



# **METRO NASHVILLE COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT**

## **Policy Advisory Report on Metro Nashville Police Department Hiring Procedures**

**Issued by the Community Oversight Board on May 26, 2021**

# Table of Contents

Table of Figures .....	iii
Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction.....	3
Motivating Incident.....	3
Research Questions and Scope .....	4
Methodology.....	4
Data .....	5
Analysis and Evaluation Standards.....	5
Findings.....	6
Hiring Standards .....	6
Tennessee POST Standards .....	7
MNPDP Standards .....	8
Overview of Recruitment Process .....	9
1. Application.....	9
2. Personal History Statement.....	9
3. Civil Service Testing.....	10
4. Background Investigation and Applicant Interview .....	10
5. Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel (DCOP Panel).....	12
6. Conditional Offer .....	13
7. Post-Offer Screening and Exams .....	13
8. Final Panel .....	15
Data on Recruitment .....	18
Disqualifiers for Employment Eligibility .....	23
Past Incidents of Violence or Use of Force .....	24
Evaluating Potential Biases of Recruits.....	25
Oversight and Evaluation of Background Investigators .....	27
Discussion and Recommendations .....	29
Personal History Statement Recommendations .....	29
Civil Service Testing Recommendations.....	31
Background Investigation and Interview Recommendations .....	32

Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel Recommendations .....	34
General Recommendations .....	35
Conclusion .....	36
References.....	36
Appendix A: Tables .....	39

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Steps in the MNPD Application and Background Process .....	9
Figure 2: MNPD Hiring Process as Outlined by the Department.....	16
Figure 3: Path of MNPD Applicants Through Hiring Process .....	18
Figure 4: Percent of Applicants Who Completed Civil Service Testing by Race and Gender, 2016-September 2020 .....	19
Figure 5: Percent of Applicants Who Passed Civil Service Testing by Race and Gender, 2016-September 2020 .....	19
Figure 6: Percent of Applicants Passing Civil Service Tests Found Qualified by DCOP Panel and Final Panel by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2016-September 2020.....	21
Figure 7: Percent of Qualified Applicants Hired by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, Data Pooled 2016-September 2020 .....	21
Figure 8: Annual Hires by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2016-September 2020.....	22

## Executive Summary

Applicants to Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPDP) undergo a background investigation prior to being hired as police officer trainees. This report, requested by the Nashville NAACP, assesses background investigations as a part of the hiring process and addresses two research questions:

1. What are the criteria for background checks and how are they conducted in the recruitment process?
  - a. Specifically, as it relates to past incidents of violence or use of force what are disqualifiers for employment eligibility?
2. What are the processes for investigating potential biases of recruits prior to employment by MNPDP?

To answer these questions, MNCO research staff conducted interviews with Deputy Chief Lokey who oversees the Administrative Services Bureau, Sue Bibb the MNPDP Human Resources director, and Lieutenant Hampton who manages the Recruitment Section of MNPDP. MNCO researchers also analyzed data on recruitment that was provided to Mayor Cooper's Policing Policy Commission in September of 2020, reviewed Recruitment Section Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), academic research on police officer hiring, and published industry standards.

The findings detail the requirements for becoming a police officer that are required by Tennessee state law and by MNPDP, the MNPDP process for screening applicants from application to hiring, data from 2016-2020 on the stages of the hiring process as well as applicant demographics, the criteria used for disqualifying applicants, and the processes used to evaluate bias in applicants. Overall, MNPDP has a defined process for evaluating applicants' suitability for being a police officer. Department leadership are working to increase diversity in recruitment and retaining more applicants of color and women through the hiring process. The data analysis in this report shows that there are racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in the hiring process that should be evaluated and addressed so that the goal of diversifying the police force can become a reality.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Personal History Statement should include law-enforcement specific questions for applicants who have been law enforcement officials in another jurisdiction. This should include questions about unnecessary use of force, bias-based policing, and any disciplinary actions.
2. Question #99 of the Personal History Statement asking whether applicants have a prejudice that will impact their job performance should be changed to a series of questions focused on discriminatory attitudes and behaviors and a short answer question regarding the applicant's

understanding of implicit bias.

3. MNPDP should evaluate reasons for Civil Service Testing no-shows through surveys and interviews with individuals who did not show up to testing. When impediments are identified, changes to the process should be considered and, if made, an evaluation plan should be in place to assess whether the change was effective. MNPDP should aim to have at least 50% of invited applicants take the Civil Service Tests.
4. MNPDP should publicly release their planned evaluation report focusing on whether changing the physical agility section of the Civil Service Test reduces gender and racial disparities in attending and passing the test.
5. MNPDP should work to increase the racial, ethnic, gender, age, and language diversity of the Recruitment Section's background investigators to align with the population of Nashville more closely and make progress toward diversification by the end of 2021.
6. MNPDP should review, at least annually, the demographics of applicants that have been assigned to background investigators and the number of disqualifications resulting from each investigator to identify potential biases. One investigator having higher disqualification rates for a specific demographic group than other investigators does not necessarily indicate bias, but it suggests that an in-depth audit is needed.
7. The Recruitment Section's SOPs should address the timing of the social media review in the hiring process and the procedures used by MNPDP personnel for reviewing social media content. This should include a standard solicitation process regarding applicant social media information. Applicants who refuse to supply access to social media accounts should be disqualified from the hiring process.
8. SOPs should require that if an applicant is the subject of a criminal investigation after review by the DCOP Panel—regardless of the investigation's outcome—the DCOP Panel must review the incident in the context of the applicant's full background investigation and re-vote on the applicant's qualification status.
9. MNPDP should add the Executive Director of the COB or their designee as a voting member to the DCOP Panel.
10. The Recruitment Section's SOPs should address conflicts of interest of the Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel and direct panelists to recuse themselves from deliberating or voting on an applicant's qualification when they have a personal or business relationship with the applicant.
11. MNPDP should evaluate the pre-academy employment program to determine whether it improves training academy outcomes and early employment outcomes compared to those who did not participate in the program and release a public report on the program.

## Introduction

The Community Oversight Board (COB) was asked by the NAACP to conduct a review of Metro Nashville Police Department's (MNP) applicant background investigations. The request follows an incident which is discussed below. The COB has the authority to review the policies and procedures of any aspect of Nashville and Davidson County's criminal justice system and issue policy recommendations. The incident highlighted by the NAACP brings up several important underlying policy issues that the COB voted to review.

## Motivating Incident

The NAACP raised concerns about the standards used to vet applicants in response to the hiring of Officer Nathan Glass who, while working as a security guard at The Pharmacy in East Nashville, shot Deangelo Knox on October 2, 2018.<sup>1</sup> According to the Tennessean, Knox was fatally shot after a shootout near the intersection of W. Eastland and McFerrin Avenues. Glass stated that he believed Knox was running at him with a weapon raised after the shootout and that he believed he and the restaurant's patrons were in danger. Glass stepped outside of The Pharmacy and opened fire on Mr. Knox as he ran past. Mr. Knox's death was ruled a homicide. The cause of his death was a combination of blunt force trauma to the head and chest as well as a penetrating gunshot wound to the head.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the shooting, Glass was given an offer to attend the MNP's police academy, but the offer was delayed while the investigation proceeded. Following the investigation, the District Attorney's office decided that Glass had acted in self-defense and the case should not proceed to the grand jury.<sup>3</sup> He was officially hired by MNP a month after the decision, on March 16, 2019.

Mr. Knox's family worked with an attorney and the NAACP to bring attention to the case and argued that the shooting should not be considered self-defense. The family's attorney pointed to video and forensic evidence that they claim suggests that Mr. Knox was running away from The Pharmacy and therefore was not a threat to Mr. Glass or patrons of the restaurant. The attorney also showed images taken from Glass' Instagram account and argued that images and hashtags from the account that were posted prior to MNP employment suggested support for militia movements and can be interpreted as indicating racial bias.

---

<sup>1</sup> Joshua Cole, "NAACP Asks for Homicide to Be Investigated as Hate Crime," (WSMV, October 20, 2020), [https://www.wsmv.com/news/davidson\\_county/naacp-asks-for-homicide-to-be-investigated-as-hate-crime/article\\_32f371a0-12f5-11eb-bdde-b3c84be31933.html](https://www.wsmv.com/news/davidson_county/naacp-asks-for-homicide-to-be-investigated-as-hate-crime/article_32f371a0-12f5-11eb-bdde-b3c84be31933.html).

<sup>2</sup> Mariah Timms and Brinley Hineman, "Security Guard Who Later Became a Police Officer Faces Murder Charge in 2018 Pharmacy Shooting," (Tennessean, November 12, 2020), <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/crime/2020/11/12/pharmacy-shooting-man-faces-second-degree-murder-charges-two-years-later/3761211001/>.

<sup>3</sup> Harriet Wallace, "Family of Man Killed in 2018 Sues Decommissioned Officer, Calls for His Termination," (Fox 17 WZTV Nashville, November 4, 2020), <https://fox17.com/news/local/family-of-man-killed-in-2018-sues-decommissioned-officer-calls-for-his-termination>.

After the NAACP’s involvement, Officer Nathan Glass was decommissioned on October 27, 2020 by Interim Chief Drake after learning that prosecutors were reviewing the 2018 shooting case again. MNPDP’s Office of Professional Accountability began an investigation of the social media posts. On November 12, 2020, Glass was indicted on one charge of second-degree murder for his alleged involvement in the fatal shooting of Mr. Knox. Glass’ bond was set at \$50,000 and he was released from Davidson County Sheriff’s Office custody on the afternoon of November 12, 2020.<sup>4</sup>

This incident raises broader questions about the role of background investigations and the types of past events that are disqualifying for employment as a police officer. This report will assess the background investigation process broadly and how MNPDP determines whether applicants should move forward in the hiring process.

### Research Questions and Scope

This report focuses on Metro Nashville Police Department’s hiring process, specifically the criteria and background investigations used to disqualify applicants in relation to incidents of violence and use of force. We focus on two main questions:

1. What are the criteria for background checks and how are they conducted in the recruitment process?
  - a. Specifically, as it relates to past incidents of violence or use of force what are disqualifiers for employment eligibility?
2. What are the processes for investigating potential biases of recruits prior to employment by MNPDP?

### Methodology

The Metro Nashville Community Oversight (MNCO) research team reviewed Metro Nashville Police Department policies and procedures related to the hiring process for sworn officers. Specifically, this review focuses on the background investigation process and the criteria used to disqualify applicants before they begin training at the MNPDP Academy. Additional information about this process has been acquired through interviews with law enforcement officials from MNPDP, MNPDP’s Recruitment Section Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Civil Service Rules and Procedures, and the MNPDP Manual. MNCO also reviewed existing research and literature on police recruitment and applicant background investigations on a national level.

---

<sup>4</sup> Timms and Hineman, “Security Guard Who Later Became a Police Officer Faces Murder Charge in 2018 Pharmacy Shooting.”

## Data

This report draws on quantitative and qualitative data related to recruitment and hiring at MNP. The quantitative data are aggregate data provided to Mayor Cooper’s Policing Policy Commission that show annual figures for stages of the hiring process from 2015 through September 2020. MNCO researchers compiled datasets for each hiring phase so that the data could be analyzed and graphed.

MNCO conducted interviews with Deputy Chief Kay Lokey who oversees the Administrative Services Bureau, Sue Bibb the director of Police Human Resources, and Lieutenant Ryan Hampton who coordinates the Recruitment Section.

## Analysis and Evaluation Standards

MNCO researchers transcribed the interviews to closely review the conversations and analyze common themes or divergences. Quantitative data was taken from the original spreadsheet and analyzed by focusing on each hiring stage. Additionally, MNCO researchers searched for academic and industry reports that discussed the recruitment process. In developing recommendations based on the findings, MNCO researchers drew on a conceptual model that centers on community and applies values of police oversight.

The COB and MNCO aim to evaluate policies and procedures using rigorous standards and values that center the needs of the people of Nashville. In the conceptual model, the core concept of “community” is surrounded by five interconnected pillars:

Accountability, Transparency, Justice, Equity, and Evidence. Policy recommendations seek to maximize these values. We operationalize these concepts as follows:

*Community* – The Nashville community is central to all the work of the COB and MNCO. The Nashville community is diverse and complex. We strive to maximize input from community and to ensure that community input shapes policies in Nashville.



