



International Association of Fire Fighters Diversity Initiative



Achieving and Retaining a Diverse Fire Service Workforce

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Acknowledgments

We have been thrilled and honored to conduct this study on behalf of the International Association of Fire Fighters and the Fire Service. After working with the Fire Service for the past 25 years, in the area of Selection and Testing, we realized that this research was long overdue. The issues of recruiting in general, and recruiting for diversity in particular, are among the most critical issues facing the Fire Service. However, while many individuals and organizations have expressed a recognition of the need, the IAFF provided the funding and direction for this first of its kind study into Best Practices in Recruiting Methods that can help unite us in our common goals.

We would like to especially thank our contact and liaison, David Neun, IAFF Education Director, for his support and feedback throughout the project. He also helped us to understand better the complex organization that is the IAFF, as well as the desire and motivation on the part of the IAFF to truly make a difference in this area. We also want to thank Harold Schaitberger, the General President of the IAFF, for his sponsorship of this project and leadership of the organization.

This project could not have been conducted without the cooperation and assistance from Fire Service and Human Resources professionals around the country. We offer a Big Thank You to the Local Presidents and members, Chief Officers, Training Officers, Recruiters, Human Resources managers and analysts, and others who gave their time, thought, honesty, and energy in interviews and completing the surveys that provide the major part of the research in this report.

We also want to express our deep gratitude to the paid and volunteer, US and Canadian, multi-cultural, brave and dedicated men and women of the Fire Service for their significant contributions to our communities.



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1. Project Summary and Key Findings on Recruitment Methods

Recruiting and Diversity have become “hot topics” in the Fire Service in recent years. A review of the demographics in the Fire Service (presented in the next chapter of this report) shows a large gap between our population and its representation in the Fire Service. There has also been a growing awareness of the effect on diversity of the huge wave of retirements that is happening now and will continue happening for the next few years. What diversity we have achieved is very likely to disappear, and as a profession and as a nation, we are uninformed and unprepared to solve the problem. Many well intentioned people have begun generating discussion, ideas, and have even proposed various solutions. However, this project is the first serious and scientific research that has been conducted to begin to understand potential solutions, and why some methods and approaches work and others do not. This study is a first step in the right direction. It will provide a good foundation for additional research to follow.



This summary highlights the key findings of this research, marked with this symbol. Examples of Best Practices methods or strategies from our surveyed departments are flagged  throughout this summary and the entire report. When we obtained specific permission to name the department, we do. In other cases, we simply describe the practices that are good examples without naming the department. Other departments who participated in interviews are not named.

The overall objective established by the IAFF for this project was ***to identify effective recruitment, selection, and retention practices to achieve a fire service workforce that reflects the community served.*** The IAFF specifically wanted to address the underrepresentation of people of color, women, and gays and lesbians in the Fire Service. Many arguments can be made for why we should place emphasis on increasing diversity. In the literature review of this report, various researchers explore the business, financial, and legal reasons for supporting diversity. In the Fire Service, in addition to all the practical issues related to diversity, there are also strong social and emotional reasons. The Fire Service serves each and every community member, regardless of ethnicity, gender, race, background, economy, or any other factor, and also depends on the entire community and country for its funding and support. As public safety and public service organizations, most Fire Departments want to better understand, communicate with, and enlist cooperation in our multi-cultural communities.



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“We received a mandate to make our department demographics representative of our community. That way the community sees itself in those who are serving them.”

Survey Respondent, Montgomery County, MD

The IAFF originally envisioned this project as research that would lead to the development of some type of program, such as a national web based orientation and training program. CWH proposed beginning the project with a much less defined end result, but with a broader focus. Throughout the project, we have questioned our assumptions and “common knowledge” about recruiting. The project evolved to be a comprehensive, qualitative, and quantitative study that documents what is and is not successful in helping to diversify the Fire Service. This report does not propose a rigid plan or structure. Instead, we provide examples of success, and documentation of many, many methods of implementing successful recruitment efforts. Even small departments or departments with severe budget restrictions can find tips and ideas that can be implemented to improve their results. Local presidents and members can review these results and suggestions and determine which ones will be most effective in your own departments with your own constituencies.

When presenting Best Practices, it is critical for us to realize that few departments would have the capability to implement all Best Practices. In addition, even some of the departments that have made the most progress, may have problems in some areas related to employee and workforce issues. Best Practices examples should be used as a guide for improvement, not as a panacea for all problems. This report attempts to acknowledge and give credit to the departments that have action oriented programs and policies, are making positive efforts, and appear to have better than average positive results.

The findings of this research may at times seem contradictory or surprising; and at times seem to be just common sense. Although the research methods we used included extensive data collection and analysis, the study was primarily a qualitative study. The results require us to interpret the data much more than to simply report it. The findings can guide the IAFF as a national organization in developing a type of program if it chooses, perhaps a cadet program or a “How to Guide” for individual departments. The results presented in this report also can guide individual departments and local unions in creating their own initiatives or adjusting their current efforts.

This project had 3 major phases or steps performed over the course of a year and a half. These were:

1. Literature Review

This resulted in the identification of major issues to probe in the interviews and surveys.



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2. Interviewing of over 80 departments and surveying over 40 departments as potential departments using Best Practices recruiting methods and conducting interviews with their local presidents, Chiefs, Training Officers, and others in each department.

The interview process resulted in the elimination of over half of the potential departments, based on their own assessment of their recruitment and diversity effectiveness.

Over 40 departments were invited to participate in the comprehensive survey. We received completed responses from 31 departments.

3. Analysis of the comprehensive survey of the departments that were identified as actually using proactive Best Practices methods.

This phase resulted in the examination of over 25 specific recruitment methods and a comparison of effectiveness. In addition, we examined related concepts such as entry level requirements, education levels, pay, and diversity values, in over 200 survey items to identify the most successful strategies and create profiles of the most successful departments.

Definition of Terms related to Recruiting

Recruiting method

This is the specific effort or process used, such as Doing Radio Ads. Our survey asked the surveyed departments to tell us which methods they used. A table presented in this summary lists the 27 methods and shows how frequently they are used.

Innovative approach vs. Traditional approach to recruiting

These terms do not describe specific methods, but refer to the approach toward recruiting. Innovative recruiting requires more effort, resources, and is usually more targeted to a specific group or defined in terms of results desired. Examples of innovative approaches include recruiting in different cities, using ads designed specifically for women on Lifetime TV, developing a cadet program, and other similar, less routine efforts.

Traditional approaches consist of methods used generally and frequently by most departments. Examples include: Direct mail interest cards, word of mouth, newsletters, general advertising. Traditional methods generally are effective for increasing your applicant pool, but are not usually effective at increasing diversity in your applicant pool, unless it is combined with a very innovative and targeted approach.

Targeted recruiting approach

Similar to innovative in that this targets a specific group or result desired. Traditional and informal recruiting methods may be used to target a specific group.

Formal vs. Informal methods



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Formal recruiting methods involve planning and funding. Doing advertising is a formal method. Informal recruiting relies on social networking and referrals. Word of mouth, open houses, and similar approaches are examples of informal recruiting.

Effective method

Specifically for this report our measure of success is diversity. Many methods may be effective in other ways. For example, word of mouth is effective in getting numbers of candidates. However, it will usually bring in more of the same demographic group that is already the majority in the department. Word of mouth is not effective to attract Minorities and women, unless it is targeted and used as part of a more planned and innovative approach.

What is Effective and Successful Recruiting for Diversity?

Effective recruiting for Diversity involves multiple methods of recruiting. Targeted recruiting for the specific groups desired is much more effective than general recruiting. Both Innovative and Traditional approaches may be used as long as they are all targeted. Also, a combination of Formal and Informal methods should be used.

For the purpose of this analysis, we measured Success in our participating departments by the percent of Minorities and Women represented in the local population based on census data compared to the percent represented in the department.

We also used National Statistics to make the same comparisons. The table below shows National (U.S.) statistics comparing U.S. population to reported representation in the Fire Service. (Please note that 2 Canadian Fire departments were also included in the study but either did not complete demographic information or did not meet or exceed average Canadian representation.)

Demographic Representation

US Census Data Compared to Bureau of Labor Statistics representation in the Fire Service

	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Women
US Census 2000	12.3%	12.5%	3.6%	50.9%
Firefighting Profession US Bureau of Labor Statistics	8.4%	8.6%	1.3%	5.1%
Group Ratio comparing percent represented in profession to percent of each group in population	.68	.69	.36	.10

Group Ratio

Similar to an adverse impact ratio, the closer the ratio is to 1.00, the closer the representation of the target group is to the actual population. Using these ratios, a successful department would be one whose ratio exceeds the national ratio. That would mean that for Blacks, a



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ratio between .68 and 1.00 exceeds the national percentage and comes closer to actual population representation. Likewise, for women, ratios above .10 would demonstrate better than average progress towards Diversity.

More information about demographics is presented later in this report.



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Phase 1 - Literature Review Findings

We obtained many benefits in doing a thorough review of past research. In presenting the case for budget and resource allocations for diversity recruiting, the literature review provides strong justification for the effort, even in difficult times of budget cuts and limited financial resources. The literature review also provides a common terminology for our discussion, and a general understanding of basic concepts that work in recruiting, and especially in recruiting for diversity. In interpreting data from this study, the literature review provides a context for evaluating the ideas and methods used and proposed by various departments. In other words, the literature review can provide something of a “reality check,” to help determine how feasible or desirable an idea, approach, or method is. We evaluated our interview, survey, and data conclusions against the hypotheses and theories in the literature to help us interpret and understand some of our findings.

Not surprisingly, most prior research about diversity recruiting has been conducted with a focus on the private sector, especially how to attract limited top talent to the top corporations in what is perceived to be a competitive environment for employers. In fact, even in the private sector, much of the research is about reaching management level candidates and competing for a limited number of qualified candidates. By contrast, the Fire Service generally operates under entirely different parameters. Candidates for the Fire Service are entry level, usually high school graduates, and there are hundreds of thousands of them! Traditionally there are many more applicants for any one job than are needed. In fact, the whole idea of recruiting is somewhat new for many Fire Departments. We regularly talk to agencies about how to narrow or decrease their applicant pools rather than to increase them. The idea of bringing even more people to the door, only to put them through a selection process that hires only a few, can at first seem nonsensical.

