

Recommendations to Support Diversification in Law Enforcement

Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force

Current status of diversity in policing

Nationally, law enforcement agencies demonstrate limited diversity. National data on law enforcement personnel¹ show that law enforcement officers in the United States are:

- 65.7% White
- 10.4% Black
- 19.8% Hispanic
- 2.9% Asian
- 1.0% Native American

These percentages have not changed significantly in the last two decades. In Connecticut, agencies are²:

	All agencies	Large agencies ³
White	84.1%	71.7%
Black	5.8%	11.9%
Hispanic	6.3%	15.5%
Asian	0.6%	0.6%
Native American	0.1%	0.04%

Why is diversity in policing important?

While it is easy to see through popular media that the public outcry after Ferguson and George Floyd includes calls for increased diversity in policing, public sentiment is not the only driving rationale supporting increasing diversity in policing.

What is diversity in policing?

Diversity⁴ in policing is generally discussed along two dimensions. The first is racial diversity, and the second is gender diversity. While racial diversity has recently received substantial attention, gender diversity is also an important consideration. Underlying racial and gender diversity is the idea of ideological diversity.

Racial diversification

Racial diversification in policing carries several substantial benefits. While limited evidence has supported differences in outcomes between White and Black officers, a recent study⁵ that now reflects

the best available evidence on the subject shows that:

- Black and Hispanic officers use less force than White officers.
- Black and Hispanic officers make fewer stops and fewer arrests than white officers. This reflects a greater reliance on community interaction and problem solving.

In addition to these advantages, racial diversity also relates to representative bureaucracy, the idea that government should reflect the characteristics of the governed.

Gender diversification

Gender diversification in policing carries similar benefits. Studies have shown that female officers:

- Use comparably less force than male officers⁶
- Use less coercion⁷
- Receive fewer complaints and engage in less misconduct⁸

In addition to these benefits, female officers are better at communication and de-escalation and enhance perceptions of procedural justice⁹.

Ideological diversity

Together the benefits of racial and gender diversification support improved police/community relationships and police legitimacy. As well, a diversification supports ideological diversity or the inclusion of many points of view. Police agencies generally do not foster diversity in thinking due to strict command structure, adherence to authority, an institutional culture. Diversity supports different perspectives when framing problems and proposing solutions, two benefits that might help police agencies transform.

¹ Reaves, 2019

² Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics 2013

³ Reporting agencies that serve a population more than 100,000: Bridgeport, Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, Stamford, Waterbury

⁴ While diversity is a larger concept incorporating principles of inclusivity for other marginalized groups, studies of diversity in

the policing context are generally limited to the categories traditionally measured within police organizations.

⁵ Knox et al., 2021

⁶ Knox et al., 2021; Schuck et al., 2005

⁷ Paoline et al., 2004

⁸ Corsianos, 2011

⁹ Novich et al., 2018

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Recommendations in response to CT Gen Stat Sec 7-291b (2015): “Not later than January 1, 2016, each law enforcement unit, as defined in section 7-294a, shall develop and implement guidelines for the recruitment, retention and promotion of minority police officers, as defined in section 7-294a. Such guidelines shall promote achieving the goal of racial, gender and ethnic diversity within the law enforcement unit.”

Recommendation 1: Stipulate diversification goals within the written directives required by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) for agencies in Connecticut

CALEA accreditation is a voluntary opportunity for law enforcement agencies to demonstrate compliance with an established set of professional standards. While not directly linked to diversification, the standards emphasize the use of written directives that define authority, performance, and responsibility alongside the use of analysis and reporting to inform management decisions. The program emphasizes annual reviews and assessments conducted by subject matter experts.

Rationale

The professional standards reflected through CALEA accreditation are particularly well-aligned to the goal of diversifying agencies. Written directives that assign responsibility and define performance targets related to diversification efforts are consistent with CT Gen Stat Sec 7-291b. Moreover, establishing these directives via an accrediting body emphasizes commitment to the underlying goal of diversification. Consistent with CALEA’s model, these directives would require implementation of performance measures and regular reporting within each organization. Moreover, diversification directives would be subject to external review providing meaningful feedback to organizations about their progress toward diversification goals.