*Accountability* – Government entities should be accountable to the people they serve. Accountability includes both what practices are done and how well those practices are



performed.<sup>5</sup> At the agency-level, strategies and programs should be evaluated by community members and their input should shape strategic decisions. Agency outcomes that are within their control (i.e. outcomes that are influenced by departmental policies, procedures, and training) should be used as benchmarks for measuring performance. At the individual-level, employees' conduct with respect to lawful, respectful, and equal treatment of community members is foundational to accountability.

*Transparency* – The community is entitled to clear, comprehensive, and timely information about what their government does, how, where, and with whom. There must be a culture of proactive transparency at all levels of government agencies to the fullest extent permitted by law.

*Justice* – Justice is a multifaceted concept that emphasizes human rights, fairness, minimization of harm, and healing when harm occurs. To evaluate policies and procedures we draw on perspectives of social justice, racial justice, economic justice, environmental justice, distributive justice, restorative justice, and procedural justice.

*Equity* – The COB and MNCO bring an equity lens to their work meaning that there is a focus on identifying social inequality, investigating the root causes of inequalities, and working to eliminate disparities in the future.

*Evidence* – Evidence should be the cornerstone for making decisions in the public interest. All reports issued by the COB use the best available evidence and rigorous analysis to make claims. Evidence comes from published research, original analysis of data from relevant sources, and lived experiences of impacted people. COB recommendations will encourage robust data collection and research to improve outcomes.

Together, these principles are used to evaluate policies and procedures and develop recommendations.

## Findings

### Hiring Standards

Applicants to MNPD must meet state and local standards to be hired. State standards are set by the Tennessee Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST) and reflect state law. These requirements apply to all jurisdictions in Tennessee. All police officers must meet POST standards to be certified as a police officer in Tennessee. Law enforcement agencies can have additional standards that they use to evaluate applicants.

---

<sup>5</sup>Samuel E, Walker and Carol A Archbold. *The New World of Police Accountability*. (Sage Publications, 2018)

## Tennessee POST Standards

The minimum pre-employment requirements for an individual to be commissioned as a police officer in the state of Tennessee are outlined in TCA §38-8-106 which are used by POST. The law includes the following minimum requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Be a citizen of the United States, or a permanent legal resident of the United States who is an honorably discharged veteran of the United States armed forces who will apply for US citizenship within 6 years.
- Be a high school graduate or possess equivalence.
- Not have been convicted of or pleaded guilty to or entered a plea of *nolo contendere* to any felony charge or to any violation of any federal or state laws or city ordinances relating to force, violence, theft, dishonesty, gambling, liquor and other alcoholic beverages or controlled substances. POST rule 1110-02-.03<sup>6</sup> clarify circumstances where waivers can be granted:
  - A waiver may be granted when the offense was classed as a misdemeanor.
  - No waiver will be granted if the individual is under probation or, in the case of driving while intoxicated, driving privileges have not been fully restored.
  - No waiver will be granted for a narcotics violation that could result in a felony charge.
- Not have been released or discharged under any other than honorable discharge from any of the armed forces of the United States.
- Have fingerprints on file with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.
- Have passed a physical examination by a licensed physician.
- Have good moral character as determined by a thorough investigation conducted by the employing agency.
- Have been certified by a Tennessee Licensed Health Care Provider qualified in the psychiatric or psychological fields as being free from any impairment, as set forth in the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of

---

<sup>6</sup> “Rules of The Tennessee Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission,” (Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST), October 22, 2014), [https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/commerce/documents/post/resources/POST\\_Rules.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/commerce/documents/post/resources/POST_Rules.pdf).

the American Psychiatric Association at the time of the examination, that would, in the professional judgment of the examiner, affect the person's ability to perform an essential function of the job, with or without a reasonable accommodation.

POST Rules<sup>7</sup> also require that an applicant:

- Not have been previously decertified as a law enforcement officer by the POST Commission.
- Not have previously voluntarily surrendered their certification as a law enforcement officer.

### MNPD Standards

To qualify to be an MNPD officer, applicants must meet all the POST criteria and additional MNPD standards. MNPD-specific standards include the following:<sup>8</sup>

- A minimum of 21 years of age.
- Have two years of college education OR two years of active military service and a high school diploma/GED OR high school diploma and two years of law enforcement experience OR a high school diploma/GED and three years of full-time work experience.
- Valid "Class D" Driver's License.
- All arrest history SHOULD be expunged and the expungement paperwork MUST be included with the personal history statement.
- Your driving record will be considered part of the background investigation for this position. Multiple offenses and/or chargeable accidents are grounds for disqualification or removal from the eligibility register.
- The medical requirements for enlistment or appointment to either the Army or Navy are the basis for physical suitability at the time of appointment.
- Previous drug use requirements:
  - Drug use will be viewed in the context of the applicant's age at the time of use, type of drug, how recently it was used, and the frequency of use. No illegal drug use will be allowed within 12 months of the date of application. No marijuana use within 6 months of application.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Police Officer Employment Standards," (Metro Nashville Police Department, 2020), <https://www.nashville.gov/Police-Department/Get-Involved/Become-a-Police-Officer/Employment-Standards.aspx>.

- No sale of any drugs.
- Could have permanent disqualification for use of heroin, LSD, PCP, crack cocaine, and methamphetamine or similar substances.
- Any prior drug use, admitted or discovered, will be evaluated in determining employment eligibility.
- No pattern of abuse of legal or legend drugs (including steroids).
- Tattoos that are offensive, provocative, advocate discrimination, or are located on the face and neck are prohibited.

To verify compliance with MNPD and POST standards, MNPD conducts background investigations of all candidates. These investigations may disqualify applicants if they do not meet the departmental and POST standards. According to MNPD, their hiring process takes 4 to 8 months on average.<sup>9</sup>

### Overview of Recruitment Process

Figure 1 shows the steps of the hiring process for MNPD. This section of the report gives an overview of each step in the hiring process.

#### 1. Application

To enter the recruitment process, applicants apply online with Metro Human Resources. Applicants who meet the eligibility requirements have their applications forwarded to Police Human Resources and the Recruitment Section. The Recruitment Section, led by Lieutenant Hampton since January of 2020, sends invitations to qualified candidates to attend Civil Service Testing which is offered twice per month.

#### 2. Personal History Statement

The **Personal History Statement**<sup>10</sup> (PHS) is a 35-page packet that asks

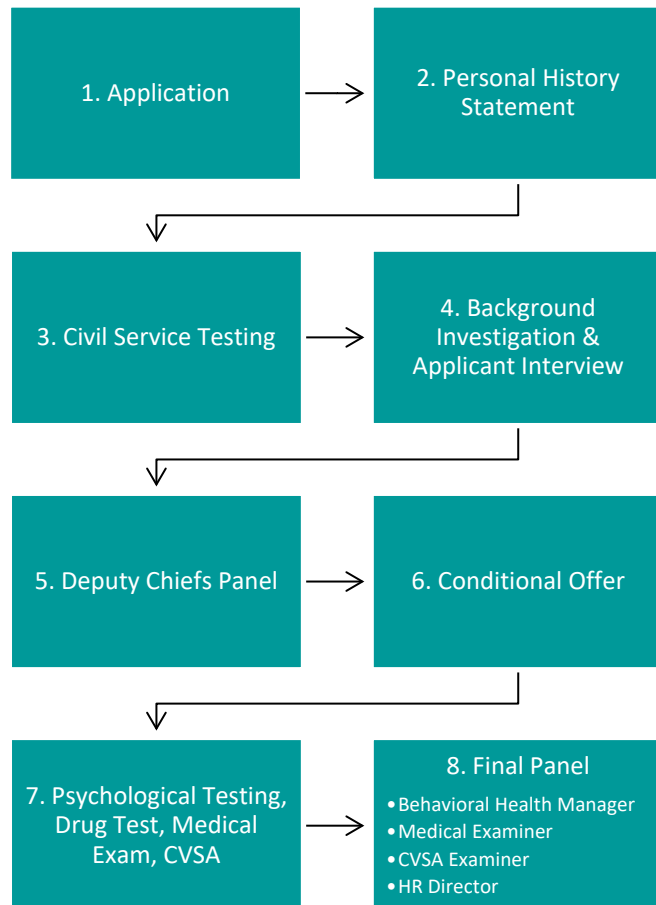


Figure 1: Steps in the MNPD Application and Background Process

<sup>9</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions About Becoming a Police Officer,” (Metro Nashville Police Department, 2020), <https://www.nashville.gov/Police-Department/Get-Involved/Become-a-Police-Officer/Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>.

applicants to sign a variety of releases and report detailed information on personal, legal, educational, employment, housing, and financial history. The PHS must be notarized. Applicants answer 172 questions about past events that may reflect on their character or ability to be a police officer. In instances where an applicant answers “yes” to a question, they must explain the circumstances in more detail. For instance, in the employment section, Question #115 asks: “Have you ever resigned (quit) after being informed that your employer intended to discharge (fire) you for any reason?” The Personal Questionnaire—Section 3—asks detailed questions on bias, group affiliations, substance abuse, violence, and legal violations that did not lead to arrest or citation. If the background investigation finds that an applicant lied on the PHS, the applicant may be disqualified. Applicants are told to complete their PHS and bring it with them to their test date.

### 3. Civil Service Testing

Civil Service Testing includes both a written exam and a physical agility test. The written portion of the Civil Service Test includes four categories: Basic Education, Interpersonal Skills, Self-Awareness, and Practical Intelligence. Knowledge of police procedures is not needed for this written exam. According to Deputy Chief Lokey, the written exam is designed to have an 80/20 pass/fail rate, meaning that 20% of test takers will not pass. The Physical Agility test is comprised of five events: a 99-yard agility run, a rescue simulation, a chain link fence climb, a solid fence climb, and a 500-yard run. The Physical Agility test requirements were changed at the beginning of 2021.<sup>11</sup> (See *Recommendation 4*)

### 4. Background Investigation and Applicant Interview

Once the Civil Service Testing is passed, the applicant enters the *background investigation* stage. Applicants who pass both components of Civil Service Testing have their PHS forwarded to one of the 14 background investigators that work for the Recruitment Section. These background investigators are part-time, retired police officers who apply to the position after

#### *Character vs. Physical Agility*

MNPD recently updated the physical agility portion of the Civil Service Testing. Rather than focusing heavily on the number of push-ups and sit-ups that an applicant can perform, MNPD wants to focus on qualities that would make a good police officer. These five qualities include: critical thinker, empathetic, integrity, problem solver, and communicator. Deputy Chief Lokey explained in an interview with the MNCO research staff that this change comes as part of a departmental review of the entire hiring process to make sure that there are no adverse impacts to women or minorities.

<sup>10</sup> “Sworn Personal History Statement,” (Metro Nashville Police Department, 2021), <https://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/Police/docs/Employment/PersonalHistoryStatement.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> “Pre-Employment Police Officer Testing Information,” (Metro Nashville Police Department, 2021), <https://www.nashville.gov/Police-Department/Get-Involved/Become-a-Police-Officer/Pre-Employment-Testing.aspx>

retiring from the force. According to Deputy Chief Lokey, of the 14 current background investigators, four are women and ten are men. One of the men is African American. (*See Recommendation 5*) According to the Recruitment Section's SOPs, any background investigator who has or has had "a relationship, business or personal, with any applicant," is required to immediately notify their supervisor. The investigator is not to be involved in the processing, review, resting, or investigation of such an applicant. The file of any such applicant would be assigned to another background investigator.

Background investigators use the information included in Personal History Statement to conduct their investigations and send out personal reference requests to individuals who have lived with, worked with, or have otherwise known an applicant. Deputy Chief Lokey explained that investigators also look for records in all locations that an applicant has lived, these include National Crime Information Center (NCIC) results, adult arrests, juvenile arrests, traffic violations, accidents, and civil actions. Investigators also conduct a criminal background check using the Interstate Identification Index (referred to as "Triple I").