As our economy continues to put pressure on public safety departments to reduce their budgets, many Fire and Human Resources executives, as well as City Managers and Civil Service board members, ask why they should spend money to do any recruiting. The literature review helps us answer that question. Diversity in the workforce will not occur simply because your department is located in a diverse metropolitan area or because your department follows the law regarding non-discrimination. In order to achieve diversity, you must have a strong commitment that includes an active recruiting strategy and you must take effective actions.

Many of the surveyed departments we identified through our interviews and surveys use methods that have been recommended in previous research. The key findings and recommendations from the literature review are shown below, along with some Best Practices examples and survey results:



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10 Key Findings from Literature Review supported by Survey



1. **Specifically target the group** you want to reach and recruit (EEOC, 1997). Generic messages and blanket advertising do not work to reach Minorities and women effectively.

57% of surveyed departments have recruitment strategies aimed at women, 63% have strategies aimed at Minorities.

Best Practices Example:

✍ The Austin, TX Fire Department calls this the “Name it and Claim it” approach. They recommend putting all your efforts into targeted recruitment. They said that whether you create an ad for TV, radio, or print, if you want to hire more women, your ad should include a woman character, talking about the job, and showing women in the job.

Potential concerns regarding targeted recruitment (Proposition 209)

One of the survey respondents expressed a concern regarding targeted recruitment. The survey respondent said that in his state of California, the law precluded methods or initiatives that target protected groups. We have heard of this concern from several others. Different laws are often subject to interpretation, and we are not giving legal advice in this report. Proposition 209 in California (enacted in 1996) specifically prohibits programs, initiatives, or policies that give preferential treatment on the basis of race or gender. To read the actual language, go to www.acri.org/209.

The Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission taskforce appointed to study best practices in the private sector (published in 1997) advocates targeted recruiting as a method for overcoming traditional barriers and discrimination, and as a way to provide Equal Employment Opportunity. This report can be found at <http://www.eeoc.gov/abouteeoc/taskreports/practice.html>. The EEOC report clearly states that targeted recruitment must not result in discrimination toward white men or any group.

In reality, all active recruiting is targeted. Even advertising in the local city newspaper is targeted to that newspaper’s subscribers. Targeted recruiting to increase diversity is the decision to advertise and recruit in various and diverse venues and markets, and to focus the recruitment budget on expanding the non-traditional applicant pool. After all, no department can recruit everywhere. Doing targeted advertising, for example, an ad in a women’s magazine, does not disadvantage men in the process, who will still apply in greater numbers than women. It simply opens the door wider for everyone and invites a new non-traditional market to join the traditional one.



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Targeted recruitment is not about quotas, preferences, or profiling. Targeted recruitment should not be confused with giving any kind of preference in the recruitment or selection system. Giving preference in the recruitment or selection system for non-job related characteristics is illegal. The recruitment message should emphasize that all selection will be based on a valid evaluation of individual qualifications required for the job. Your recruiting efforts should be tracked so that you can ensure that you have adequate representation from all relevant groups in your applicant pool. You can then demonstrate that no group is being disadvantaged by your recruiting methods.



2. When targeting particular groups and when doing recruiting in general, **use language to promote a message of inclusiveness**. Several studies found that even when targeting a particular group, a message of inclusiveness can be communicated effectively to all groups. A company in one study organized a recruitment event specifically for gays and lesbians and found that only half of the attendees were from the target group (Audit Commission, 2002).

The standard advised by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in its 1997 task force report is to target diverse populations and associations and to sponsor programs offered by Minority and women’s organizations, such as a “Women in Hard Hats” workshop that introduces women to non traditional careers.



3. **Use some “formal” methods of recruiting such as advertising**. For best results, combine that with establishing formal associations with Minority and women based organizations, formal programs with schools, or other formal channels. In other words do not rely on word of mouth from current fire fighters and your website alone to spread the message. Research shows that women and Minorities use a greater number of formal recruiting sources than White men (Kirnan et al., 1989).

*In a separate applicant survey developed by CWH for its clients, 30% of Black applicants said they **first** heard that the Fire Department was hiring by hearing an ad on the radio, compared to only 1% of White applicants.*

R **Best Practices Example:**

Montgomery County, MD enlists the participation of its Minority firefighter groups in the recruitment effort. It also reaches out to local Minority associations, such as the NAACP, CASA, and Asian American associations. However, they do not rely on word of mouth alone. They also advertise extensively in both major and local newspapers, radio, and TV.



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4. Give specific and detailed information about the job, entry level skills needed, work requirements, salary, and benefits. Let your potential candidates know what a great career opportunity it is, not just a job!

Almost all of the surveyed departments describe the duties, salary, and basic benefits in their recruitment information. About 40% also describe opportunities for development and promotion.

R **Best Practices Example:**

A large southwest area department provides detailed information in its recruitment materials. This includes job duties, steps in the selection process, preparation assistance offered, and salary and benefits, including providing benefits to domestic partners, not just spouses. Another department advised also providing information about some of the negatives of the job, such as the shifts, so that applicants are as fully informed as possible.



5. In developing recruiting information and in advertising, remember to target the candidate’s family as well.

One study found that Black applicants for Police jobs will self-select out of the process after passing the first step because of lack of support from friends and family. (Ryan, et al. 2000)

“There is a common misconception in some Minority communities, Black and Hispanic, that the jobs of firefighter and police officer are strictly blue-collar and sub-level employment, say as compared to parents wanting their children to be an accountant, physician, etc. Education of the potential candidate often means educating the parents as well, as to all of the advantages that your department can provide in its employment.”

Surveyed department



6. Use minority and women recruiters. Walk the talk! One study found that half of Black candidates will consider whether there are other Blacks in the organization in making a decision about the job (Leonard, 2001). Make sure you let potential candidates know that they will not be the only minority or woman in the department.

Almost all of the surveyed departments have at least 1 – 2 full time recruiters, and usually have additional recruiters on a part-time or overtime basis. The average number of recruiters is 1 FT and 4 PT or OT. The majority of full time recruiters are minority and/or female.



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R **Best Practices Example:**

A medium sized southeast area department has 1 full time recruiter and 12 who recruit on overtime. They are all ethnic Minorities, and 5 are women.



7. Communicate the value of Diversity in all your messages (even those not specifically designed for recruiting). Show Diversity in all your advertisements, recruiting information, website, study guide, and other materials. Go beyond simply stating an Equal Opportunity message, and describe how and why the department values inclusion and diversity. Studies have found that showing diversity and talking about values increases positive perceptions that Minorities and women hold about the organization without creating negative perceptions in White men. Also, diversity values are more important to women and Minorities than they are to White men.

Almost all of the surveyed departments show pictures of ethnic Minorities and women in their recruitment materials. About a third of the departments also discuss their diversity values in more detail than a simple equal opportunity message.



8. Use a fair and valid selection process that measures what is really required for the job. Examine each stage in the selection process to look for adverse impact on protected groups. Keep your process flexible to adjust as needed. Be as inclusive as possible in the first stages of the process in order to learn more about more of your candidates.

43% of surveyed departments use a test specifically validated for them. 33% use a pass/fail score on the written test. 31% of those who use a score on the written test set the cutoff score after reviewing the results.



9. Only require the education needed to perform the job.

100% of the surveyed departments require no more than a High School diploma.



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10. For retention and job satisfaction, **provide a mentoring program** for newly hired firefighters. Individuals with mentors rated themselves as having more career opportunities, recognition, satisfaction, and promotions than those without (Fagenson, 1989). Women perceive greater barriers to having mentors than men and have more difficulty establishing informal mentor relationships.

48% of surveyed departments report having some type of mentoring program.

R **Best Practices Example:**

“Members from within the workforce are recruited to participate in the cadet training program by serving as Team Leaders. These individuals usually come from Operations working a shift schedule and are moved to a 40 hour schedule during cadet training. Team leaders are assigned a group of 10 to 12 cadets who they mentor and assist throughout the training academy. Their role is to positively influence the training experience for cadets. They are expected to lead their assigned team by example, be a liaison with instructors to improve cadet performance, participate in Physical Fitness and drill field activities, monitor assigned team activities (e.g. attendance, performance, corrective actions), document the performance and progress of each cadet, become knowledgeable on curriculum and skill requirements, be accountable for the success of cadets, be fully responsible for results of their assigned team, and report directly to the training program coordinators.”

Austin, TX Fire Department

Summary of Literature Review

The positive news is that effective diversity recruiting does not require us to change all of our current recruiting strategies and methods; it does require us to change our focus and emphasis. Targeted messaging matters. We can implement one or two or more of these strategies in the course of our everyday business as we naturally have to revise our recruiting messages and internal policies. We have to communicate a clear, consistent, and committed message about diversity and inclusion in everything that we do.



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Phase 2 - Interview and Survey Administration

Process

- Called and interviewed Union Local presidents, recruitment officers, human resources professionals, Chiefs, and others in over 80 departments to identify departments that use some Best Practices methods effectively.
- The interview process was used to ask a few basic questions about the recruitment methods, strategies and results. Over half of the departments initially nominated as potential participating departments, self-selected out of providing information because they did not believe that their department actually does effective recruiting.
- 44 + Departments remained in the pool of potential participating departments and were contacted for more detailed information.
- 29 Departments provided full data, 2 others provided almost complete data, others provided only partial data.
- The next steps included gathering extensive survey data regarding critical areas of:
 - Demographics
 - Recruitment
 - Selection
 - Retention
- 7 of the 31 departments were previously under consent decrees which recently ended.
- Both the statistical and qualitative analysis presented in the Key Findings section of the report includes all of the departments that provided data, including consent decree departments. This presents and interprets “average” data for the entire sample of participating departments.
- Additional analysis was conducted to compare the participant departments to each other. In this analysis, we identified the 10 top departments that appeared to have the most success, when compared with other departments in the study. In this particular analysis, we excluded consent decree departments in order to focus only on the results achieved specifically through active efforts that the departments initiated. This eliminated diversity benefits that were achieved through a forced legal process that is ordinarily not allowed by law (giving preferences, using quotas, using different lists, etc.)
- Over 200 survey questions were asked in order to fully describe and analyze departments.

Limitations with Sampling Method



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- 1 This is not a random sample. Departments self selected based on their belief that they used effective recruiting methods. In addition, we used only 1 criterion to measure success objectively: that was the comparison of diversity in the department compared to the community. There are other objective and subjective criteria that could be used in future follow up studies.
- 2 Restriction of Range. All departments in the survey are using some innovative recruitment methods, so there is no easy way to compare innovative to traditional or to no recruiting.
- 3 There may be other successful departments that were not identified.

