience with a police officer

WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU WOULD WANT TO SEE HAPPEN TO MAKE THE JOB OF POLICE OFFICER MORE ATTRACTIVE?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WOULD IT BE HELPFUL FOR POLICE DEPARTMENTS TO ESTABLISH CADET OR INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS TO BRING IN MORE YOUNG PEOPLE AND MENTOR THEM ABOUT POLICING AND CAREER CHOICES? WHY

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

IF SO, WHAT IS THE RIGHT AGE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENROLL?

_____

_____

WOULD A PAID AND STRUCTURED POLICE DEPARTMENT INTERNSHIP BE ATTRACTIVE TO YOU?

_____

_____

_____

Additional Discussion Questions:

What would you include in an advertisement to better connect with Gen Z and/or Gen Alpha? Assume that you are responsible to create an effective advertisement to invite applicants for law enforcement positions.

What effect will the following current factors have on law enforcement recruitment? Will the effect be positive, negative, or no effect? Explain.

Military deployment to cities

Better use of drones – Real time crime centers

Public perception of immigration enforcement

Artificial intelligence

Distrust in government

Appendix G
Youth Academy Poster