With all the collected information, background investigators prepare a background summary for each applicant that highlights key information and any concerns they may have. This summary overview includes the applicant's name, address, whether or not they are qualified based on the initial application requirements, their Civil Service Testing scores, their education, employment, NCIC results, traffic violations, accidents, civil actions, references, amount of financial debt, foreign languages spoken, social media, military service, drug use, alcohol use, other agencies applied to, any concerns the investigator may have and a conclusion. This summary overview document is then reviewed by Recruitment Section supervisors and then shared with the Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel.<sup>12</sup>

### *Structured Applicant Interview*

Applicants who have passed both components of the Civil Service Testing and submitted their Personal History Statement must complete an applicant panel interview. According to Deputy Chief Lokey, an applicant will be invited to come in for a structured interview after a background investigator has reviewed the Personal History Statement packet, sent out personal reference mailers, and conducted a Triple I search for records. This interview can be conducted by a panel consisting of 3 or more panelists or by a background investigator. This panel asks each applicant the same ten questions. After the interview, panelists will grade an applicant's responses on a bubble sheet.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to collecting records, investigators also look at an applicant's social media presence for any posts or comments that might be concerning or inappropriate. According to Lieutenant Hampton, applicants are asked to disclose login information for their social media accounts

---

<sup>12</sup> "Summary Overview," (Metro Nashville Police Department, 2021)

<sup>13</sup> "Recruitment Unit - Standard Operating Procedures," (Metro Nashville Police Department, August 4, 2020)

during their first panel interview, but they are not required to do so. Applicants are also permitted to sign into their social media accounts in the presence of personnel from the Recruitment Section so that their accounts can be reviewed without disclosing passwords to MNPd. Deputy Chief Lokey explained that if an applicant refuses to disclose their social media information, background investigators rely on search engines, such as Google and Bing, to find as much publicly accessible information as they can.

### 5. Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel (DCOP Panel)

Once a background investigator has completed their investigation, an applicant's file is reviewed by the Recruitment Section supervisors and sent to the Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel, a review panel comprised of the MNPd's Deputy Chiefs and the Director of the Office of Professional Accountability (OPA). The MNPd Human Resources Director, Recruitment Section Supervisor, Recruitment Sergeant, or Recruitment Section Background Investigative Supervisor will present applicant information to the DCOP Panel.<sup>14</sup> (*See Recommendation 9*) According to HR Director Bibb, the DCOP Panel will review the background investigation and the investigator's summary and can request more information about an applicant if they have concerns. If there are no concerns, the review panel can clear an applicant to continue to move forward in the hiring process. The Recruitment Section's SOPs do not address any conflicts of interest due to personal or business relationships with applicants that may arise during the panel interviews or applicant reviews conducted by the DCOP Panel. (*See Recommendation 10*)

The DCOP Panel members who are present (or their designees) will vote in favor of an applicant being categorized as Qualified, Disqualified, Deferred, or Better Qualified Applicants. To move forward in the process, an applicant must receive approval from four of the six members on the DCOP Panel. If the vote results in a tie, the decision will automatically defer to an applicant interview with the DCOP Panel.<sup>15</sup> (*See Recommendation 8*)

- *Qualified* – “Applicants have complied with all specific requirements and/or precedent conditions to move on to the Conditional Offer stage of the application process.”
- *Disqualified* – “Applicants can be disqualified and removed from the hiring process for any of the following reasons...”
- *Deferred* – “Applicants may need further applicant file review, an applicant interview, and/or etc. In some cases, more applicant information may be requested.”
- *Better Qualified Applicants* – “Can be disqualified and removed from the hiring process based on the totality of the information contained within the background investigation. Because of the sensitive nature of police work, the level of responsibility entrusted, and the integrity required of a police officer, all background information will be taken into account. Background investigations are based on numerous factors which are located in

---

<sup>14</sup> “Recruitment Unit - Standard Operating Procedures,” (Metro Nashville Police Department, August 4, 2020)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

[SOP] section 1.8, Background Investigations. These factors are evaluated both individually and comprehensively to ensure applicants can meet and satisfy all established standards of Metropolitan Nashville Police Department.”

## 6. Conditional Offer

Once an applicant has been categorized as qualified, then a conditional offer will be extended to move forward with the rest of the hiring process. An applicant must sign a conditional offer of employment prior to submitting to the medical examination, drug screening, psychological examination, and the CVSA exam.<sup>16</sup>

## 7. Post-Offer Screening and Exams

### *Medical (Physical) Exam*

The medical examination is conducted by Dr. Gill Wright from the Metro Department of Health, who is the approved Civil Service medical examiner. According to Lieutenant Hampton, after a medical examination, MNPDP does not receive an applicant’s medical information, they receive a cover sheet stating if the applicant is fit or not. During an interview with MNCO, Ms. Bibb, MNPDP’s Human Resources Director, explained that the medical examinations are conducted using “Army induction standards.” These standards, “Army Regulations 40-501 Medical Services Standards of Medical Fitness Rapid Action Revision (RAR),” were issued in August of 2011 by the Department of the Army.<sup>17</sup>

There is an appeal process for medical examinations. According to HR Director Bibb, if an applicant has a condition that would disqualify them by the military standards but would not impede their day to day performance as a police officer, a waiver can be granted by the Civil Service Commission with Dr. Wright’s support. For instance, Ms. Bibb discussed psoriasis which is disqualifying for the Army but would not impede an officer conducting their duties.

### *Pre-Academy Program*

In an effort to retain more recruits in the period between the end of the hiring process and the start of the next Training Academy class, MNPDP has created a pre-academy program for applicants that successfully make it through the hiring process. Pre-academy recruits are hired by MNPDP to work in civilian roles until their academy class begins. They earn the Police Officer Trainee salary of \$42,259.74 per year (\$19.12 per hour). According to Lieutenant Hampton, the department has previously employed successful applicants in an administrative capacity, but the new pre-academy program introduces a physical fitness routine, curriculum-based educational materials, and a mentor who is a sworn officer. The Recruitment Unit hopes that the pre-academy program will help to retain applicants and better prepare them for success during their time at the MNPDP Training Academy and beyond. The MNPDP Training Academy class that begins in March 2021 will be the first cohort to have had the opportunity to participate in this fully established pre-academy program. (*See Recommendation 11*)



Additionally, if an applicant disagrees with the medical examiner's decision, they can appeal the decision to the Civil Service Commission and submit two medical opinions which refute the diagnosis and prognosis of the medical examiner.<sup>18</sup>

### *Psychological Testing*

The psychological examination conducted during the MNPD's hiring process is contracted out to a third-party company, Hughes and McDaniel, who specializes in psychological assessment. They administer several psychological surveys including Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2).<sup>19</sup> MMPI-2 was published by the University of Minnesota Press in 1989. It is a self-report tool used to help assess a wide range of clinical conditions. The tool consists of 567 true-false questions and the administration time is typically 60-90 minutes.<sup>20</sup> Hughes and McDaniel also administers the Candidate and Officer Personnel Survey (COPS) which is a 240-item test that is specifically geared toward law enforcement psychological evaluation.

After the administration of this written portion, part two of the psychological examination consists of a one-on-one interview between the applicant and a psychologist at Hughes and McDaniel. This discussion is different for each applicant as the conversation focuses on indicators or characteristics discovered during the written assessment.<sup>21</sup> Concerns that were found in the background investigation but were not disqualifying can be sent to the psychologist to further probe in the evaluation.

The recommendation of the psychological examination is not an appealable decision. According to Lieutenant Hampton, should an applicant be disqualified by the psychological examination and is determined to not be mentally fit to be a police officer, the decision cannot be appealed to the Civil Service Commission. Applicants who are found to not be fit during the psychological examination are not eligible to reapply with the department for twelve months.<sup>22</sup>

### *Drug Screening*

Applicants must pass a drug test as well as a polygraph or CVSA concerning their drug use. Testing positive on a drug screening would disqualify the applicant for service. Over time, MNPD has changed their drug use criteria for applicants for the role of police officer. Currently, an applicant cannot have used illegal drugs within 12 months of the date of their application, six months for marijuana use. The sale of any drugs is automatically disqualifying and there might be permanent disqualification for the use of drugs such as heroin, LSD, PCP, crack cocaine, and methamphetamine or similar substances. Drug use is reviewed during the hiring process and

---

<sup>18</sup> "Recruitment Unit - Standard Operating Procedures," (Metro Nashville Police Department, August 4, 2020)

<sup>19</sup> *09/14/20 Mayors Policing Policy: Workforce Group*, (YouTube, 2020), <https://youtu.be/teyqxi4ceWA>.

<sup>20</sup> "MMPI-2 Overview," (University of Minnesota Press, 2021), <https://www.upress.umn.edu/test-division/mmpi-2>.

<sup>21</sup> *09/14/20 Mayors Policing Policy: Workforce Group*.

<sup>22</sup> "Recruitment Unit - Standard Operating Procedures," (Metro Nashville Police Department, August 4, 2020)

multiple factors may come into play when it comes to eligibility, including age at the time of drug use, how recently it was used, and the frequency of use.<sup>23</sup>

### *Computer Voice Stress Analyzer (CVSA) Examination*

MNPD conducts an interview using a voice stress analysis technology called Computer Voice Stress Analyzer (CVSA). During a CVSA examination, a trained examiner looks for signs of deception from the applicant. This voice stress technology is used instead of using a polygraph device. Before the examination, an applicant is provided with a consent form, release form, and a copy of the questions to be asked.<sup>24</sup> Lieutenant Hampton said that the CVSA is mostly standardized so that it is reliably administered but aims to detect deception by asking questions like, “is there anything in your PHS that you didn’t disclose? Is there anything in this investigation you are withholding?”

After the examination, the examiner submits a written report with all the associated forms and graphs to the Recruitment Section for review by the CVSA Coordinator or the Background Investigative Supervisor. If an examiner believes there was deception detected during an examination, a second examination can be requested by the examinee or the examiner.<sup>25</sup>

### **8. Final Panel**

After an applicant has completed the physical examination, psychological examination, drug screening, and the CVSA examination, a final panel will convene to review the results of these assessments. The final panel consists of the members of the Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel as well as the Civil Service medical examiner, MNPD’s HR Director, a supervisor from the Recruitment Section or a CVSA examiner, and the head of MNPD’s Wellness division. According to HR Director Bibb, if an applicant has passed these assessments and the panel decides to hire them, MNPD will contact the applicant and let them know they have been approved to attend the upcoming academy training class. Often, MNPD will also extend pre-academy employment opportunities to candidates that have successfully undergone the hiring process and accept a spot in the upcoming training academy class.

---

<sup>23</sup> “Police Officer Employment Standards,” (Metro Nashville Police Department, 2021), <https://www.nashville.gov/Police-Department/Get-Involved/Become-a-Police-Officer/Employment-Standards.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> “Recruitment Unit - Standard Operating Procedures,” (Metro Nashville Police Department, August 4, 2020)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