Limitations with Survey Method

- All data is self reported.
- Complete data is not available for any department. For example, we do not have data from individual departments that actually tracks recruitment success linked to each method. Therefore, our analysis was based on only 1 measure of success (Diversity in the department) that is also influenced by many other factors (such as, the length of time they have been using a particular recruitment method or strategy).
- There is no data regarding how long each method had been used in the department.

The list of all survey questions is available in the Appendix. Also, an Item Frequencies report is presented in the Appendix. This report shows how many departments selected each answer choice. This has average responses and range of responses on each question.



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Phase 3 - Results and Key Findings

Types of recruiting methods

One of the major purposes of the comprehensive survey was to identify and compare the effectiveness of the specific recruiting methods being used by the study departments. The following list of 27 recruitment methods are rank ordered according to how many study departments reported using this method. A mean of 2 would indicate that all departments reported using this method. A mean of 1 would indicate that no departments used this method.

For example, Word of Mouth is used by almost everyone. (In fact, 1 department stated it was not used, but it probably is used informally and not tracked.) Conducting testing in other cities is the least used method, only used by 1 department. (The number following the name of each type of effort is the original survey item number.)

Reported frequency of use of each recruiting method	Mean
1 Word of Mouth # 1	1.90
2 Dept/City Website # 16	1.87
3 Other Job Fairs # 20	1.87
4 Community Events # 18	1.84
5 Schools/Com Ctr/Churches # 19	1.81
6 Ads Local Newspapers # 6	1.74
7 Ads Major Metro Newspapers # 5	1.71
8 Open House # 21	1.65
9 Public Service Announcements # 13	1.58
10 Minority Publication Ads # 11	1.58
11 News Stories # 15	1.55
12 Cadet/Explorer Program # 24	1.55
13 Other Website # 17	1.52
14 Radio Ads # 7	1.48
15 Orientation/Info Session # 22	1.48
16 Mentoring Applicants # 25	1.48
17 Direct Mail Interest Cards # 2	1.42
18 Recruit in Other Cities # 26	1.42
19 Cable/Local Access TV Ads # 9	1.39
20 Network TV Ads # 8	1.39
21 Newsletter # 3	1.35
22 Minority Radio/TV Ads Recruitment Effort 13	1.35



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23	Female Publication Ads # 10	1.32
24	Preparation Assistance # 23	1.32
25	Female Radio/TV Ads # 12	1.23
26	Banners # 4	1.19
27	Test Other Cities # 27	1.03

The next section summarizes the key findings related to how the surveyed departments used the above recruiting methods, and which methods appear to be most effective.



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Discussion of Top 8 Effective Methods used by Most Successful Departments

This section highlights the most effective methods used by the surveyed departments.

Keep in mind that all of the departments use a combination of approaches. Many of these methods are effective because they are used in a targeted approach and in combination with other methods. These methods are not presented in order of effectiveness, but these are the primary methods used by all of the departments.



1. Word of Mouth

This is named as the most frequently used method by all departments. However, word of mouth without other recruiting methods and without strong diversity commitment will increase homogeneity in the department, not diversity.

This method should not be relied on by most departments without a good recruitment plan to accompany it.

Word of mouth works when:

- 1 Involve current employees in planned activities and events
- 2 Build on prior success and current diversity.
- 3 Use current employees to attract others within the same group.
- 4 Combine with strong relationships with community organizations and events with those organizations.
- 5 Combine with other methods of formal advertising.
- 6 Message is consistent from employees, website, recruiting materials, etc. about the values of diversity.
- 7 Minority and women employees refer family and friends to the department.

Note that many of our most successful departments count on word of mouth to continue their success. However, they also formalize the word of mouth process to some extent by involving current employees in planned events and communicating a consistent message.

Word of mouth is not effective for recruiting for diversity if there is very little diversity in the department, and the current employees only recruit informally to family members and friends, who tend to be in the same ethnic group.



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2. Formal advertising, especially when targeted to desired group.

This includes ads in major newspapers, as well as local minority based papers. Also includes radio, TV, Cable ads during shows heard or watched by targeted group, such as Lifetime for women, BET for Blacks, Spanish speaking TV shows for Hispanics.

Effective recruiting almost always requires some formal advertising along with other methods.

1. Women rely on formal methods, such as advertising, much more than men for finding jobs.
2. Advertising in all different media works for women.
3. Radio and targeted advertising works better for Minorities.
4. Put ads on TV during popular shows, not during fill time on cable.
5. Almost all of surveyed departments use a combination of advertising in different media.
6. PSAs can also be effective.
7. Advertise to the families of the candidates as well as to the candidates.



3. Direct Mail

While this can be a very traditional method, if it is used to make personal contact with your target group, this is very effective.

Direct Mail contact is most effective when:

1. Maintain a database of all people who express interest and keep them informed.
2. Be aggressive in reminding people about upcoming dates for training, testing, etc.
3. Combine with phone calls if possible.
4. Have personal contact with candidates prior to test date.
5. Have current employees volunteer to answer phone calls, answer emails, etc. as questions come in from candidates.



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4. Cadet / Explorer Program

Programs vary, but this exposes kids from 8th grade through high school to the career opportunity in the Fire Service. It provides a good career option, advanced preparation opportunities, and extends a personal welcome to disadvantaged kids or to kids from backgrounds that are not part of the traditional recruitment pool.

This is one of the most effective methods. This method is effective for all Minority Groups and for women. Some of the departments use a Cadet program as their primary recruiting method that minimizes the need to advertise and use other formal methods of identifying candidates.

Cadet / Explorer programs are almost universally considered very effective.

1. Create relationships with local schools in predominately Minority communities to offer programs.
2. Build alliances with organizations that offer special programs for girls to teach them non traditional skills and show non traditional career options.
3. Develop relationships with the schools and kids in the programs to communicate Fire Service culture and values.
4. Programs should focus on career preparation.
5. Provide internships and interactions with firefighters.
6. Partner with local Tech Center / School to offer Fire / EMT program.



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5. News Stories

This is free advertising that can be good if focused on good deeds of the department and members, showing diversity, emphasizing community values. Can be negative if the issue is about adverse impact in the testing process and how the department has not hired Minorities or women.

News stories about the Fire Department get huge amounts of public and official attention.

1. Build relationships with reporters and publishers.
2. Use news stories to highlight department achievements.
3. Offer firefighters for human interest stories and to discuss the department's diversity goals and community values.
4. If negative stories appear, follow them up with what the department is doing to correct any problems.



6. Diversity message, inclusion message, showing diversity in recruitment messages and internal communications

The strongest and most statistically significant correlations in the data are with having a strong diversity and inclusive message and internal commitment.

Constant and consistent communication of your message is essential!

1. Continually train and reinforce positive values and message within the department.
2. Post diversity goals and statements in every station and reinforce in internal and external documents.
3. Market the department's diversity goals and values widely by including it in all external messages and materials.
4. Match newly hired firefighters to mentors who are preferably same gender and ethnicity, demonstrate value for all employees.
5. Provide diversity training for all employees.
6. Rigorously enforce harassment policies.



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7. Job Fairs / Community Events / Churches / Schools

*“Having a number of females on the department has proven invaluable in recruiting other females, as their visible presence gives immediate hope to others. The same principle applies to ethnic Minorities. Be prepared to answer questions about real or perceived barriers in the testing process.”
Minneapolis Fire Department*

These methods can be very effective when:

1. Target the message and effort to groups at cultural events, not to general audiences.
2. The department, employee minority groups, and IAFF locals sponsor booths at Cultural events during Cinco de Mayo, Martin Luther King Day, and other events.
3. Current employees from each group create their own recruitment plans.
4. Ask employees to represent the department at these events.
5. Relationship building in the community gets you invited to these events as well as others that are less well known.
6. Surveyed departments named Kwanza, Chinese New Year, Fiesta Hispanio, Filipino Festival, Juneteenth, Hmong, and Somalian events and festivals as some they attend and sponsor.



8. Candidate preparation, candidate and employee assistance and mentoring

*This must be inclusive, but can also be targeted so that mentors are matched with others of same ethnicity and gender.
Departments that use CPAT discussed the importance of mentoring women candidates by women employees.*

1. Develop a program to build relationships and offer career preparation, not simply test preparation.
2. Continue mentoring through academy and training to offer support to newly hired firefighters.
3. Mentors can be informal.
4. Assign women and Minorities to work together.
5. Try to hire 2 – 3 women and Minorities at a time in each academy to provide mutual support, mentoring opportunities, etc.
6. Assign women and Minorities to a strong trainer/officer whom you know will not tolerate anti-women or anti-Minority statements.
7. Protect your newly hired firefighters from poor attitudes from others until they are trained and confident.



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Case Studies of Successful Departments

This section highlights the achievements of a few of the surveyed departments. This is not intended to suggest that other departments are not also successful or innovative. In addition, even departments listed below do not represent “perfect” recruiting or results. Recruiting continues to be a challenge for all departments. In addition, Best Practices relate to Recruiting, Selection, Internal Commitment and Policies, as well as other areas of performance. Some departments may be effective in recruiting, but have deficiencies elsewhere in their process. These case studies are presented to demonstrate the types of Best Practices methods and strategies that are successful.



1. Madison, WI

This department has never been under a consent decree. They have over-representation of Blacks, community representation of Hispanics, and very good representation of women. This department is ranked #1 in our sample for excellent diversity for all groups.

What type of recruiting is done?

- *News stories*
- *Advertising in major and local/community newspapers*
- *Ads in newspapers, radio, TV whose audience is Women and Minorities*
- *Ads on Cable TV*
- *Direct mail*
- *Word of Mouth through strong relationships with community groups*
- *Job Fairs*
- *Churches, schools, open houses, and orientation*
- *Department website*

Keys to Success: They make use of their current diversity to continue building on it. They involve current employees in recruiting and formalize word of mouth activities through community organizations. They also continue to use formal methods of advertising to reach all segments of their market. Their website and recruiting materials reinforce the message of valuing diversity.

*They have 25 PT recruiters, 14 are Minorities and/or women
Approximately 1% of budget goes to recruitment*



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2. Lansing, MI

This department has never been under a consent decree. They have excellent representation of women, ranking #3 for representation of women with 20% in the department. Most of their ethnic diversity is fairly new - in the last 10 years 42% of their new hires have been protected group members. They acknowledge there is still a long way to go to be representative of the community.

“Hire quality and diversity...after a few years, other employees recognize the world didn’t end...”