Recommendation 2: State-level dissemination of promising practices in recruiting and hiring, promotion, training, and promotion that effectively support diversification

It is recommended that the state engage an authorized agent or agency to maintain and

disseminate information on promising practices in recruiting and hiring, promotion.

Rationale

There is currently no source for information for agencies trying to adopt better practices in recruiting and hiring, promotion, and training that provides consistent, reliable, and up to date information on best practices. Moreover, given regional differences it is unclear whether strategies that have demonstrated initial success in other locations would be feasible or effective in Connecticut. State level dissemination on promising practices would develop a repository of information as a resource for departments within the state and serve as a mechanism to publicize local knowledge about what works (see Recommendation 3).

The following strategies are recommended as part of the initial effort:

Recruiting

- *Diversify the types of outreach activities conducted related to recruiting. Expand beyond job fair, military, cultural event, and university recruiting*¹⁰. Depending on when and where events are held, these events can lead to less diversity in the candidate pool. While cultural events seem like a good way to access diverse populations, some evidence suggests that they are ineffective at generating applications.
- *Openly address concerns about sexism in law enforcement when recruiting women*¹¹. Evidence suggests that women that have experience in the workforce are more likely to be aware of the impact of sexism in organizations, and concerns about these issues in law enforcement may limit interest. Transparency and willingness or organizations to openly discuss these issues suggest an organizational culture capable of supporting women.
- *Openly address concerns about ability when recruiting college-age women*¹¹. Evidence suggests that younger women are more likely to be concerned about their ability to work in policing. Emphasizing that women

¹⁰ Kringen, Uchida, Hock, & Land, forthcoming; Taylor, Kubu, Fridell, Rees, Jordan, & Chaney, 2006.

¹¹ Kringen, 2018

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can work in the career is an important message.

- *Emphasize the challenge aspects of law enforcement careers to attract more female and racial/ethnic minority candidates*¹². Evidence suggests that service messages are ineffective at increasing applicant pools. Challenge messages increase the number of applicants and increases the relative number of applications from diverse groups.
- *Emphasize job security in law enforcement careers to attract more female and racial/ethnic minority candidates*¹². Similar to the previous recommendation, emphasis on job security can increase the relative number of applications from diverse groups.

Hiring

- *Reduce processing times for applicants to limit loss through attrition*¹³. Evidence suggests that hiring applicants more quickly limits the number of applicants lost in the process. Importantly, this has been demonstrated to be more important among female and minority applicants.
- *Simplify hiring process instructions/processes to limit confusion among applicants*¹³. Evidence suggests that complex hiring processes create confusion increasing attrition.
- *Incorporate supportive messaging (nudging – e.g., statements like “most applicants complete this process within a week”)*^{13,14}. Evidence suggests that loss due to attrition, particularly among diverse applicants, is reduced through nudging.
- *Analyze qualification criteria to determine which aspects disproportionately impact female and racial/ethnic minority candidates*¹⁵. Hiring processes and pre-employment qualification issues can serve

as barriers that disproportionately impact diverse applicants limiting diversity in the hiring process.

- *Set standards for evaluating disproportionate impact at equal passing rates rather than at the 80% EEOC compliance threshold*¹⁶. While agencies largely understand EEOC compliance, less attention is paid to the fact that 80% passing rates for diverse applicants necessarily fails to diversify.