# METRO NASHVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT RECRUITMENT HIRING PROCESS

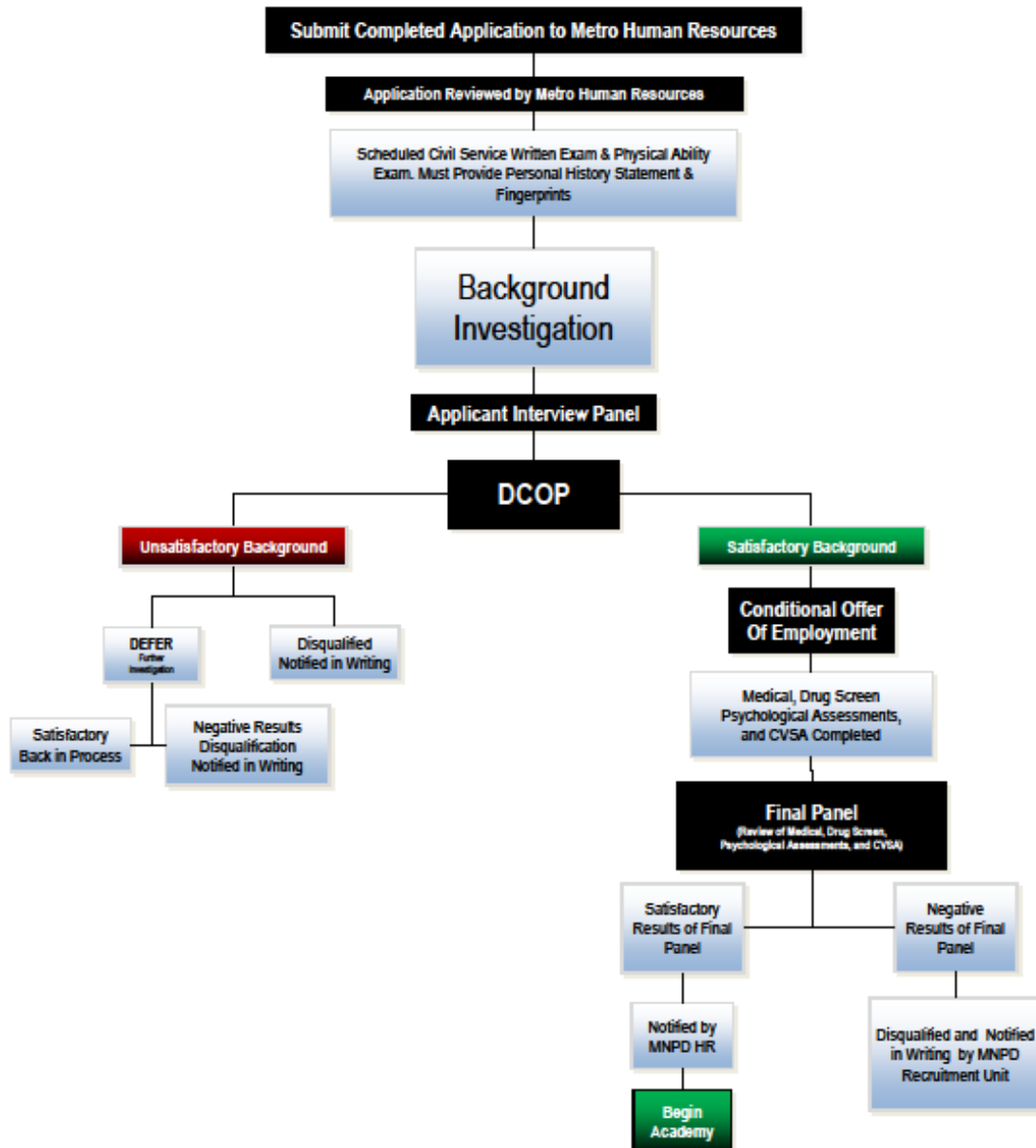


Figure 2: MNPD Hiring Process as Outlined by the Department

### *Research Example: Experimentally Testing Recruitment Messages in Chattanooga, TN*

Recruiting and retaining police department applicants is a challenge for departments across the country. Researchers from the Behavioral Insights Team—an international research group based in the UK with offices in the US—have worked with police departments to find out how to improve police recruitment. In a study conducted with Chattanooga Police Department, researchers used a randomized control trial to test whether the type of message used on recruitment mailers led to increases in recruitment, particularly recruitment of women and people of color. To conduct the experiment, researchers sent 9,907 postcards to a random selection of registered voters who were within the target age range and compared them to a control group of 11,900 voters who did not receive a postcard. Voter records include race, gender, and age so they could track respondents’ demographics. The postcards were personalized with the individual’s first name and had a picture of a current Black male officer. The researchers varied two sentences that altered the message of the postcard. The messages emphasized service, the challenging nature of the job, the long-term career prospects, or impact on the community.

Results showed that postcards with a service message stating “Are you ready to serve?” did not increase applications compared to never having received a postcard at all. Postcards stating, “Are you up for the challenge?” or “Are you looking for a long-term career?” had three times more applicants than the control group who received no postcard. Applications from people of color increased four times compared to the no-postcard group when they received the “challenge” or “long-term career” message. Postcards focusing on impact asked, “What it would mean to you and your community?” had a greater impact than not receiving a postcard but less than the career or challenge messages.

This study, as well as other studies highlighted in the Behavioral Insights Team’s report (referenced below), show that recruitment and retention of police officers is an area where careful research and experimentation can increase the number of police department applicants, diversify applicants, help applicants navigate the recruitment process, and help them succeed in the police academy.

#### References:

Linos, Elizabeth. “More Than Public Service: A Field Experiment on Job Advertisements and Diversity in the Police.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 28, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 67–85.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mux032>.

Weill, Joanna, Elizabeth Linos, Siddharth Mandava, and Cecily Wallman-Stokes. “Behavioral Insights for Building the Police Force of Tomorrow.” New York: The Behavioral Insights Team, January 23, 2019.  
<https://www.bi.team/publications/behavioral-insights-for-building-the-police-force-of-tomorrow/>.

## Data on Recruitment

The following analysis is based on data provided by MNPD to Mayor Cooper’s Policing Policy Commission in October 2020. The information provided was aggregated, yearly data in Excel format that showed the attrition of applicants through each stage of the hiring process. ***It is important to note that this analysis shows where disparities exist, not the causes of the disparities. There are likely multiple reasons why any disparity exists, and these should be a focus for MNPD while aiming to increase equity in the hiring process.***

The information was presented as a total and disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender categories. The analysis primarily focuses on White men, White women, Black men, Black women, Hispanic men, and Hispanic women due to low numbers of applicants in other groups. When focusing on department totals (Figure 3 and Table 2), Asian Men, Asian Women, and Other or Unknown Groups are included. Chi-square tests and Fisher’s exact tests are used to compare whether differences between race/ethnicity and gender groups were different than expected if race/ethnicity and gender played no role in the outcome. Additionally, an effect size was computed for each test. Cramer’s  $V$  is the most appropriate effect size for categorical data with more than two categories on a variable.<sup>26</sup> In this case with five degrees of freedom, a Cramer’s  $V$  of .04-.13 is considered a small effect, .13-.22 is considered medium, and .22 or greater is considered large. Additional tables for each plot can be found in Appendix A.

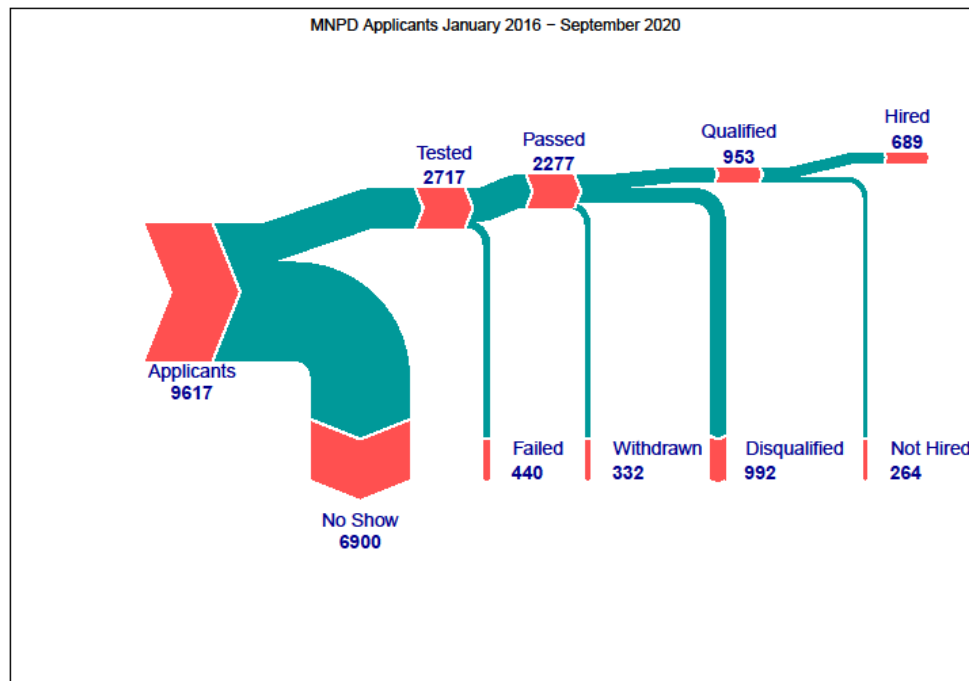


Figure 3: Path of MNPD Applicants Through Hiring Process

<sup>26</sup> Sun, Shuyan, Wei Pan, and Lihshing Leigh Wang. “A Comprehensive Review of Effect Size Reporting and Interpreting Practices in Academic Journals in Education and Psychology.” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 102, no. 4 (November 2010): 989–1004. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0019507>.

Figure 3 shows the path of all applicants of all racial/ethnic groups through the MNPd hiring process from January 2016 through September 2020. A total of 9,617 applicants were invited to Civil Service Testing. From 2016 to 2020, approximately 28% of applicants (2,717) completed the Civil Service Tests. That means that 72% of applicants who were invited to participate in the Civil Service Tests did not show up for the exam. In 2020, 66% of applicants invited to the Civil Service Tests did not show up for their test date. (See Recommendation 3)

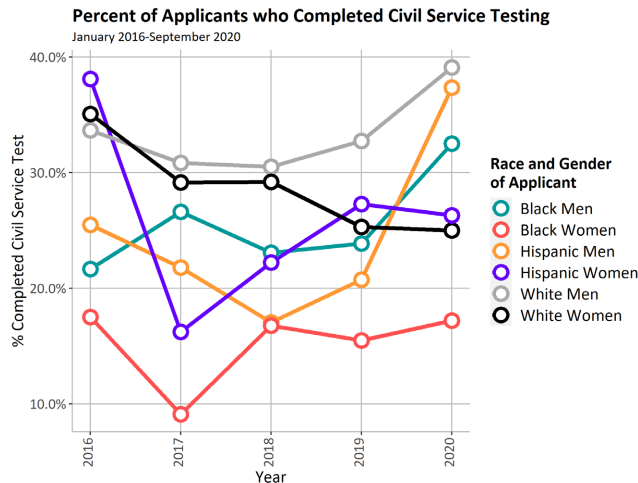


Figure 4: Percent of Applicants Who Completed Civil Service Testing by Race and Gender, 2016-September 2020

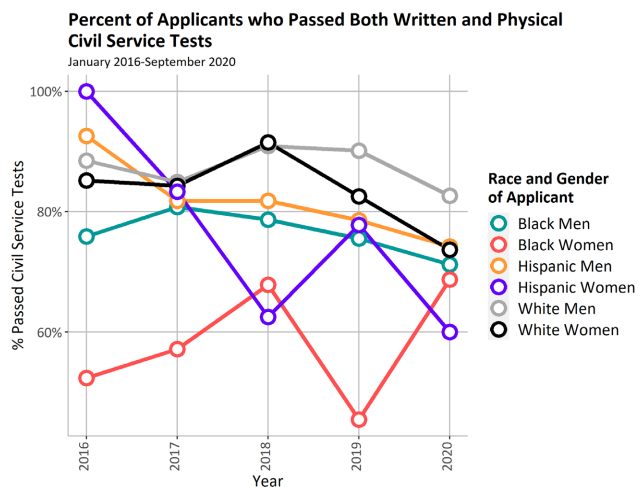


Figure 5: Percent of Applicants Who Passed Civil Service Testing by Race and Gender, 2016-September 2020

Figure 4 disaggregates the percentage of applicants completing the Civil Service Tests by race/ethnicity and gender showing the trend over time. Black women were the least likely to show up to the Civil Service Tests following their application to MNPd. Focusing on 2020, of the 93 Black women applicants included in the data, only 16 (17%) completed the exams. The Chi-square test was significant ( $\chi^2=26.5$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $p<.001$ , Cramer's  $V=.13$ ) meaning that in 2020 some groups diverged from what would be expected if race/ethnicity and gender had no effect. Black women were much less likely to complete the exams than expected and White men were more likely to take the exams than expected. Black men, Hispanic men, and Hispanic women did not differ substantially from the expected values for their respective groups.

From January 2016 through September 2020, 2,277 applicants passed the Civil Service Tests, approximately 84% of test takers. For 2020, 78.5% of test takers passed both the written and physical exams. Due to few Hispanic women who completed Civil Service Testing, the expected count of failing the tests was less than five meaning that a Chi-square test is inappropriate for the

data. Instead, a Fisher's exact test was used. The test indicated that, in 2020, group differences were not significantly different than expected ( $p=.10$ , Cramer's  $V=.08$ ). When pooling with the previous four years, the Chi-square test is significant with Black women failing more often than

would be expected ( $\chi^2=84.1$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $p<.001$ , Cramer's  $V=.18$ ). Figure 5 plots the percent of applicants who passed both the written and physical Civil Service Tests annually. Prior to 2020, Black women had a passage rate substantially lower than other groups.