What type of recruiting is done?

- *Advertising in major and local/community newspapers*
- *Ads in newspapers, radio, TV whose audience is Women and Minorities*
- *Cadet program*
- *Word of Mouth, small community, recruit in other communities*
- *Relationship with community college provides many applicants*
- *Recruit in other cities*
- *News Stories*
- *Job Fairs*
- *Churches, schools, open houses, and orientation*
- *Department website*

Keys to Success: They have a cooperative union/administration program. They assign mentors to new employees. Employees communicate with candidates, keep them informed. They have current employees act as informal recruiters and teach classes.



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3. Minneapolis, MN

This department was under a consent decree to hire ethnic Minorities until 2000. However, their excellent representation of women is due solely to active recruiting. They have continued to build on the success they have, especially with women.

“Candidates are called individually and encouraged to show up for tutoring sessions for both the written and physical test. In addition, a recruiter is available to answer questions.”

What type of recruiting is done?

- *Advertising in major and local/community newspapers*
- *Ads in newspapers, radio, TV whose audience is women and Minorities*
- *Word of Mouth, community events, Women and Minority recruiters*
- *News Stories*
- *Job Fairs*
- *Sporting events, colleges, schools*
- *Department website*

Keys to Success: Participate in many cultural and community events and have current employees attend. Personally contact applicants and provide mentoring for applicants. Conduct aggressive recruiting prior to testing.

They have 1 FT recruiter and 4 others PT.



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4. Charlottesville, VA

This department ranks 3rd in Black representation, with a ratio of .83.

“Offer high school students the opportunity to explore these career paths through courses taught at the Tech Center.”

What type of recruiting is done?

- *Advertising in major and local/community newspapers*
- *Test Preparation, Job Fairs, Open House*
- *Cadet program*

Keys to Success: Encourage, support, and provide training for newly hired Minority and Women firefighters. Rigorously enforce harassment policies. Go where Minorities are to recruit; don't expect them to come to you.

7 PT recruiters, includes 5 Women and Minorities.



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5. Rochester, NY

They consider the Cadet program to be Very Successful relative to any other method. They sponsor a Firefighter Trainee program with the school district, and they bring graduates right into a recruit class in the department.

“Understand that for women, breaking into what has been traditionally a man’s domain, creates special problems and the need for out of the box solutions.”

What type of recruiting is done?

- *Ads on radio/tv targeting Minorities, PSAs*
- *News Stories*
- *Work with community agencies, community events, job fairs*
- *Cadet program – Trainee program, work with school district*

Keys to Success: Working in the community, ensuring inclusiveness in the organization, recognizing that the organization has to demonstrate its commitment to treating women and Minorities as equals. Getting women to talk to others so they have realistic expectations about the job.

2 FT recruiters who are Minorities.



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6. Montgomery County, MD

This department has never been under a consent decree. This department has shown commitment to diversity in their recruitment, selection, and internal commitment efforts. They use a multi-prong approach and commit significant resources.

What type of recruiting is done?

- *Targeted advertising in major and local/community newspapers*
- *Ads in many targeted local newspapers and community papers*
- *Word of Mouth through strong relationships with community groups*
- *Department and other websites*
- *High school cadet program*
- *Individual feedback and contact with candidates throughout process*
- *They administer candidate surveys to track recruitment success*
- *Mentoring program, including CPAT prep for 12 weeks*
- *Use of a written test and oral board process professionally developed and customized for the department to minimize adverse impact*
- *Internal characteristics include mandatory harassment and diversity training, all stations and gear accommodate women, and other efforts*

Keys to Success: They use over 20 different methods of recruiting. They involve current employees in recruiting and formalize word of mouth activities through community organizations. They use extensive formal methods of advertising to reach all segments of their market. They add a personal touch with all candidates to make them feel welcome, including personal notification of their test score. If candidates do not pass the test, they are invited to try again next time.

*They have 1 FT recruiter, 20 PT recruiters, 10 are Minorities and 8 are women
Approximately 1% of budget goes to recruitment*

Finally, words of advice from surveyed departments include being persistent, continuing to work at it, and not giving up. Once your efforts begin to work, success builds on success.

It is critical to track results at **every** stage so that you can evaluate your success accurately. Without this, you will have no way of knowing how to best improve your process or what stages need improvement



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2. Demographics of the Participating Departments

The table presented below shows demographics for the major ethnic Minority groups and for Women that were used as the basis for comparison in this report. The terms Black, Hispanic, Asian, and White are used to match the terms used by the U. S. Census. The term Hispanic is inclusive of Latino, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban and other. The term Asian is inclusive of Filipino, Pacific Islander, and other Asian. We did collect data regarding other Minority groups, such as Native American and Arab/Middle Eastern, but the numbers are too small to report. Total Minority in this report when we refer to census and similar data usually refers to a combination of Black, Hispanic, and Asian.

Demographics in the US, Fire Service, and study participant departments

	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Women
1. US Census 2000	12.3%	12.5%	3.6%	50.9%
2. Firefighting Profession US Bureau of Labor Statistics	8.4%	8.6%	1.3%	5.1%
3. Average Percent of each group in study Departments	11.8%	8.5%	1.6%	7.8%
4. National Group Ratio - percent representation in the Fire Service compared to representation in the US	.68	.69	.36	.10

The goal of diversity in the Fire Service is for each group to be represented according to the representation in the general population. A comparison of Census data (row 1) with Fire Service data (row 2) shows that all groups are significantly underrepresented in the Fire Service. Using the same type of comparison with the departments in this study shows that *on average*, the representation almost meets or exceeds the national averages for representation in the Fire Service as a whole (row 3). However, the surveyed departments as a group are below the national census numbers. This would suggest that progress has been made in these departments, but there is more work to do. This is a useful comparison to give a general baseline and scope of the problem.

However, using the percent of each group within a department as a measure of success or comparison is not useful to determine the success of each department. It does not take into account the percent of representation in each department’s community. In other words, a department may have 20% Black, but if the community is 60% Black, this is not good



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representation. In order to create a better measure of success, we use a Group Ratio, of department representation divided by community representation.

Group Ratio

Similar to an adverse impact ratio, the closer the ratio is to 1.00, the closer the representation of the target group is to the actual population. Row 4 in the table shows the National Group ratios comparing representation in the Fire Service to representation in the population. Using these ratios, a department showing progress would be one whose group ratios exceed the national Fire Service ratios. For example, a department with a Black ratio between .69 and 1.00 exceeds the national ratio for Blacks in the Fire Service as a whole and comes closer to actual population representation. Likewise, for women, ratios above .10 would demonstrate better than average progress towards Diversity. (For women, either the ratio or percent representation in the department is a valid comparison because women make up about half the population in most communities.)

For the purpose of this analysis, we measured success in the study departments by the percent of Minorities and women represented in the local population based on census data compared to the percent represented in the department.

As the table below shows, the average ratios in the study departments are below the average ratios nationally for Minorities. This is because there are other departments in the US with equal or better representation of Minorities compared to their communities. This study did not identify all departments with good diversity, nor was that the goal of the project. The goal of the project was to identify departments with active and successful recruiting for diversity, whose numbers are expected to improve over time as they continue pursuing their diversity goals.

Study Departments Average Ratios, and Minimum and Maximum

	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Female	Female %
Mean	.60	.47	.24	.15	7.8%
Minimum (department with the worst ratio)	.11	.00	.00	.01	0%
Maximum (department with the best ratio)	1.5	1.0	.97	.46	24%



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The current representation of Minorities and Females in each department is one important measure of success. However, the current snap shot may not reveal how the department is changing or has changed since implementing effective recruiting. This is why even some of the surveyed departments may not have good representation of all groups. Also, the purpose of the study is to identify methods that are more or less effective. Therefore, we included departments with a somewhat limited range of success in order to compare methods between departments.

Women

The US Bureau of Labor statistics (2004) reports that 5.1% (13,668) of firefighters are female in the US. The Women in the Fire Service (WFS) reports a figure of less than half of that (www.wfsi.org, 2005). Depending upon which estimate is used, the department ratios will show more or less progress compared to national. For the purpose of this study, we used the BLS numbers, which sets a higher comparison for the study departments.

The average representation of women in our study departments is 7.8%. This shows that our study departments are exceeding the national average. Some of the study departments exceed the national average very significantly. In fact, many of the surveyed departments have had more success recruiting women than ethnic Minorities.



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3. Correlations with Methods of Recruitment and Group Ratios

How to read the data

CWH conducted several analyses on the survey data. One of the analyses was to simply run correlations between various methods of recruitment and group ratios, indicating diversity success. This and other analyses form the basis for the Key Findings presented earlier.

The attached tables show the correlations between the Group Ratios (that we are using as indicators of success) and each recruitment method. Due to the small sample size ($n = 31$ departments), most of the correlations are not statistically significant. However, this information can be helpful to see the relative effectiveness or usefulness of the 27 different recruitment methods used by surveyed departments. This also shows some other recruitment oriented actions and strategies used by the departments.

The larger the number in the correlation, the stronger the relationship is between the two variables. Positive correlations indicate that departments with better group representation use the particular method. Negative correlations indicate that departments with lower group representation use the method. Correlations greater than .10 or less than -.10 are highlighted as being of some interest. Correlations between .10 and -.10 should be generally ignored. A few correlations are statistically significant and those are shaded. The shaded correlations indicate very strong support for the use of the method.

This analysis used our full sample of 31 departments, and did not make distinctions between more or less successful departments or those with consent decrees.

How to use this data

Please note that we cannot draw cause and effect conclusions from this data. We can use this data to help guide our understanding of recruitment in the context of our literature review and the qualitative data provided by the departments. This information can help in the development of recruitment strategies. All recruitment efforts should be tracked in detail and analyzed by each department to determine their effectiveness over time.

Caution:

In interpreting this data, it is important not to place too much emphasis on any one method or correlation, but to use this as additional information. Keep in mind that most departments use a combination of methods. Also, the nature of and implementation of each method may be different from department to department.



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The same table of correlations is presented several times, sorted by each group (Black, Hispanic, Asian, Total Minority, and Female) to make it easy to see results related to specific groups. The Total Minority results are presented for comparison purposes but are generally not as useful or meaningful. The results are washed out by combining across groups, and it is more meaningful to look at what has worked for individual groups.

The correlations are between the group ratio and the Method of recruitment. Each group ratio is the percent of representation in that department compared to the percent of representation in the city or area, similar to an adverse impact ratio. Thus, higher correlations indicate that greater representation is associated with the use of the particular method.