Training

- *Adopt or expand adult or active learning principles in academy training*¹⁷. Shifting training models supports best practices in adult learning and alters training academy dynamics which may contribute to attrition.
- *Reduce emphasis on paramilitary approaches to training*¹⁸. The paramilitary training model is related to the concept of a “hidden academy” where organizational values are learned. These experiences can lead to attrition, particularly among diverse cadets.
- *Increase support networks for cadets through mentoring programs*¹⁹. Evidence suggests that mentoring programs for female and minority cadets can increase retention rates by helping these cadets navigate the challenges of the environment.
- *Monitor developments in training academies in other jurisdictions that are advancing these issues through novel training protocols*²⁰. Several other jurisdictions are grappling with these same issues, and many novel attempts at addressing the problems are underway. Some jurisdictions within the region are likely candidates for monitoring.
- *Compare implementation of similar curriculum across other jurisdictions to determine best approach to content delivery*

¹² Linos, 2018

¹³ Linos, 2019

¹⁴ See PTATF Recruiting and Hiring handout

¹⁵ Kringsen & Kringsen, 2014; Kringsen et al., forthcoming

¹⁶ An 80% relative passing rate for a group that composes less than 50% of applicants implies that the majority group passes a higher proportion of individuals. Ergo, more individuals from the

majority group enter the training academy than from the minority group.

¹⁷ Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, 2019

¹⁸ Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, 2019; Prokos & Pavadic, 2002

¹⁹ National Institute of Justice, 2019

²⁰ National Institute of Justice, 2019

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*and format*²¹. Shifts in training protocols (e.g., moving to an active learning model) may be insufficient without changes to the underlying curriculum. These changes may require changes to CT-POST policy.

Promotion

- *Regularly evaluate promotional tests for disparity.* Organizational diversification requires increasing diversity at the executive and managerial levels as well as among staff overall.
- *Consider involving outside participants like civilian review boards in the promotional process.* Increasing diversity in the promotional process may support increased diversity in the promotions that result. Implementing changes like this are complex and may involve issues like union contracts which may specify promotional rules.

Recommendation 3: State-level data collection, evaluation, and oversight

It is recommended that the state identify an organization to engage in data collection and study to isolate which strategies disseminated to departments within the state demonstrate effectiveness. This should include data collection and analysis related to hiring, training, promotion, and issues like early career attrition and limited interest in promotion among female and minority officers that impact diversity. Moreover, this data collection should serve as the basis for ongoing audits to support diversification efforts. Audits should begin by assessing the level of diversity within organizations at the time of the statute's adoption as well as their current level of diversity. The audits should include reviews of specific actions taken by agencies in response to the statute. For agencies that have not adopted reasonable practice to support diversification or have been unsuccessful in increasing diversity through their efforts, the auditing organization should work with the agencies to develop remediation plans. Actions taken under these remediation plans should be monitored to ensure adequate implementation and compliance.

Rationale

Evidence suggests that each of the areas noted impact diversity within law enforcement agencies²².

Moreover, loss of workforce carries substantial financial costs. While information about promising practices to be made available to departments under recommendation 2 is a good starting point, a more-developed local model for addressing these issues is preferable. This model can only be derived through analysis of existing and newly implemented practices which requires substantial effort. Vesting this responsibility in a single organization emphasizes the state's commitment to diversification and reduces the likelihood that individual studies about effectiveness undertaken in specific departments remain unknown to other departments. As well, a state level program for data collection and analysis related to diversification in policing strategically situates the state as more competitive in solicitation for federal funding addressing these issues.

While the statute stipulates that departments shall work to diversify, there is currently no enforcement of the statute. Effective enforcement requires an enforcement agent, monitoring, investigating, and penalties and/or remedies for non-compliance. Given the lack of consistent information available on effective strategies, using a remediation plan approach to initial enforcement after a statewide audit has been performed provides an avenue to assist departments in adopting reasonable strategies to address the issue through remediation planning. Remediation plans must include considerations about levels of diversity overall which can be addressed through marketing, recruiting, and hiring as well as levels of diversity in different ranks within departments. Both issues include legal complexities including employment law considerations and navigation of union issues. These concerns further illustrate the need for state-level guidance in the remediation plan development efforts.

Finally, the state is in a stronger position to develop and implement a data system to track all applicants and disqualifications, all cadets and separations, and all officers and officer attrition at all state agencies. These data should be analyzed to determine the impact of state and agency-level changes in recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining law enforcement officers. In areas where these forces limit diversification, the state might consider implementing and testing other novel approaches to address the problem.

²¹ UK Policing Gender Equality Summit, 2019

²² Kringsen et al., forthcoming