After passing the Civil Service Tests, applicants have their background investigations completed and the Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel evaluates qualifications. If the applicant passes the DCOP Panel and is given a conditional offer of employment, they complete the medical, psychological, drug, and CVSA tests. Due to the low numbers of applicants and the large number of categories of disqualification, we pool all disqualifications. As shown in Table 1, of the 355 applicants who passed Civil Service Tests in 2020 and did not withdraw from the hiring process, 280 (79%) were found to be qualified and 75 (21%) were disqualified. A Fisher's exact test showed that the breakdown by race/ethnicity and gender differed from what would be expected if race/ethnicity and gender played no role in the process ( $p<.05$ , Cramer's  $V=.14$ ). Black men are overrepresented in disqualifications compared to their expected amount. Eight (40%) of the 20 disqualified Black male applicants were excluded based on "arrest history."

**Table 1: Number and Percent of Applicants Who Were Qualified and Disqualified by Both the DCOP Panel and Final Panel Review in the First Nine Months of 2020 After Passing Civil Service Tests (excludes applicants who withdrew from hiring process)**

	Qualified		Disqualified		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
<b>White Men</b>	192	82%	41	18%	233
<b>Black Men</b>	37	65%	20	35%	57
<b>Hispanic Men</b>	18	78%	5	22%	23
<b>White Women</b>	23	82%	5	18%	28
<b>Black Women</b>	9	82%	2	18%	11
<b>Hispanic Women</b>	1	33%	2	67%	3

Figure 6 shows the trend over time in applicants who are found to be qualified. The graph excludes Hispanic women since the low number of eligible applicants makes the percentage vary widely based on a single case. Over the five-year period, there has been a trend where an increasing percentage of applicants are found to be qualified. There are several low percentages of note. In 2019, nine out of the 10 Black women passing both the written and physical Civil Service Tests were disqualified: two for arrest history, two based on the background investigation, one for not meeting minimum requirements, one for failure to disclose, one for failure to keep appointments, and two based on the psychological exam. In 2018, 51 (86%) Black men out of the 59 passing applicants were disqualified: 17 based on the background investigation, three for arrest history, six for not meeting minimum qualifications, one for the drug policy, six for failure to disclose, seven for failure to follow up, two for failure to keep appointments, one for work history, one based on the CVSA, five based on the medical exam,

and two based on the psychological exam. In 2017, 16 (89%) of Hispanic men passing the Civil Service Tests were disqualified: three for arrest history, three for the drug policy, three for failure to disclose, three for failure to follow up, two for failure to keep appointments, one based on the medical exam, and one based on the psychological exam.

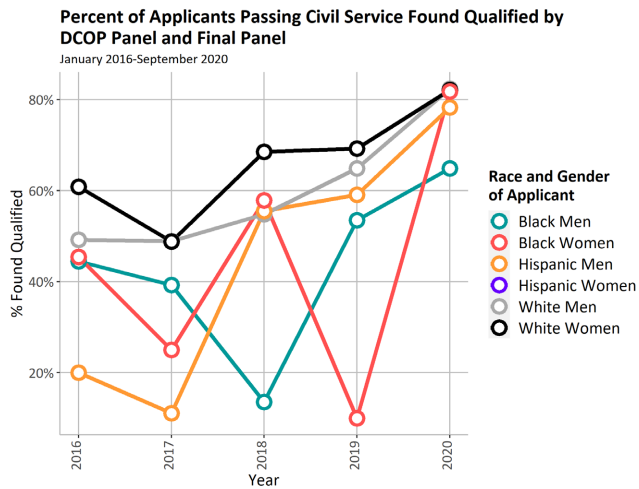


Figure 6: Percent of Applicants Passing Civil Service Tests Found Qualified by DCOP Panel and Final Panel by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2016-September 2020

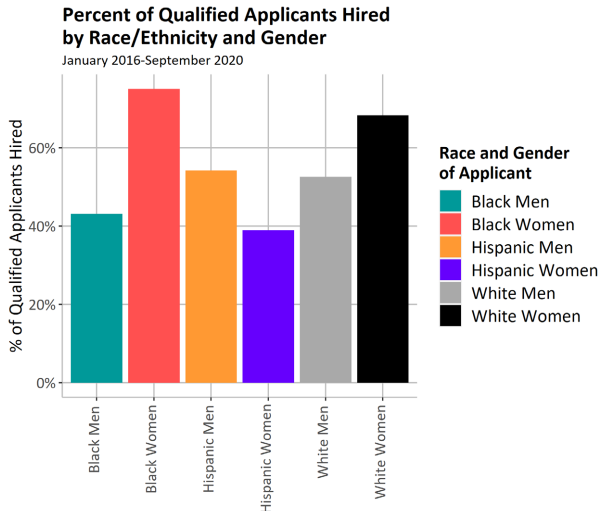


Figure 7: Percent of Qualified Applicants Hired by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, Data Pooled 2016-September 2020

If the five years of data are pooled, 1,241 (56%) of the 2,202 applicants passing both Civil Service Tests are found to be qualified by the DCOP Panel and Final Panel. A Chi-square test shows that race/ethnicity and gender groups differ from the expected number of qualified applicants ( $\chi^2=42.9$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $p<.001$ , Cramer's  $V=.13$ ). When pooled across the five years, the qualification rate for Black men differs most from the expected qualification rate with only 43% found to be qualified compared to the rate for all applicants, 56%. Hispanic men and Black women also have lower qualification rates of 45% and 47%, respectively. White men, White women, and Hispanic women are overrepresented with qualification rates of 59%, 65%, and 64%, respectively.

The final stage is hiring. In several years of data, more individuals are listed as hired than who were found qualified since hiring can take place the year after the background investigation. To address this issue, all five years were pooled to test whether there were race/ethnicity and gender differences in the proportion of people who were hired after being found qualified. The Chi-Square test showed that race/ethnicity and gender groups differed from what would be expected if groups had equal hiring rates ( $\chi^2=26.1$ ,  $df=5$ ,

$p<.001$ , Cramer's  $V=.13$ ). Figure 7 shows the percent of qualified applicants who were hired pooled over the 5-year time frame. On average, 54% of qualified applicants were hired. Black women and White women were above the average with 75% and 68% of qualified applicants hired, respectively. White men and Hispanic men were close to average with 53% and 54%



hired, respectively. Black men and Hispanic women were below the average with 43% and 39% of qualified applicants hired, respectively.

Another way to examine the demographics of new hires is through the racial/ethnic and gender composition of those who are hired. Figure 8 plots the demographic composition of new hires over time. From January through September 2020, 93 officer trainees were hired. Of these, 68 (73%) were White men. In the preceding four years, White men comprised 63%-67% of all new hires. The percentage of White women fell from 17% in 2019 to 8% in the first nine months of 2020. Black men fell from 7% in 2019 to 3% in the first nine months of 2020, Black women fell from 5% in 2019 to 2% in the first nine months of 2020, and Hispanic women fell from 1% in 2019 to 0% in the first nine months of 2020. Hispanic men represented 5% of new hires in 2019 compared to 4% in the first nine months of 2020. Table 2 shows the number and percent of hires by race/ethnicity and gender for 2016-September 2020 and includes Asian men, Asian women, and other unknown groups.

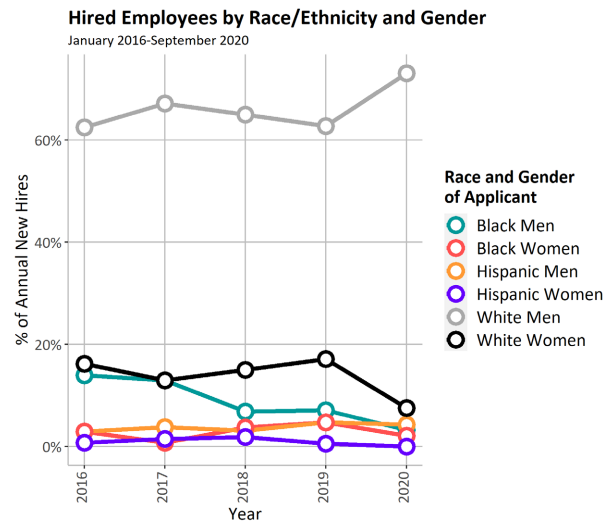


Figure 8: Annual Hires by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2016-September 2020

Table 2: Racial/Ethnic and Gender Composition of Hired Applicants to MNPD										
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>White Men</b>	85	63%	88	67%	104	65%	106	63%	68	73%
<b>Black Men</b>	19	14%	17	13%	11	7%	12	7%	3	3%
<b>Hispanic Men</b>	4	3%	5	4%	5	3%	8	5%	4	4%
<b>White Women</b>	22	16%	17	13%	24	15%	29	17%	7	8%
<b>Black Women</b>	4	3%	1	1%	6	4%	8	5%	2	2%
<b>Hispanic Women</b>	1	1%	2	2%	3	2%	1	1%	0	0%
<b>Asian Men</b>	1	1%	1	1%	2	1%	3	2%	1	1%
<b>Asian Women</b>	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Other and Unknown Groups</b>	0	0%	0	0%	5	3%	2	1%	8	9%
<b>Total</b>	136		131		160		169		93	

\*2020 includes data from January through September 2020

## Disqualifiers for Employment Eligibility

There is a range of disqualifiers for employment eligibility for the role of police officer trainee with MNPD. These disqualifiers, such as not meeting the minimum employment standards, can be caught upon an applicant's initial application or upon review of their completed Personal History Statement. However, some applicants will be disqualified later in the recruitment process due to further information regarding their PHS responses, information that is collected from other agencies or references, or information divulged by the applicant during an interview or examination. During an interview with MNCO, HR Director Bibb explained that MNPD does have a level of discretion when it comes to histories that may or may not be disqualifying. She stated, "as long as we can get POST to give us a waiver for it, if it isn't one of the 'seven deadly' ones... something like that, the department itself comes up with what we can live with and what we can't." By the "seven deadly" disqualifiers, Ms. Bibb was referring to POST standards that prohibit certification for any guilty plea or plea of *nolo contendere* related to: force, violence, theft, dishonesty, gambling, liquor and other alcoholic beverages or controlled substances including a DUI.

### *Additional Sworn Staff Within Recruitment*

Four sworn officers were transferred to the Recruitment Unit at the end of 2020: Officer Larry Williams, Officer Cassandra Del Bosco, Officer Bill Fox and Officer Cecilia Gomez. These four officers will work under the supervision of Sergeant Clifton Knight and serve as recruiters at events and using social media. The demographics of the four sworn officers: one Hispanic female, one white female, one Black male, and one white male.

Deputy Chief Lokey explained that there are some nuances when it comes to deciding if information that is disclosed is disqualifying. For instance, past drug or alcohol use. She explained that such disclosed information would be discussed with the applicant to help determine if there are any concerns about abusive or addictive behavior. In deciding whether a past behavior might be disqualifying, Deputy Chief Lokey explained that context is crucial:

We weigh heavily on the responses... We often get, one or two times during high school, individuals often admit, you know, I haven't smoked in over a year but I did for a long time. But I've decided that I want a career in law enforcement, however it is, so I determined that that [the marijuana use] needs to stop. So we usually try to pry a little bit, you know, tell us about this drug usage, tell us how often, what were your thoughts, where are you now today? And our psychological evaluation really speaks to that. They do a lot of questioning and trying to seek out any abusive behavior, drugs, violence, what have you.

Deputy Chief Lokey also emphasized the importance of information collected from the personal reference questionnaires. She stated that if a personal reference responds to a questionnaire with

something that might be “alarming,” the department will seek them out and ask them to clarify further. Sometimes, she explained, references will fill out the questionnaire form and not want to be contacted again. She says the department is respectful of such responses, wanting people to feel safe providing information.

According to Lieutenant Hampton, one of the top reasons for disqualification is arrest history and a failure to provide the proper expungement paperwork. Another top reason he highlighted was a failure to disclose information that is later discovered during a background investigation. He emphasized that the latter was dependent on whether the failure to disclose was accidental or if it was information that the applicant was asked about directly. Lieutenant Hampton also discussed how some disqualifying information may come from personal references that respond to MNPD’s request for additional information about an applicant.

### Past Incidents of Violence or Use of Force

The Personal History Statement includes several questions about violence related to physical fights such as, “Have you ever been involved in a fight?,” “Have you ever been in a fight or argument with anyone while you had been drinking?” and “Have you ever been involved in an argument or fight because of a narcotic, dangerous drug, or marijuana? This includes but is not limited to: marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, anabolic steroids, ecstasy, LSD.” Deputy Chief Lokey explained that—like decisions on drug and alcohol use—the context of involvement in incidents such as fights is also important. She stated, “someone gets in a fight in high school, somebody got in a fight in college, you know, we want to talk to them. Anything that they acknowledge doing...we want to talk to you about it. We want to understand it better.”