Correlations that are **shaded** are statistically significant and indicate strong support for use of the method. Correlations that are **bolded** are interesting and meaningful, and should be considered and interpreted in with other information.

Each of the following tables sorts the methods by what appears most effective for each group.



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1. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Black Ratio

		Black	Hispani c	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
2	Direct Mail Interest Cards Survey item # 2	0.43	0.28	0.23	0.35	-0.24	0.03	31
1	Word of Mouth Survey item # 1	0.34	-0.20	-0.04	0.09	-0.04	0.18	31
7	Radio Ads Survey item # 7	0.18	0.15	-0.18	0.24	-0.11	0.46	31
15	News Stories Survey item # 15	0.16	-0.06	-0.08	-0.09	0.13	0.12	31
16	Dept/City Website Survey item # 16	0.16	-0.29	-0.25	-0.03	0.34	-0.25	31
18	Community Events Survey item # 18	0.15	0.04	0.21	0.00	0.24	0.24	31
3	Newsletter Survey item # 3	0.12	0.14	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.05	31
10	Female Publication Ads Survey item # 10	0.12	0.20	0.18	0.10	-0.15	0.24	31
24	Cadet/Explorer Program Survey item # 24	0.11	-0.17	-0.01	-0.22	-0.01	0.02	31
23	Preparation Assistance Survey item # 23	0.10	-0.15	-0.05	-0.06	-0.08	-0.11	31
9	Cable/Local Access TV Ads Survey item # 9	0.08	-0.03	-0.08	0.01	0.02	0.27	31
6	Ads Local Newspapers Survey item # 6	0.07	-0.06	-0.01	0.08	-0.06	0.41	31
4	Banners Survey item # 4	0.04	0.09	0.18	0.16	0.26	-0.07	31
25	Mentoring Applicants Survey item # 25	0.02	0.02	0.35	-0.20	-0.18	-0.02	31
20	Other Job Fairs Survey item # 20	0.02	-0.26	-0.14	-0.35	-0.06	-0.04	31
5	Ads Major Metro Newspapers Survey item # 5	0.01	-0.04	-0.01	-0.09	-0.02	0.42	31
11	Minority Publication Ads Survey item # 11	0.00	-0.08	0.13	-0.07	-0.01	0.07	31
	Use Assistance/Mentoring Recruitment Strategy	0.00	-0.24	-0.11	-0.29	-0.14	-0.06	31
19	Schools/Com Ctr/Churches Survey item # 19	-0.01	-0.13	0.06	-0.30	0.27	0.15	31
17	Other Website Survey item # 17	-0.02	-0.03	-0.08	-0.24	0.23	0.06	31
13	Minority Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 13	-0.03	0.06	-0.03	-0.11	0.15	0.01	31
14	Public Service Announcements Survey item # 14	-0.03	-0.12	-0.13	-0.02	0.14	0.04	31
27	Test Other Cities Survey item # 27	-0.04	-0.01	-0.10	-0.09	0.19	-0.13	31
21	Open House Survey item # 21	-0.07	-0.17	-0.31	-0.29	0.00	-0.17	31
26	Recruit Other Cities Survey item # 26	-0.10	0.10	0.03	-0.23	-0.04	0.20	31
22	Orientation/Info Session Survey item # 22	-0.12	-0.07	-0.11	-0.14	0.12	-0.12	31
8	Network TV Ads Survey item # 8	-0.15	-0.10	0.02	-0.24	0.05	0.19	31
12	Female Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 12	-0.16	-0.12	0.08	-0.22	0.11	0.14	31



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1. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Black Ratio (Continued)

		Black	Hispani c	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
Other Recruitment related activities that Impact Diversity								
Q143	Is Test prep offered?	0.27	0.07	-0.15	0.17	0.16	0.07	31
Q149	Is test preparation geared for minorities?	0.21	0.15	0.15	0.00	-0.11	0.35	22
	Newspaper or Publication Recruitment Strategy	0.13	0.00	0.05	0.15	-0.11	0.45	31
Q147	Is test prep geared for women?	0.12	0.04	0.11	-0.09	-0.09	0.39	22
	TV or Radio Recruitment Strategy	0.06	0.06	-0.08	0.12	0.11	0.25	31
	Number of Newspaper & Publication Recruitment Efforts	0.06	0.01	0.09	0.00	-0.07	0.33	31
	Number of TV and Radio Recruitment Efforts	-0.02	-0.01	-0.06	-0.08	0.06	0.31	31
Q126	Recruitment targets women	-0.03	-0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.03	0.11	31
Q127	Recruitment targets minorities	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	-0.13	0.08	0.06	31
Q194	Mentoring program?	-0.07	0.18	0.07	0.01	-0.17	-0.15	31



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2. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Hispanic Ratio

		Black	Hispani c	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
2	Direct Mail Interest Cards Survey item # 2	0.43	0.28	0.23	0.35	-0.24	0.03	31
10	Female Publication Ads Survey item # 10	0.12	0.20	0.18	0.10	-0.15	0.24	31
7	Radio Ads Survey item # 7	0.18	0.15	-0.18	0.24	-0.11	0.46	31
3	Newsletter Survey item # 3	0.12	0.14	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.05	31
26	Recruit Other Cities Survey item # 26	-0.10	0.10	0.03	-0.23	-0.04	0.20	31
4	Banners Survey item # 4	0.04	0.09	0.18	0.16	0.26	-0.07	31
13	Minority Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 13	-0.03	0.06	-0.03	-0.11	0.15	0.01	31
18	Community Events Survey item # 18	0.15	0.04	0.21	0.00	0.24	0.24	31
25	Mentoring Applicants Survey item # 25	0.02	0.02	0.35	-0.20	-0.18	-0.02	31
27	Test Other Cities Survey item # 27	-0.04	-0.01	-0.10	-0.09	0.19	-0.13	31
17	Other Website Survey item # 17	-0.02	-0.03	-0.08	-0.24	0.23	0.06	31
9	Cable/Local Access TV Ads Survey item # 9	0.08	-0.03	-0.08	0.01	0.02	0.27	31
5	Ads Major Metro Newspapers Survey item # 5	0.01	-0.04	-0.01	-0.09	-0.02	0.42	31
6	Ads Local Newspapers Survey item # 6	0.07	-0.06	-0.01	0.08	-0.06	0.41	31
15	News Stories Survey item # 15	0.16	-0.06	-0.08	-0.09	0.13	0.12	31
22	Orientation/Info Session Survey item # 22	-0.12	-0.07	-0.11	-0.14	0.12	-0.12	31
11	Minority Publication Ads Survey item # 11	0.00	-0.08	0.13	-0.07	-0.01	0.07	31
8	Network TV Ads Survey item # 8	-0.15	-0.10	0.02	-0.24	0.05	0.19	31
14	Public Service Announcements Survey item # 14	-0.03	-0.12	-0.13	-0.02	0.14	0.04	31
12	Female Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 12	-0.16	-0.12	0.08	-0.22	0.11	0.14	31
19	Schools/Com Ctr/Churches Survey item # 19	-0.01	-0.13	0.06	-0.30	0.27	0.15	31
23	Preparation Assistance Survey item # 23	0.10	-0.15	-0.05	-0.06	-0.08	-0.11	31
24	Cadet/Explorer Program Survey item # 24	0.11	-0.17	-0.01	-0.22	-0.01	0.02	31
21	Open House Survey item # 21	-0.07	-0.17	-0.31	-0.29	0.00	-0.17	31
1	Word of Mouth Survey item # 1	0.34	-0.20	-0.04	0.09	-0.04	0.18	31
	Use Assistance/Mentoring Recruitment Strategy	0.00	-0.24	-0.11	-0.29	-0.14	-0.06	31
20	Other Job Fairs Survey item # 20	0.02	-0.26	-0.14	-0.35	-0.06	-0.04	31
16	Dept/City Website Survey item # 16	0.16	-0.29	-0.25	-0.03	0.34	-0.25	31



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2. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Hispanic Ratio (Continued)

Other Recruitment related activities that Impact Diversity		Black	Hispanic	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
Q194	Q194 - Mentoring program?	-0.07	0.18	0.07	0.01	-0.17	-0.15	31
Q149	Q149 - Is test preparation geared for minorities?	0.21	0.15	0.15	0.00	-0.11	0.35	22
Q143	Q143 - Is Test prep offered?	0.27	0.07	-0.15	0.17	0.16	0.07	31
	Use TV or Radio Recruitment Strategy	0.06	0.06	-0.08	0.12	0.11	0.25	31
Q147	Q147 - Is test prep geared for women?	0.12	0.04	0.11	-0.09	-0.09	0.39	22
	Number of Newspaper & Publication Recruitment Efforts	0.06	0.01	0.09	0.00	-0.07	0.33	31
	Use Newspaper or Publication Recruitment Strategy	0.13	0.00	0.05	0.15	-0.11	0.45	31
	Number of TV and Radio Recruitment Efforts	-0.02	-0.01	-0.06	-0.08	0.06	0.31	31
Q126	Q126 - Recruitment targets women	-0.03	-0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.03	0.11	31
Q127	Q127 - Recruitment targets minorities	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	-0.13	0.08	0.06	31



IAFF Diversity Initiative Achieving and Retaining a Diverse Fire Service Workforce

3. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Asian Ratio

	Use of Recruitment Methods that impact Diversity	Black	Hispani c	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
25	Mentoring Applicants Survey item # 25	0.02	0.02	0.35	-0.20	-0.18	-0.02	31
2	Direct Mail Interest Cards Survey item # 2	0.43	0.28	0.23	0.35	-0.24	0.03	31
18	Community Events Survey item # 18	0.15	0.04	0.21	0.00	0.24	0.24	31
10	Female Publication Ads Survey item # 10	0.12	0.20	0.18	0.10	-0.15	0.24	31
4	Banners Survey item # 4	0.04	0.09	0.18	0.16	0.26	-0.07	31
11	Minority Publication Ads Survey item # 11	0.00	-0.08	0.13	-0.07	-0.01	0.07	31
12	Female Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 12	-0.16	-0.12	0.08	-0.22	0.11	0.14	31
3	Newsletter Survey item # 3	0.12	0.14	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.05	31
19	Schools/Com Ctr/Churches Survey item # 19	-0.01	-0.13	0.06	-0.30	0.27	0.15	31
26	Recruit Other Cities Survey item # 26	-0.10	0.10	0.03	-0.23	-0.04	0.20	31
8	Network TV Ads Survey item # 8	-0.15	-0.10	0.02	-0.24	0.05	0.19	31
24	Cadet/Explorer Program Survey item # 24	0.11	-0.17	-0.01	-0.22	-0.01	0.02	31
5	Ads Major Metro Newspapers Survey item # 5	0.01	-0.04	-0.01	-0.09	-0.02	0.42	31
6	Ads Local Newspapers Survey item # 6	0.07	-0.06	-0.01	0.08	-0.06	0.41	31
13	Minority Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 13	-0.03	0.06	-0.03	-0.11	0.15	0.01	31
1	Word of Mouth Survey item # 1	0.34	-0.20	-0.04	0.09	-0.04	0.18	31
23	Preparation Assistance Survey item # 23	0.10	-0.15	-0.05	-0.06	-0.08	-0.11	31
15	News Stories Survey item # 15	0.16	-0.06	-0.08	-0.09	0.13	0.12	31
17	Other Website Survey item # 17	-0.02	-0.03	-0.08	-0.24	0.23	0.06	31
9	Cable/Local Access TV Ads Survey item # 9	0.08	-0.03	-0.08	0.01	0.02	0.27	31
27	Test Other Cities Survey item # 27	-0.04	-0.01	-0.10	-0.09	0.19	-0.13	31
	Use Assistance/Mentoring Recruitment Strategy	0.00	-0.24	-0.11	-0.29	-0.14	-0.06	31
22	Orientation/Info Session Survey item # 22	-0.12	-0.07	-0.11	-0.14	0.12	-0.12	31
14	Public Service Announcements Survey item # 14	-0.03	-0.12	-0.13	-0.02	0.14	0.04	31
20	Other Job Fairs Survey item # 20	0.02	-0.26	-0.14	-0.35	-0.06	-0.04	31
7	Radio Ads Survey item # 7	0.18	0.15	-0.18	0.24	-0.11	0.46	31
16	Dept/City Website Survey item # 16	0.16	-0.29	-0.25	-0.03	0.34	-0.25	31
21	Open House Survey item # 21	-0.07	-0.17	-0.31	-0.29	0.00	-0.17	31



IAFF Diversity Initiative Achieving and Retaining a Diverse Fire Service Workforce

3. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Asian Ratio (Continued)

Other Recruitment related activities that Impact Diversity		Black	Hispani c	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
Q149	Q149 - Is test preparation geared for minorities?	0.21	0.15	0.15	0.00	-0.11	0.35	22
Q147	Q147 - Is test prep geared for women?	0.12	0.04	0.11	-0.09	-0.09	0.39	22
	Number of Newspaper & Publication Recruitment Efforts	0.06	0.01	0.09	0.00	-0.07	0.33	31
Q194	Q194 - Mentoring program?	-0.07	0.18	0.07	0.01	-0.17	-0.15	31
	Use Newspaper or Publication Recruitment Strategy	0.13	0.00	0.05	0.15	-0.11	0.45	31
Q126	Q126 - Recruitment targets women	-0.03	-0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.03	0.11	31
Q127	Q127 - Recruitment targets minorities	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	-0.13	0.08	0.06	31
	Number of TV and Radio Recruitment Efforts	-0.02	-0.01	-0.06	-0.08	0.06	0.31	31
	Use TV or Radio Recruitment Strategy	0.06	0.06	-0.08	0.12	0.11	0.25	31
Q143	Q143 - Is Test prep offered?	0.27	0.07	-0.15	0.17	0.16	0.07	31



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4. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Total Minority Ratio

		Black	Hispani c	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
2	Direct Mail Interest Cards Survey item # 2	0.43	0.28	0.23	0.35	-0.24	0.03	31
7	Radio Ads Survey item # 7	0.18	0.15	-0.18	0.24	-0.11	0.46	31
4	Banners Survey item # 4	0.04	0.09	0.18	0.16	0.26	-0.07	31
10	Female Publication Ads Survey item # 10	0.12	0.20	0.18	0.10	-0.15	0.24	31
1	Word of Mouth Survey item # 1	0.34	-0.20	-0.04	0.09	-0.04	0.18	31
6	Ads Local Newspapers Survey item # 6	0.07	-0.06	-0.01	0.08	-0.06	0.41	31
9	Cable/Local Access TV Ads Survey item # 9	0.08	-0.03	-0.08	0.01	0.02	0.27	31
18	Community Events Survey item # 18	0.15	0.04	0.21	0.00	0.24	0.24	31
3	Newsletter Survey item # 3	0.12	0.14	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.05	31
14	Public Service Announcements Survey item # 14	-0.03	-0.12	-0.13	-0.02	0.14	0.04	31
16	Dept/City Website Survey item # 16	0.16	-0.29	-0.25	-0.03	0.34	-0.25	31
23	Preparation Assistance Survey item # 23	0.10	-0.15	-0.05	-0.06	-0.08	-0.11	31
11	Minority Publication Ads Survey item # 11	0.00	-0.08	0.13	-0.07	-0.01	0.07	31
27	Test Other Cities Survey item # 27	-0.04	-0.01	-0.10	-0.09	0.19	-0.13	31
5	Ads Major Metro Newspapers Survey item # 5	0.01	-0.04	-0.01	-0.09	-0.02	0.42	31
15	News Stories Survey item # 15	0.16	-0.06	-0.08	-0.09	0.13	0.12	31
13	Minority Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 13	-0.03	0.06	-0.03	-0.11	0.15	0.01	31
22	Orientation/Info Session Survey item # 22	-0.12	-0.07	-0.11	-0.14	0.12	-0.12	31
25	Mentoring Applicants Survey item # 25	0.02	0.02	0.35	-0.20	-0.18	-0.02	31
24	Cadet/Explorer Program Survey item # 24	0.11	-0.17	-0.01	-0.22	-0.01	0.02	31
12	Female Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 12	-0.16	-0.12	0.08	-0.22	0.11	0.14	31
26	Recruit Other Cities Survey item # 26	-0.10	0.10	0.03	-0.23	-0.04	0.20	31
17	Other Website Survey item # 17	-0.02	-0.03	-0.08	-0.24	0.23	0.06	31
8	Network TV Ads Survey item # 8	-0.15	-0.10	0.02	-0.24	0.05	0.19	31
21	Open House Survey item # 21	-0.07	-0.17	-0.31	-0.29	0.00	-0.17	31
	Use Assistance/Mentoring Recruitment Strategy	0.00	-0.24	-0.11	-0.29	-0.14	-0.06	31
19	Schools/Com Ctr/Churches Survey item # 19	-0.01	-0.13	0.06	-0.30	0.27	0.15	31
20	Other Job Fairs Survey item # 20	0.02	-0.26	-0.14	-0.35	-0.06	-0.04	31



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4. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Total Minority Ratio (Continued)

Other Recruitment related activities that Impact Diversity		Black	Hispani	Asian	Total	White	Female	N
			c		Minority			
Q143	Q143 - Is Test prep offered?	0.27	0.07	-0.15	0.17	0.16	0.07	31
	Use Newspaper or Publication Recruitment Strategy	0.13	0.00	0.05	0.15	-0.11	0.45	31
	Use TV or Radio Recruitment Strategy	0.06	0.06	-0.08	0.12	0.11	0.25	31
Q194	Q194 - Mentoring program?	-0.07	0.18	0.07	0.01	-0.17	-0.15	31
	Number of Newspaper & Publication Recruitment Efforts	0.06	0.01	0.09	0.00	-0.07	0.33	31
Q149	Q149 - Is test preparation geared for minorities?	0.21	0.15	0.15	0.00	-0.11	0.35	22
Q126	Q126 - Recruitment targets women	-0.03	-0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.03	0.11	31
	Number of TV and Radio Recruitment Efforts	-0.02	-0.01	-0.06	-0.08	0.06	0.31	31
Q147	Q147 - Is test prep geared for women?	0.12	0.04	0.11	-0.09	-0.09	0.39	22
Q127	Q127 - Recruitment targets minorities	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	-0.13	0.08	0.06	31



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5. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Female Ratio

	Use of Recruitment Methods that Impact Diversity	Black	Hispani c	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
7	Radio Ads Survey item # 7	0.18	0.15	-0.18	0.24	-0.11	0.46	31
5	Ads Major Metro Newspapers Survey item # 5	0.01	-0.04	-0.01	-0.09	-0.02	0.42	31
6	Ads Local Newspapers Survey item # 6	0.07	-0.06	-0.01	0.08	-0.06	0.41	31
9	Cable/Local Access TV Ads Survey item # 9	0.08	-0.03	-0.08	0.01	0.02	0.27	31
18	Community Events Survey item # 18	0.15	0.04	0.21	0.00	0.24	0.24	31
10	Female Publication Ads Survey item # 10	0.12	0.20	0.18	0.10	-0.15	0.24	31
26	Recruit Other Cities Survey item # 26	-0.10	0.10	0.03	-0.23	-0.04	0.20	31
8	Network TV Ads Survey item # 8	-0.15	-0.10	0.02	-0.24	0.05	0.19	31
1	Word of Mouth Survey item # 1	0.34	-0.20	-0.04	0.09	-0.04	0.18	31
19	Schools/Com Ctr/Churches Survey item # 19	-0.01	-0.13	0.06	-0.30	0.27	0.15	31
12	Female Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 12	-0.16	-0.12	0.08	-0.22	0.11	0.14	31
15	News Stories Survey item # 15	0.16	-0.06	-0.08	-0.09	0.13	0.12	31
11	Minority Publication Ads Survey item # 11	0.00	-0.08	0.13	-0.07	-0.01	0.07	31
17	Other Website Survey item # 17	-0.02	-0.03	-0.08	-0.24	0.23	0.06	31
3	Newsletter Survey item # 3	0.12	0.14	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.05	31
14	Public Service Announcements Survey item # 14	-0.03	-0.12	-0.13	-0.02	0.14	0.04	31
2	Direct Mail Interest Cards Survey item # 2	0.43	0.28	0.23	0.35	-0.24	0.03	31
24	Cadet/Explorer Program Survey item # 24	0.11	-0.17	-0.01	-0.22	-0.01	0.02	31
13	Minority Radio/TV Ads Survey item # 13	-0.03	0.06	-0.03	-0.11	0.15	0.01	31
25	Mentoring Applicants Survey item # 25	0.02	0.02	0.35	-0.20	-0.18	-0.02	31
20	Other Job Fairs Survey item # 20	0.02	-0.26	-0.14	-0.35	-0.06	-0.04	31
	Use Assistance/Mentoring Recruitment Strategy	0.00	-0.24	-0.11	-0.29	-0.14	-0.06	31
4	Banners Survey item # 4	0.04	0.09	0.18	0.16	0.26	-0.07	31
23	Preparation Assistance Survey item # 23	0.10	-0.15	-0.05	-0.06	-0.08	-0.11	31
22	Orientation/Info Session Survey item # 22	-0.12	-0.07	-0.11	-0.14	0.12	-0.12	31
27	Test Other Cities Survey item # 27	-0.04	-0.01	-0.10	-0.09	0.19	-0.13	31
21	Open House Survey item # 21	-0.07	-0.17	-0.31	-0.29	0.00	-0.17	31
16	Dept/City Website Survey item # 16	0.16	-0.29	-0.25	-0.03	0.34	-0.25	31