The PHS also asks applicants other questions about interpersonal violence, these include: “Have you ever been involved in or been accused of any type of forced sexual act?,” “Have you ever forced anyone to have sexual intercourse with you?,” and “Have you ever forced anyone to kiss, touch, or to have any other type of sexual contact with you?” Lieutenant Hampton explained that responses to questions focused on histories of violence or sexual assault are also sent to the organization that conducts the psychological assessments, “some of that one there is going to be more specific for psych. And maybe what we provide to them [psychological evaluators] when it comes to some of that stuff. And a lot of that just depends on what the answer is...” He also said that personal references are important for evaluating past instances of violence.

The PHS includes several questions on domestic violence and a Domestic Abuse Acknowledgement which defines “abuse” as well as “domestic abuse victim” and has an applicant agree that they will report to their Recruitment Background Investigator within 48 hours “any Domestic Violence incident that you or your immediate family member is involved in as a suspect, victim, or witness.” On the PHS, Question 43 asks, “Have you ever been in a physical confrontation or altercation with anyone, including your spouse, ex-spouse, children, relatives, girl/boyfriend, or parents? To include pushing, shoving, etc.,” Question 44 asks, “Has your spouse, ex-spouse, children, relatives, girl/boyfriend or parents ever called the police on

you for any reason?,” and Question 46 asks “Has your spouse, ex-spouse, children, relatives, girl/boyfriend or parents ever accused you of battery in a report or discussion with anyone else?” The personal reference questionnaire that is sent to an applicant’s spouse or significant other includes the question “have you ever had a physical fight with your spouse?” The questionnaire sent to listed references also includes a question about domestic violence: “Has this applicant and spouse or domestic partner (girlfriend/boyfriend) ever had any domestic problems? If yes, briefly explain situation and give location.” Deputy Chief Lokey stated that the department takes domestic violence very seriously and that mentions of domestic violence from personal references are further investigated.

The PHS includes a section on previous service in any of the branches of the U.S. Armed Forces including a release form for military records to be released to MNPD. However, the PHS does not include a similar section for any applicants that might be a current or former law enforcement official in another jurisdiction. There is a lack of questions on the PHS for current or former law enforcement officials that would help evaluate their previous service. (*See Recommendation 1*)

When an applicant is a current or former law enforcement official, HR Director Bibb explained that it is best to review their personnel files in person. She explained that obtaining such information over the phone is often challenging. Such contacts are likely to only obtain an individual’s years of employment and whether they left the department in good standing. It is unlikely that any performance evaluations or disciplinary history will be disclosed. Ms. Bibb highlighted the need to budget for such travel, as such reviews can take background investigators to different states around the country. Ms. Bibb believes that under Chief Drake, the Recruitment Section will be more consistent in sending out investigators to review personnel files in person.

Lieutenant Hampton explained that in the absence of law enforcement records or criminal convictions for incidents like violent offenses, the department’s Recruitment Section relies on other steps of the background investigation process such as personal reference questionnaires that allow individuals to come forward with concerns about an applicant. Personal reference questionnaires sent to listed references and former employers include the question “how would you describe the applicant’s ability to control his/her temper?”

### Evaluating Potential Biases of Recruits

During interviews with MNCO, the Recruitment Section highlighted a few different ways that they search for potential biases among applicants and recruits.

On the Personal History Statement, Question #99 asks, “Have you any racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or other prejudices that will affect your job performance?” This question is a double-barreled question meaning that it asks two separate questions while only asking for one response. The first question is whether the individual has prejudices. The second is whether their prejudices will affect job performance. When combined, it is not clear which question the

response is referencing, the existence of prejudice or the impact of prejudice on job performance. (See Recommendation 2)

Additional questions about an applicant's prejudices are included on the personal reference questionnaires that are sent to listed references, former employers, and spouses or significant others. These questions include: "Does the applicant display prejudice against people of certain races, religions, or other groups? How does he/she get along with other races and nationalities?"

Lieutenant Hampton explained that the answers to the questions on the Personal History Statement are reviewed by the Recruitment Section and are discussed with an applicant during their applicant interview and/or during their psychological examination with a psychologist. Deputy Chief Lokey elaborated on how the department seeks out bias during the hiring process stating:

I sat down with Hughes and McDaniel about a week ago, they use the IACP [International Association of Chiefs of Police] standards. They have different criteria, dimensions, one of them is freedom from bias. They also look for social competence, teamwork, adaptability...They have one test, which is COPS – it covers bias in race, gender, national origin, income level, you know, all the ways that we have biases. They also do an incomplete sentence, meaning they'll ask a question about, what do you think about women in the police force? And they look for any biases against women or the LGBTQ. So, they do a really good job at looking at biases. And since I've sat down with them and told them that you know, we're looking at these characteristics, they were able to pinpoint their criteria that matches up to – does this person have communication skills, integrity, empathy. So, that was a good evaluation for us to say, yes, we do also test for these qualities that we're looking for.

The Candidate and Officer Personnel Survey (COPS), is a tool used during pre-employment psychological evaluations to measure bias and tolerance. The COPS-R (Candidate and Officer Personnel Survey – Revised) is a 240-item test that has 20 items specifically assessing for bias against minorities, women, the wealthy, and educated people.<sup>27</sup> Answers to this test are typically used by psychologists to query areas of concern in a conversation with the applicant.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the Personal History Statement, interviews, references, and assessments, the Recruitment Section will look for signs of potential bias within an applicant's social media

---

<sup>27</sup> For general information about the COPS-R assessment see <https://www.copsr.com/>. For detailed information about the constructs measured in the COPS-R assessment see: Robert McGrath and Matthew Guller, "Concurrent Validity of the Candidate and Officer Personnel Survey (COPS)," *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 11, no. 2 (June 2009): 150–59, <https://doi.org/10.1350/ijps.2009.11.2.119>.

<sup>28</sup> Schlosser et al. "Assessing Bias and Intolerance in Police and Public Safety Personnel." (*Police Chief Magazine*, 2021), <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/assessing-bias-and-intolerance/>

presence. Lieutenant Hampton explained that the Recruitment Section has received training from the Specialized Investigations Division (SID) on how to conduct social media searches online. He highlighted that there are different boundaries to be mindful of when it comes to a hiring processes compared to a search conducted for a criminal investigation. Lieutenant Hampton explained that applicants are asked to disclose login information for their social media accounts during their first panel interview, but they are not required to do so. Applicants are also permitted to sign into their social media accounts in the presence of personnel from the Recruitment Section so that their accounts can be reviewed without disclosing passwords. Deputy Chief Lokey explained that if an applicant refuses to disclose their social media information, background investigators rely on search engines, such as Google and Bing, to find as much publicly accessible information about an applicant as they can. (*See Recommendation 7*)

According to Lieutenant Hampton, the social media searches carried out by the Recruitment Section include reviewing posts made by the applicant, posts reposted by the applicant, and online membership in any groups that may be deemed inappropriate or concerning. According to the Recruitment Section's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), candidates can be disqualified if their social media contains content that "ridicules, maligns, disparages, or otherwise promotes discrimination against race, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation, gender identity and expression or any other explicit class of individuals." Candidates can also be disqualified if "their social media content contains speech or other expression that suggests that they are engaged in behavior reasonably considered to be unlawful or reckless toward public safety."<sup>29</sup>

### Oversight and Evaluation of Background Investigators

Lieutenant Hampton explained that the part-time background investigators are supervised by the Background Investigation Supervisor Laura Fosbinder. Ms. Fosbinder ensures that investigations are complete and that there isn't important information missing. Ms. Fosbinder's supervisor is Lieutenant Hampton.

Since background investigators are retired police officers, they bring their professional experience to their investigations but as MNPd shifts priorities toward community-oriented policing and diversifying the police force it is important to ensure that background investigators are aligned with a changing department. This alignment with departmental change may also be impacted by a lack of age diversity amongst the background investigators who are taking on this role after retirement. HR Director Bibb stated that if background investigators were not aligned with the department's mission, there is a potential for bias in the investigations they conduct. According to the Recruitment Section's SOPs, background investigators are required to undergo annual training on topics including hiring laws, policies, areas of concern, and trends. They are also required to attend training conducted by the Background Investigation Supervisor regarding

---

<sup>29</sup> "Recruitment Unit - Standard Operating Procedures," (Metro Nashville Police Department, August 4, 2020)

the unit's standard operating procedures and the format in which investigations are to be conducted and documented.

The Background Investigation Supervisor is responsible for assigning, monitoring, and evaluating the status of each applicant file that is investigated. Recruitment Sergeant Knight is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the assigning process for integrity and ensuring the efficiency of each investigation. The Background Investigation Supervisor is also responsible for reviewing all completed investigations and summaries. The supervisor makes sure all necessary areas have been investigated and that the investigation was complete and thorough. (See *Recommendation 6*) The supervisor will then send the investigation summaries to the DCOP Panel members for their review.<sup>30</sup> During his interview, Lieutenant Hampton explained that he also reviews investigative files with Ms. Fosbinder and will review them as they are sent to the DCOP Panel members.

### *The 30x30 Pledge*

In March 2021, MNP Chief Drake signed onto the national 30x30 Pledge, an initiative sponsored by the Policing Project at NYU School of Law. The goal of the 30x30 Pledge is “to increase the representation of women in police recruit classes to 30% by 2030 and to ensure police policies and culture intentionally support the success of women officers throughout their careers.” Currently, women make up 11% of the MNP. The 30x30 Pledge uses evidence from social science researchers and was developed and vetted by a group of law enforcement leaders and academic experts. The pledge calls on agencies to commit to a series of no- and low-cost actions that are critical to understand the current state of an agency with regards to gender equity, understand factors that may be driving any disparities, and develop and implement strategies and solutions to advance women in policing. Over 20 police agencies across the country have already signed onto the 30x30 Pledge, including large, mid-sized, rural, university, and state policing agencies.

#### References:

“Coalition of Police Leaders, Researchers, and More Back 30x30 Initiative to Promote the Advancement of Women in Policing.” *Policing Project*, March 9, 2021.

<https://www.policingproject.org/news-main/2021/3/9/coalition-of-police-leaders-researchers-and-more-back-30x30-initiative-to-promote-the-advancement-of-women-in-policing>

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

## Discussion and Recommendations

The research questions motivating this report focused on reviewing the background investigation process as a part of hiring, identifying how disqualification decisions—especially disqualifications for violence-related incidents—are made, and how bias in applicants is investigated. The findings, above, review the employment standards, hiring process, data on recruitment, criteria used to disqualify applicants, how bias in recruits is evaluated, and oversight of the background investigation process. Several ongoing departmental changes are also highlighted including adding additional sworn recruiters who will hopefully assist with recruiting a more diverse pool of applicants and retaining them through the hiring process. Deputy Chief Lokey emphasized that one of her priorities is recruiting and retaining diverse applicants who reflect the diversity of Nashville.

By applying the conceptual model that emphasizes community, accountability, transparency, justice, equity, and evidence, this report makes eleven recommendations related to the background investigation process. These recommendations are focused on the Personal History Statement, Civil Service Testing, Background Investigations, the Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel, and one general recommendation related to the pre-academy employment program.

### Personal History Statement Recommendations

As discussed in the findings, the PHS is the raw material that helps guide the background investigators and is a crucial step in the background process. Applicants are asked to be truthful on the PHS, therefore thoroughness and well-crafted questions are essential. The PHS can also inform the psychological evaluation and lead investigators to ask the right follow up questions when talking with personal references. In reviewing the PHS, MNCO researchers identified two areas where changes are recommended:

*Recommendation 1: The Personal History Statement should include law-enforcement specific questions for applicants who have been law enforcement officials in another jurisdiction. This should include questions about unnecessary use of force, bias-based policing, and any disciplinary actions.*

As discussed in the findings, it is sometimes difficult to obtain personnel records of former law enforcement officers, especially those from out of state. If an applicant has a law enforcement background, it is important to know the type of officer she or he has been to gauge the type of officer they would be if they were to join MNP. Including several questions on the PHS regarding law enforcement background would not change the need to review personnel files but would assist in identifying areas of focus. For instance, if an applicant were asked whether they had been accused of bias-based policing and they explained that they had been accused regarding a traffic stop, the background investigator may attempt to find out more about how that officer has conducted traffic stops in addition to what is included in the personnel file. Similarly, if an officer does not disclose discipline that is found in personnel records, investigators should



evaluate whether the individual is withholding information that would reflect on their professional experience.

*Recommendation 2: Question #99 of the Personal History Statement asking whether applicants have a prejudice that will impact their job performance should be changed to a series of questions focused on discriminatory attitudes and behaviors and a short answer question regarding the applicant's understanding of implicit bias.*

Assessing whether an applicant has a bias that will influence her or his job performance is one of the most important, and most challenging, aspects of the police hiring process. Having psychologists evaluate potential biases is an important step in the process. The PHS is another step that could be more useful in evaluating bias than its current format. Since bias can be both explicit and implicit, the PHS could aim to evaluate both aspects of bias.

For explicit biases, the PHS should have a series of questions focusing on attitudes and behaviors using multiple items rather than a single item asking the applicant whether they are prejudiced. Due to social desirability bias, very few people—including those who act in prejudiced ways—would identify themselves as prejudiced. Asking specific questions would encourage self-reflection and emphasize to applicants that the department aims to minimize bias and treat all people with dignity and respect. Some possible questions include:

- Have you ever treated someone with less courtesy based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability status, nationality, or any other aspect of their identity than you would have if they were not part of that group?
- Would you have a problem working closely with someone who is a different race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, nationality, or who has a disability?
- Have you ever teased or bullied someone using stereotypes related to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability status, nationality, or any other aspect of identity?
- Have you ever used racial slurs?
- Have you ever made demeaning comments about a person based on their sexual orientation or gender presentation?

Affirmative answers to questions like these would require an explanation and would be discussed with the applicant. The questions could assist investigators in asking the right questions during their investigation and could inform the DCOP Panel or the psychological examiners.

Since implicit biases happen without an individual's awareness or intentional control, direct measurement in the PHS is not possible. Another strategy is to evaluate an applicant's understanding of implicit bias to gauge receptivity and exposure to examining their own unconscious biases. To achieve this, a short answer question should be included on the PHS that

asks the applicant to describe their understanding of implicit bias and what they have done in the past to try to counteract unconscious bias. For example, the question could read:

Psychological research shows that most people have unconscious or implicit biases toward people based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation, or other aspect of who they are. How do you understand unconscious or implicit bias and have you taken any steps to try to reduce or manage unconscious or implicit biases?

A short response to this questions may show that an applicant has a strong understanding of how stereotypes affect their decision making, that they have little to no exposure to the concepts, or they may not be open to the self-reflective work that is required to counteract implicit biases. Background investigators and the psychological evaluator can use this information in conjunction with the personal references to assess of the applicant's qualification.

### Civil Service Testing Recommendations

In 2020, two thirds (66%) of applicants did not show up to Civil Service Testing after submitting an application to the police department and being invited to take the tests. While research on other departments has found that no-shows to testing is often 50% or greater,<sup>31</sup> increasing the number of applicants who take the Civil Service Tests must be a priority. To increase equity in the department, it is important to address the reasons that Black women are less likely to attend Civil Service Testing.

*Recommendation 3: MNPd should evaluate reasons for Civil Service Testing no-shows through surveys and interviews with individuals who did not show up to testing. When impediments are identified, changes to the process should be considered and, if made, an evaluation plan should be in place to assess whether the change was effective. MNPd should aim to have at least 50% of invited applicants take the Civil Service Tests.*

People who complete an initial application likely have some interest in being a police officer and understanding why they did not follow through may be illuminating. Some departments have had great success by contacting no shows and reinviting them to apply. It is also important to assess whether there are administrative barriers that could be easily changed. For instance:

- Changes to email notifications to improve clarity or simplicity of messages.
- Sending text message reminders or phone calls the day before testing.

---

<sup>31</sup> See: Weill, Joanna, Elizabeth Linos, Siddharth Mandava, and Cecily Wallman-Stokes. "Behavioral Insights for Building the Police Force of Tomorrow." New York: The Behavioral Insights Team, January 23, 2019. <https://www.bi.team/publications/behavioral-insights-for-building-the-police-force-of-tomorrow/>.

- Changes to notarizing the PHS, providing a notary at Civil Service Testing locations, or determining whether notarization is necessary.
- Changing the due date of the PHS to after the Civil Service Testing. If an individual passes the tests, they may have more incentive to complete the PHS.

When changes are made, evaluating whether they have the intended effect is an important step. Some changes may have undesirable outcomes or have no effect and being able to identify those is an important part of evidence-based policing. Changes that have already occurred should also be evaluated and shared with the community:

*Recommendation 4: MNPD should publicly release their planned evaluation report focusing on whether changing the physical agility section of the Civil Service Test reduces gender and racial disparities in attending and passing the test.*

MNPD's new physical agility test events include: a 99-yard agility run, a rescue simulation, a chain link fence climb, a solid fence climb, and a 500-yard run. Previously, the physical agility test focused on running, sit-ups, and push-ups. Members of MNPD's Recruitment Section expressed that the department was concerned that the previous physical agility test was one of the reasons that women were not advancing in the recruitment process or showing up to the Civil Service Tests. In an interview with MNCO, Deputy Chief Lokey explained that the changes to the physical agility test were going to focus on skills that were likely to be needed on the job.

MNPD plans to evaluate whether the new physical agility test is having the desired effect in reducing gender and racial disparities. To reflect a proactive culture of transparency, the results of this evaluation should be released to the public.

### Background Investigation and Interview Recommendations

To ensure that background investigations are unbiased and equitable, it is important that the background investigators are aligned with the mission of diversifying the police force and bringing candidates from a wide range of backgrounds to MNPD.

*Recommendation 5: MNPD should work to increase the racial, ethnic, gender, age, and language diversity of the Recruitment Section's background investigators to align with the population of Nashville more closely and make progress toward diversification by the end of 2021.*

The current group of part-time background investigators are former law enforcement officers who do not reflect the level of diversity MNPD is looking to achieve among their applicants and within the department's ranks. As mentioned above, of the 14 current background investigators, four are women and ten are men. One of the ten men is African American. All are retired officers. MNPD should prioritize increasing diversity at all levels of staff, including those who are not currently sworn officers. By more accurately reflecting the diversity of the Nashville

community at large—including race, ethnicity, gender, and age—MNPD can combat potential bias within their hiring process and make the department a more welcoming place for all.

One possible way to diversify the background investigators could be to open the job to civilian investigators who are not former law enforcement officers. By widening the recruitment for investigator roles, MNPD’s Recruitment Section might better reflect the diversity that they are looking to create in their sworn ranks both in terms of race/ethnicity as well as age.

Additionally, to ensure that background investigators are conducting their investigations equitably there should be a review of completed background investigations as well as future investigations.

*Recommendation 6: MNPD should review, at least annually, the demographics of applicants that have been assigned to background investigators and the number of disqualifications resulting from each investigator to identify potential biases. One investigator having higher disqualification rates for a specific demographic group than other investigators does not necessarily indicate bias, but it suggests that an in-depth audit is needed.*

Comparing investigators to one another is a helpful tool for performance evaluation. It is not the only tool nor can it be informative without following through on auditing investigative files.

Finally, the processes for evaluating social media should be clarified:

*Recommendation 7: The Recruitment Section’s SOPs should address the timing of the social media review in the hiring process and the procedures used by MNPD personnel for reviewing social media content. This should include a standard solicitation process regarding applicant social media information. Applicants who refuse to supply access to social media accounts should be disqualified from the hiring process.*

MNPD should add their social media review protocols to the Recruitment Section’s Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs). Currently, there is no information in the Recruitment Section’s SOPs regarding the process by which MNPD personnel review an applicant’s social media accounts online.

According to a paper released by IACP’s Law Enforcement Policy Center, police department applicants may be asked for access to their personal social media accounts to determine whether they “contain any objectionable or concerning information.” IACP also states that refusal by an applicant to provide access to social media accounts “may result in their immediate removal for consideration of employment.”<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> “Concepts & Issues Paper: Social Media,” (IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center, 2019), <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Social%20Media%20Paper%20-%202019.pdf>

The MNPB Recruitment Section's SOPs should include a standard solicitation process regarding an applicant's social media information. This process should include mainstream social media platforms as well as lesser known platforms that may be easier to conceal or join anonymously. Refusal to allow access to this information should disqualify an applicant from consideration. Documenting these procedures in the Recruitment Section's SOPs will ensure that all MNPB personnel are reviewing this information in a fair and equitable manner. This will help to increase accountability amongst the Recruitment Section's staff and increase transparency regarding the background investigation process.

### Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel Recommendations

The DCOP Panel is the department's main chance to evaluate whether the results of a background investigation qualify the person to be a police officer. The motivating incident for this report identified a weakness in the process. Since the applicant had already been evaluated by the DCOP panel and the district attorney stated that the incident was in self-defense, the applicant was not re-evaluated to see if the incident would have impacted the decision to qualify him as a candidate. This recommendation aims to close this gap:

*Recommendation 8: SOPs should require that if an applicant is the subject of a criminal investigation after review by the DCOP Panel—regardless of the investigation's outcome—the DCOP Panel must review the incident in the context of the applicant's full background investigation and re-vote on the applicant's qualification status.*

In addition to the above change to the Recruitment Section's SOPs regarding the DCOP Panel, MNPB could make changes to the DCOP Panel's composition that would make the hiring process more transparent and accountable to community needs and concerns. The DCOP Panel is currently comprised of the MNPB's deputy chiefs and the director of the Office of Professional Accountability (OPA). The DCOP Panel plays a large role in the qualification decision of each applicant, reviewing an applicant's background investigation file, and for those who are given conditional offers of employment, the results of the medical examination, psychological examination, drug screening, and CVSA. Additional members could be added to the DCOP Panel to increase transparency and accountability in the hiring process:

*Recommendation 9: MNPB should add the Executive Director of the COB or their designee as a voting member to the DCOP Panel.*

The COB has an important police accountability function that would add to the DCOP Panel's capacity to evaluate applicants' potential to be successful police officers. The executive director of the COB reports to the COB which is comprised of community members elected by the Metro Council. Including the executive director of the COB on the DCOP Panel would bring an external, community-focused perspective to the Panel which would hopefully improve the community's sense of legitimacy in the hiring process. The executive director would report on her or his activities with the DCOP Panel to the COB at their monthly public meeting which

would increase transparency in the evaluation of applicants' backgrounds. The executive director currently serves on MNPB's Force Review Board which also includes the director of OPA.

Finally, the Recruitment Section's SOPs address conflicts of interests among the background investigators but do not address these same concerns among the members of the DCOP Panel. A similar policy regarding these panelists should be included in the Recruitment Section's SOPs.

*Recommendation 10: The Recruitment Section's SOPs should address conflicts of interest of the Deputy Chiefs of Police Panel and direct panelists to recuse themselves from deliberating or voting on an applicant's qualification when they have a personal or business relationship with the applicant.*

This policy should prohibit panel members from deliberating or voting on an applicant who they have a personal or business relationship with. When deciding to recuse themselves, panelists should take into consideration any personal or business relationships they may have with an applicant's relatives since these may influence a panelist's ability to be objective.

These potential conflicts of interest are not explicitly addressed in Metro Government's Civil Service Rules. The Rules address nepotism within departments and states that employees who are relatives should not be placed within the same line of supervision where one relative is "responsible for supervising the job performance or work activities of another relative." This rule does not address nepotism in terms of hiring procedures and only refers to relatives, not persons who may know each other through personal or business relationships.

### General Recommendations

In an interview with MNCO, Lieutenant Ryan Hampton explained how the pre-academy employment program had begun as an unofficial way to retain applicants who had a long wait time before beginning their training at the academy. Over time, the program became more structured and now includes pre-academy employment at the department as well as a physical fitness routine, curriculum-based educational materials, and access to a mentor. The training academy class that begins in March 2021 will be the first cohort to have had the opportunity to participate in this fully established pre-academy program.