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5. Correlations with Recruiting Methods - Sorted by Female Ratio (Continued)

Other Recruitment related activities that affect Diversity		Black	Hisp	Asian	Total Minority	White	Female	N
	Use Newspaper or Publication Recruitment Strategy	0.13	0.00	0.05	0.15	-0.11	0.45	31
Q147	Q147 - Is test prep geared for women?	0.12	0.04	0.11	-0.09	-0.09	0.39	22
Q149	Q149 - Is test preparation geared for minorities?	0.21	0.15	0.15	0.00	-0.11	0.35	22
	Number of Newspaper & Publication Recruitment Efforts	0.06	0.01	0.09	0.00	-0.07	0.33	31
	Number of TV and Radio Recruitment Efforts	-0.02	-0.01	-0.06	-0.08	0.06	0.31	31
	Use TV or Radio Recruitment Strategy	0.06	0.06	-0.08	0.12	0.11	0.25	31
Q126	Q126 - Recruitment targets women	-0.03	-0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.03	0.11	31
Q143	Q143 - Is Test prep offered?	0.27	0.07	-0.15	0.17	0.16	0.07	31
Q127	Q127 - Recruitment targets minorities	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	-0.13	0.08	0.06	31
Q194	Q194 - Mentoring program?	-0.07	0.18	0.07	0.01	-0.17	-0.15	31



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4. Department Characteristics and Policies that Impact Diversity

Research suggests that many factors influence recruiting and diversity success, other than recruiting method. The CWH comprehensive survey collected data on Selection, Retention, Training, and Diversity Commitment policies in addition to recruitment methods.

The table below shows correlations with the Group Ratios (that indicate greater diversity success) and other various policies. Statistically significant correlations are **shaded**. Stronger relationships have been **bolded**.

Selection Policies

			Blac k	Hispani c	Asia n	Total Minority	Whit e	Female	N
Q32	Dept provides patient transport		0.32	0.34	0.28	0.33	-0.31	0.43	31
Q35	Offer Incentive Pay for EMS certification (rather than requiring it at hire)		0.14	0.47	0.25	0.26	-0.35	0.50	31
Q60	Require more than a High School Diploma		-0.26	0.06	-0.22	-0.16	0.32	-0.13	32
Q62	Hire both Certified and Non Certified Firefighters (if need some to be certified at hire)		0.14	0.04	-0.09	0.12	0.04	-0.04	31
Q63	Hire from Separate lists for certified & non certified Firefighters (if need some certified at hire)		0.21	0.37	0.03	0.32	-0.23	0.19	26
Q64	Hire Both Paramedics and Non Paramedics (if need more Paramedics)		0.01	-0.21	-0.31	-0.09	0.05	-0.30	31
Q65	Hire Paramedics from Separate list (if need more Paramedics)		-0.06	0.14	0.27	0.00	-0.01	0.42	29
Q97	Preference Points Given for Veteran's, City Residence, Prior Experience, City employee, etc.		0.08	0.07	-0.07	-0.02	0.04	-0.21	34
Q98	Accept applications continuously, have open recruitment		-0.29	0.04	-0.07	-0.22	0.29	-0.13	31
Q99	Test frequently or have on-going testing		-0.18	-0.03	0.02	-0.14	0.23	0.05	31
Q147	Test preparation class or program targets women (especially PAT)		0.12	0.04	0.11	-0.09	-0.09	0.39	22
Q149	Test preparation class or program targets minorities		0.21	0.15	0.15	0.00	-0.11	0.35	22
Q141	Have personal contact with candidates other than at the test administration		0.08	0.13	-0.02	-0.12	-0.03	0.22	30



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Diversity Commitment, Message, and Values

			Blac k	Hispani c	Asia n	Total Minority	Whit e	Female	N
Q200	Encourage Official or Unofficial Organizations/Groups based on race, gender, etc.		0.65	0.31	0.30	0.49	-0.16	0.06	31
Q180	Diversity Message Communicated in Department Mission		0.41	0.24	0.14	0.34	-0.19	0.51	29
Q182	Develop a Specific & Formal Diversity Plan		0.23	0.01	-0.02	-0.02	0.13	0.20	29
Q183	Specifically Refer to Types of Diversity in Statements/Plans (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)		0.10	0.38	0.23	0.11	0.10	0.42	26
Q185	Develop and enforce Specific Harassment Policies Based on race, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, etc.		0.01	0.30	0.32	0.06	-0.15	0.30	28

Other Recruitment Issues & Policies

			Blac k	Hispani c	Asia n	Total Minority	Whit e	Female	N
Q139	Provide Detail about process in the Recruitment Message		0.28	0.08	0.11	0.03	-0.05	0.11	31
Q140	Provide Detail about department values in the Diversity Message		0.22	0.17	-0.01	0.02	-0.30	0.06	30



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Conclusions

- 1 Requiring certifications for firefighter, EMS, or Paramedic **decreases** or limits diversity. Some surveyed departments have dealt with this issue by using two different lists, and hiring from the certified list to maintain minimum required numbers. Other non certified employees are allowed time after hire to obtain necessary certifications or are provided training.
- 2 Having continuous and open application periods and continuous testing **decreases** diversity. This may be because this decreases the recruitment effort that normally would occur right before testing when departments test on an annual or bi-annual cycle. Most departments would not be able to maintain the necessary level of recruiting effort continuously.
- 3 Having personal contact with candidates during the recruiting period, including offering preparation classes is very **helpful**. Preparation classes should be inclusive and open to all candidates if possible. Ensure that the classes are not filled up with candidates referred by current employees and do not include adequate numbers of your targeted groups.
- 4 The communication about the department's diversity and inclusion intent and commitment is **critical**. For retaining Minorities and Women, and for using the current employees to recruit others, the enforcement of harassment policies is also **critical**.
- 5 Providing detail about the job, the process, and the department's values is **important**.
- 6 Preference points may either **help or hurt** diversity. Generally, preference points for city residence or city employment will **help** Minorities when representation is high in the city. Giving Veteran's points will **hurt** women. Giving preference for prior experience **decreases** diversity.



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5. Comparison of “Top 10” departments to others

Even among the surveyed departments, all of which do some active and effective recruiting, there are differences in recruiting methods used and results achieved. We divided our departments into 3 groups for further statistical analysis for comparison purposes. Departments that had been under a consent decree in the recent past were *excluded* (n = 7). Although the participant departments that have been under a consent decree are doing very innovative and active recruiting; they began with a great advantage in their diversity that would skew this comparison.

The groups are:

- 1 Top 10 Most Successful Departments (Rated in terms of successful in recruiting total Minorities)
- 2 Middle 8 Moderately Successful Departments
- 3 Remaining 5 Less Successful Departments

Similarities and Differences in Recruitment Methods used by surveyed Departments:

- 1 All of the departments use many different methods. That is, they do not rely on just a few methods to recruit.
- 2 Almost all of the departments use a combination of Traditional and Innovative recruiting methods and approaches.
- 3 The Top 10 departments in our sample (Most Successful) use more Innovative (and targeted) approaches than the other departments.
- 4 The Middle 8 departments (Moderately Successful) use some Innovative methods, but rely more on Traditional methods.
- 5 The bottom 5 departments (Less Successful) rely more on Traditional methods and approaches.



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Finding #1

Our Top 10 Most Successful departments use more methods in combination than our Moderately successful departments.

- 1 Top 10 departments use an average of 6 and up to 9 of the most Innovative methods.
- 2 Moderately Successful departments use an average of 3 and up to 6 of the Innovative methods.



Finding #2

What are the most effective recruiting methods?

- 1 Minority Radio/TV Ads
- 2 Direct Mail Interest Cards
- 3 Minority Publication Ads
- 4 News Stories
- 5 Female Radio/TV Ads
- 6 Cadet/Explorer Program
- 7 Mentoring Applicants
- 8 Word of Mouth is used very effectively when there is diversity in the department on which to build!

- All of these methods are used in combination with targeting the desired group.
- Each of these methods is used by over half of the top 10 departments.
- The Top 10 departments use these methods more than our other departments.
- These methods are more effective because they seem to target the desired group more directly.



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Finding #3

What are other effective recruiting methods used by our Moderately Successful departments?

- 1 Community Events
- 2 Job Fairs
- 3 Ads Local Newspapers
- 4 Ads Major Metro Newspapers
- 5 Radio Ads
- 6 Network TV Ads
- 7 Cable/Local Access TV
- 8 Female Publication Ads
- 9 Public Service Announcements

- These are additional methods used somewhat successfully.
- All departments use some of these methods.
- Our Moderately Successful group uses these methods more than the most effective methods used by the Top 10 group.
- The major difference between these methods and the methods used by the Top 10 is that these methods are not as targeted. They reach a more general audience.



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Finding #4

What are the Least Effective recruiting methods for increasing Diversity?

- 1 Word of Mouth – This is only effective if there is some diversity in the department to attract and refer other diversity, and if it is planned and formalized.
 - 2 Dept/City Website – This is a method to reinforce your diversity message and to provide recruiting information. It is not effective to recruit if the candidate does not know about you.
 - 3 Schools/Community Centers/Churches – Attending events or making isolated presentations is less effective. Working with community groups and building relationships is effective.
 - 4 Assistance/mentoring – Offering short term classes for test preparation immediately prior to testing is traditional, but not effective for recruiting larger numbers of Minorities and females. Many of these programs enroll more white men than other groups.
 - 5 Open House – Same comments as for word of mouth. This typically engages candidates who already know about your organization.
 - 6 Other Website – Same comments as for Department Website.
 - 7 Orientation/Info Session – Same comments as for Assistance/Mentoring.
- These are very common methods used by most departments.
 - Without planning and effort they likely reach Non Minorities more than Minorities unless they are targeted and structured.
 - They reach men & women equally, but may not appeal to women unless a targeted approach is used.
 - They are “minimum” efforts that are more traditional. Effectiveness varies.