*Recommendation 11: MNPB should evaluate the pre-academy employment program to determine whether it improves training academy outcomes and early employment outcomes compared to those who did not participate in the program and release a public report on the program.*

Now that MNPB has formalized their pre-academy employment opportunities into a program, data should be collected and analyzed to measure the success of the program and help implement evidence-based changes in the future. By collecting this information and sharing it with the public, MNPB can also increase the transparency of their recruitment and retention of applicants with demographic information.

## Conclusion

Metro Nashville Police Department's Recruitment Section has a well-defined process for evaluating applicants for the police officer trainee position. Deputy Chief Lokey, Lieutenant Hampton, and HR Director Bibb all identified strengths and challenges in the recruitment process and outcomes. They also have been working to modify the Recruitment Section to increase the number of applicants and reduce attrition. They stated that Police Chief Drake's priority is to recruit officers who are critical thinkers, empathetic, have integrity, are problem solvers, and are good communicators. The data analysis in this report shows that there are racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in the hiring process that should be evaluated and addressed so that the goal of diversifying the police force can become a reality. The eleven recommendations offered in this report aim to encourage community, transparency, accountability, equity, justice, and evidence as core components of the police department.

## References

- 09/14/20 *Mayors Policing Policy: Workforce Group*. YouTube, September 16, 2020.  
<https://youtu.be/teyqxi4ceWA>.
- "Civil Service Rules." *Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, 2021*,  
<https://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/HumanResources/docs/CivilService/CivilServiceRules.pdf>
- Cole, Joshua. "NAACP Asks for Homicide to Be Investigated as Hate Crime." *WSMV*, October 20, 2020, [https://www.wsmv.com/news/davidson\\_county/naacp-asks-for-homicide-to-be-investigated-as-hate-crime/article\\_32f371a0-12f5-11eb-bdde-b3c84be31933.html](https://www.wsmv.com/news/davidson_county/naacp-asks-for-homicide-to-be-investigated-as-hate-crime/article_32f371a0-12f5-11eb-bdde-b3c84be31933.html).
- "Concepts & Issues Paper: Social Media." *IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center*, May 2019,  
<https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Social%20Media%20Paper%20-%202019.pdf>.
- "Current or Past Employer Interview." *Metro Nashville Police Department*, 2021.
- "Frequently Asked Questions About Becoming a Police Officer." *Metro Nashville Police Department*, 2020, <https://www.nashville.gov/Police-Department/Get-Involved/Become-a-Police-Officer/Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>.

Kay Lokey (Metro Nashville Police Department Deputy Chief of the Administrative Services Bureau), interview with Metro Nashville Community Oversight, December 17, 2020.

Linos, Elizabeth. "More Than Public Service: A Field Experiment on Job Advertisements and Diversity in the Police." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 28, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 67–85. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mux032>.

"Listed Reference Interview." *Metro Nashville Police Department*, 2021.

Robert McGrath and Matthew Guller, "Concurrent Validity of the Candidate and Officer Personnel Survey (COPS)," *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 11, no. 2 (June 2009): 150–59, <https://doi.org/10.1350/ijps.2009.11.2.119>.

"MMPI-2 Overview." *University of Minnesota Press*, 2021, <https://www.upress.umn.edu/test-division/mmpi-2>.

Ryan Hampton (Metro Nashville Police Department Recruitment Section Lieutenant), interview with Metro Nashville Community Oversight, January 12, 2021.

"Spousal Interview." *Metro Nashville Police Department*, 2021.

Sue Bibb (Metro Nashville Police Department Human Resources Director), interview with Metro Nashville Community Oversight, December 22, 2020.

"Sworn Personal History Statement." *Metro Nashville Police Department*, 2021, <https://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/Police/docs/Employment/PersonalHistoryStatement.pdf>

"Police Officer Employment Standards." *Metro Nashville Police Department*, 2020, <https://www.nashville.gov/Police-Department/Get-Involved/Become-a-Police-Officer/Employment-Standards.aspx>.

"Rules of The Tennessee Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission." *Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST)*, October 22, 2014, [https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/commerce/documents/post/resources/POST\\_Rules.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/commerce/documents/post/resources/POST_Rules.pdf).

"Recruitment Unit - Standard Operating Procedures." *Metro Nashville Police Department*, August 4, 2020.

Standards of Medical Fitness." *Department of the Army*, 2011, [https://www.qmo.amedd.army.mil/diabetes/AR40\\_5012011.pdf](https://www.qmo.amedd.army.mil/diabetes/AR40_5012011.pdf)

"Summary Overview." *Metro Nashville Police Department*, 2021.



Sun, Shuyan, Wei Pan, and Lihshing Leigh Wang. "A Comprehensive Review of Effect Size Reporting and Interpreting Practices in Academic Journals in Education and Psychology." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 102, no. 4 (November 2010): 989–1004. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0019507>.

Timms, Mariah and Hineman, Brinley. "Security Guard Who Later Became a Police Officer Faces Murder Charge in 2018 Pharmacy Shooting." *Tennessean*, November 12, 2020, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/crime/2020/11/12/pharmacy-shooting-man-faces-second-degree-murder-charges-two-years-later/3761211001/>.

Walker, Samuel E, and Archbold, Carol A. *The New World of Police Accountability*. Sage Publications, 2018.

Wallace, Harriet. "Family of Man Killed in 2018 Sues Decommissioned Officer, Calls for His Termination." *Fox 17 WZTV Nashville*, November 4, 2020, <https://fox17.com/news/local/family-of-man-killed-in-2018-sues-decommissioned-officer-calls-for-his-termination>.

Weill, Joanna, Elizabeth Linos, Siddharth Mandava, and Cecily Wallman-Stokes. "Behavioral Insights for Building the Police Force of Tomorrow." New York: The Behavioral Insights Team, January 23, 2019. <https://www.bi.team/publications/behavioral-insights-for-building-the-police-force-of-tomorrow/>.

## Appendix A: Tables

**Table A1: Number and Percent of Applicants Taking Civil Service Tests by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2016-2020**

Year	Group	Tested		No Shows		Total Applicants Invited
		N	%	N	%	N
2016	White Men	365	34%	719	66%	1084
	Black Men	83	22%	300	78%	383
	Hispanic Men	27	25%	79	75%	106
	White Women	54	35%	100	65%	154
	Black Women	21	18%	99	83%	120
	Hispanic Women	8	38%	13	62%	21
2017	White Men	325	31%	729	69%	1054
	Black Men	104	27%	287	73%	391
	Hispanic Men	22	22%	79	78%	101
	White Women	51	29%	124	71%	175
	Black Women	14	9%	140	91%	154
	Hispanic Women	6	16%	31	84%	37
2018	White Men	331	31%	754	69%	1085
	Black Men	75	23%	250	77%	325
	Hispanic Men	22	17%	107	83%	129
	White Women	59	29%	143	71%	202
	Black Women	28	17%	139	83%	167
	Hispanic Women	8	22%	28	78%	36
2019	White Men	354	33%	727	67%	1081
	Black Men	94	24%	300	76%	394
	Hispanic Men	28	21%	107	79%	135
	White Women	63	25%	186	75%	249
	Black Women	22	15%	120	85%	142
	Hispanic Women	9	27%	24	73%	33
2020*	White Men	282	39%	439	61%	721
	Black Men	80	33%	166	67%	246
	Hispanic Men	31	37%	52	63%	83
	White Women	38	25%	114	75%	152
	Black Women	16	17%	77	83%	93
	Hispanic Women	5	26%	14	74%	19
Total	White Men	1657	33%	3368	67%	5025
	Black Men	436	25%	1303	75%	1739
	Hispanic Men	130	23%	424	77%	554
	White Women	265	28%	667	72%	932
	Black Women	101	15%	575	85%	676
	Hispanic Women	36	25%	110	75%	146
	All Groups/All Years	2625	29%	6447	71%	9072

\*2020 includes data from January through September 2020

**Table A2: Number and Percent of Applicants Passing Written and Physical Civil Service Tests by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2016-2020**

Year	Group	Passed		Failed		Total Tested
		N	%	N	%	N
2016	White Men	323	88%	42	12%	365
	Black Men	63	76%	20	24%	83
	Hispanic Men	25	93%	2	7%	27
	White Women	46	85%	8	15%	54
	Black Women	11	52%	10	48%	21
	Hispanic Women	8	100%	0	0%	8
2017	White Men	276	85%	49	15%	325
	Black Men	84	81%	20	19%	104
	Hispanic Men	18	82%	4	18%	22
	White Women	43	84%	8	16%	51
	Black Women	8	57%	6	43%	14
	Hispanic Women	5	83%	1	17%	6
2018	White Men	301	91%	30	9%	331
	Black Men	59	79%	16	21%	75
	Hispanic Men	18	82%	4	18%	22
	White Women	54	92%	5	8%	59
	Black Women	19	68%	9	32%	28
	Hispanic Women	5	63%	3	38%	8
2019	White Men	319	90%	35	10%	354
	Black Men	71	76%	23	24%	94
	Hispanic Men	22	79%	6	21%	28
	White Women	52	83%	11	17%	63
	Black Women	10	45%	12	55%	22
	Hispanic Women	7	78%	2	22%	9
2020*	White Men	233	83%	49	17%	282
	Black Men	57	71%	23	29%	80
	Hispanic Men	23	74%	8	26%	31
	White Women	28	74%	10	26%	38
	Black Women	11	69%	5	31%	16
	Hispanic Women	3	60%	2	40%	5
Total	White Men	1452	88%	205	12%	1657
	Black Men	334	77%	102	23%	436
	Hispanic Men	106	82%	24	18%	130
	White Women	223	84%	42	16%	265
	Black Women	59	58%	42	42%	101
	Hispanic Women	28	78%	8	22%	36
	All Groups/All Years	2202	84%	423	16%	2625

\*2020 includes data from January through September 2020

**Table A3: Number and Percent of Applicants Found Qualified by DCOP Panel and Final Panel After Passing Civil Service Tests by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2016-2020**

Year	Group	Qualified		Disqualified		Total Passed CS Tests
		N	%	N	%	N
2016	White Men	159	49%	164	51%	323
	Black Men	28	44%	35	56%	63
	Hispanic Men	5	20%	20	80%	25
	White Women	28	61%	18	39%	46
	Black Women	5	45%	6	55%	11
	Hispanic Women	5	63%	3	38%	8
2017	White Men	135	49%	141	51%	276
	Black Men	33	39%	51	61%	84
	Hispanic Men	2	11%	16	89%	18
	White Women	21	49%	22	51%	43
	Black Women	2	25%	6	75%	8
	Hispanic Women	4	80%	1	20%	5
2018	White Men	165	55%	136	45%	301
	Black Men	8	14%	51	86%	59
	Hispanic Men	10	56%	8	44%	18
	White Women	37	69%	17	31%	54
	Black Women	11	58%	8	42%	19
	Hispanic Women	5	100%	0	0%	5
2019	White Men	207	65%	112	35%	319
	Black Men	38	54%	33	46%	71
	Hispanic Men	13	59%	9	41%	22
	White Women	36	69%	16	31%	52
	Black Women	1	10%	9	90%	10
	Hispanic Women	3	43%	4	57%	7
2020*	White Men	192	82%	41	18%	233
	Black Men	37	65%	20	35%	57
	Hispanic Men	18	78%	5	22%	23
	White Women	23	82%	5	18%	28
	Black Women	9	82%	2	18%	11
	Hispanic Women	1	33%	2	67%	3
Total	White Men	858	59%	594	41%	1452
	Black Men	144	43%	190	57%	334
	Hispanic Men	48	45%	58	55%	106
	White Women	145	65%	78	35%	223
	Black Women	28	47%	31	53%	59
	Hispanic Women	18	64%	10	36%	28
	All Groups/All Years	1241	56%	961	44%	2202

\*2020 includes data from January through September 2020

**Table A4: Number and Percent of Applicants Hired and Not Hired Who Were Qualified by the DCOP Panel and Final Panel Review from 2016 to September 2020**

	Hired		Not Hired		Total Qualified
	N	%	N	%	N
<b>White Men</b>	451	53%	407	47%	858
<b>Black Men</b>	62	43%	82	57%	144
<b>Hispanic Men</b>	26	54%	22	46%	48
<b>White Women</b>	99	68%	46	32%	145
<b>Black Women</b>	21	75%	7	25%	28
<b>Hispanic Women</b>	7	39%	11	61%	18
<b>Total</b>	666	54%	575	46%	1241