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Finding #5

There are differences in which methods are more effective for different groups.

Some of the Most Successful Recruitment Efforts for Blacks

- Cadet/Explorer Program
- Direct Mail
- Radio Ads
- Ads in Minority Publications
- Cable/Local Access TV Ads
- Community Events
- Mentoring
- Orientation/Information Sessions

Some of the Most Successful Recruitment Efforts for Hispanics

- Cadet/Explorer Program
- Radio Ads
- Ads in Minority Publications
- Cable/Local Access TV Ads
- Community Events
- Mentoring
- Job Fairs
- Minority Radio Ads
- Orientation/Information Sessions

Some of the Most Successful Recruitment Efforts for women

- Cadet/Explorer Program
- Radio / TV Ads on stations targeting women
- Ads in Major and Minority Publications
- Radio Ads
- Job Fairs
- Orientation/Information Sessions
- Formal advertising in different media is very effective for women!



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Achieving and Retaining a Diverse Fire Service Workforce





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6. Obstacles to Diversity

Diversity recruitment requires a recognition of the need to diversify, an awareness of effective methods, a commitment to a program and strategies, and the assignment of resources. As we conducted the second phase of our study: interviews with IAFF Local Presidents, Recruiters, Chief Officers, Human Resources personnel, and others in various departments around the country, we learned why many departments do not have any recruitment programs in place, and especially not for diversity recruitment. Over half of the departments initially nominated to participate in the study of Best Practices used, self-selected out of providing information because they did not believe that their department actually does effective recruiting.

Most of the people we interviewed in the departments that self selected out of the survey believe that diversity is decreasing in the Fire Service, not increasing. At least that is true in their own departments, and it is predicted for the country, especially with upcoming retirements and the end of many consent decrees and Affirmative Action initiatives put in place in the 70's and 80's.

The comments received during these brief interviews inform us about some of the problems with Recruitment, Selection, and Retention in the Fire Service. This section highlights some of the major obstacles in achieving diversity.



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Obstacle 1. Being passive or defeatist about the problem. CWH has worked with departments who believe that being challenged legally and forced into a consent decree is a more realistic option or achievable goal than actually solving the problem. Unfortunately, consent decrees end, and they can have strong and lasting negative impacts. If the recruiting and selection process has not been corrected, the problem repeats itself as firefighters retire.

Our literature review also shows that people hired under an affirmative action plan may have a stigma attached to them for their entire careers (Heilman, Block, & Lucas, 1992). Another study reported that some Blacks withdraw from the selection process if there is a perception of favoritism towards Blacks, rather than deal with the stigma for the duration of their careers (Schmit & Ryan, 1997).

Seven (over 20%) of the surveyed departments had been under consent decrees at some time in the past.

This situation can be a catalyst for change, as is the case with our surveyed departments, or it can be a temporary relief that eventually reverts back to the conditions that caused the legal action.

Three other departments in the original 80+ are currently or were also under consent decrees, but they have not appeared to have implemented corrective policies.

“We are currently representative of the community because of a consent decree, but it ended 9 years ago. In the past 8 years, we have hired 2 Blacks and 1 Hispanic.”

Interview respondent, medium sized department in the Midwest

“We are under a consent decree until 2007. There is no incentive to recruit, so we don’t. If 30% of Minorities pass the test, the recruit class must be 30% minority. The union President has pushed for year-round recruitment and training/preparation for candidates, but this has fallen on deaf ears.”

Interview respondent, medium-large department in the Midwest



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Obstacle 2. The selection process does not measure the most important skills and abilities. Tests that do not measure a wide range of appropriate and important skills and characteristics will screen out quality and diversity.

43% of the surveyed departments use a written test validated for their department, and another 25% have done a transportability study.

“Diversity is lessening every day. We used to be on a 2 list system, and it may go back to that soon. Recruitment efforts have not been successful in getting Minorities to apply – and those who do have a hard time passing the test. Our union and management have a good relationship and we all realize we have a problem.”

Interview respondent – medium department in the Midwest

“We are not representative of the community and never will be with the current test. The current PAT focuses on upper body strength, not aerobic capacity. We are getting bulky men in worse shape than our incumbents.”

Interview respondent – medium - large department in the South



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Obstacle 3. The selection process requires education, certification, or prior experience that limits diversity. This is often used to reduce the applicant pool or to address a specific need in the department. However, this decreases diversity significantly and has effects that last for up to 30 years.

In separate CWH recruitment surveys administered to candidates in 4 large NE departments, 56% of Whites had previous experience (volunteer or paid), compared to 21% of Blacks. 49% of Whites had FF1 certification, compared to only 17% of Blacks. The same trend is true of men compared to women.

*None of the surveyed departments require prior experience.
83% do not require FF1 certification until after hire.
74% do not require EMT-B until after hire.*

“Our representation does not match our community. We now require fire academy graduation and college courses. Our department pays lip service to diversity, but we do not do anything to achieve it.”

Interview respondent, medium department in the West

“Our department is mostly White males. Our community is 70% – 80% Black and Hispanic. Candidates must be paramedics to apply, but our community is very impoverished, and it is unlikely that we will be able to recruit from our community.”

Interview respondent – small department in the Midwest

“We are lacking in diversity. The last minority we hired was 15 years ago. We used to be known for hiring women, but that is going down too. We look for people with volunteer experience. We do not do any real recruiting.”

Interview respondent- small department in the West



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Obstacle 4. Not knowing how to reach the desired groups effectively.

The literature review and our surveyed departments show that recruiting should be focused on the desired group with a message of inclusiveness. It should put forth a strong message about why the career of firefighting is beneficial for them. Also, having women and Minority recruiters may help, as well as showing diversity in the recruitment materials.

“We have traveled around the country to recruit women, but efforts have not been successful.”

Interview respondent - medium department in the Northwest

“We are lacking in diversity. The last few recruit classes haven’t had any women. The last class of 32 had 1 Minority. Our recruitment efforts, including ads in Minority publications and having a booth at the library in Minority communities, have not been successful.”

Interview respondent- large department in the Southwest

“We are not representative. We have 12 Blacks and 15 women out of 280 sworn. Our recruitment efforts – going to neighborhoods, churches, and cultural events, putting ads in newspapers, radio, and TV – have not been successful. ”

Interview respondent- medium department in the Northeast



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Obstacle 5. Not communicating a clear message of the value of diversity within the organization, not fostering an inclusive environment within the organization, and not developing or enforcing policies regarding harassment.

Our literature review says that informal methods of recruitment are the most frequently used and effective methods of recruitment for all jobs. That includes word of mouth and referrals, which are used extensively in the Fire Service. However, this method of recruitment promotes homogeneity in the workforce (Jackson et al., 1991). Where internal values and policies do not support diversity, informal recruiting such as word of mouth can even work in the reverse.

“Our representation has gotten better for Hispanics and Blacks, but worse for women. The department does not make any conscious effort to recruit – it is mostly word of mouth. Women are warning other women not to apply.”

Interview respondent - large department in the West



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7. Data Collection Process and Sample Selection

Selecting our sample

The departments in our sample were selected from both the United States and Canada to be representative of the membership departments of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). The one absolute criterion for inclusion in the study was that the department had to have some paid firefighting personnel. Because of this, paid and combination departments were included in the study, while strictly volunteer departments were not. So that the results would generalize to a wide variety of fire departments, we made a conscious effort to include departments of various sizes, types, and locations. We also tried to include at least one department from each of the 16 IAFF Districts.

Department selection occurred through the following steps:

- Putting out a request for departments to self-identify as a best practice in recruitment. This request was put out separately by both the IAFF and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).
- Reviewing demographic data on IAFF Locals collected through an IAFF Internal Organizing Survey to determine departments with good minority and female representation.
- Conducting a search of department web sites to gather information on their recruitment practices.

From this process, we identified 81 departments to complete a short screening survey and interview. A list of these departments is included in the Appendix.

Administering the Short Screening Survey and Interview

The screening survey was a telephone interview that solicited opinions on department diversity and recruitment. Specifically, we asked whether diversity in the department represented the diversity in the community served; what the department's recruitment efforts consisted of; and whether those recruitment efforts were successful in attracting women and minorities. (For a complete list of questions, see the Appendix) For the majority of the 81 departments surveyed, the person interviewed was the President of the IAFF Local Union. In certain cases, union representatives referred us to department members involved in the recruitment process.

The purpose of the screening survey was to identify potentially successful departments to complete a comprehensive survey on recruitment, selection, and retention practices. The comprehensive survey was lengthy and time-consuming. We did not want to unnecessarily



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burden departments by asking them to complete the survey if they did not have a successful recruitment program. Based on the responses we received to the screening survey, we were able to narrow down our sample for the comprehensive survey. For a department to move on to the comprehensive survey, they had to express both of the following characteristics of their department:

1. Were making an active recruitment effort; and
2. Had some success in their representation of women and/or minorities in the department.



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Comprehensive Survey Sample and Responses

Based on responses to the screening survey, we invited 44 departments to complete the comprehensive survey. Of the 44 invited departments, 29 departments fully completed the survey, 4 departments partially completed the survey, and 11 departments either declined to participate or did not complete the survey. Most of the results presented in this report are based on survey responses from the departments who fully completed the survey. In some cases, as indicated, results include departments who provided partial responses.

Attached to this report is Appendix 3 - Summary of Survey Responses to the long survey.

This report can be used to see the following types of information about the surveyed departments.

1. Department description
2. Demographics
3. Description/Size
4. Incentive Pay
5. Consent Decree
6. Education / Experience requirements
7. Written Test
8. PAT
9. Other selection processes
10. Preference points
11. Testing schedule
12. Average number hired
13. Drop out rates
14. Recruitment methods
15. Recruitment messages
16. Preparation assistance
17. Recruiters
18. Diversity message/training
19. Accommodation of women
20. Recognized employee groups
21. Other requirements
22. Background check
23. Why candidates drop out
24. Time for recruiting before test
25. Candidate contact
26. Community groups & events
27. Most successful efforts
28. Advice
29. Mentors
30. Accommodating women



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If you would like to see the initial screening interview, see Appendix 1. If you would like to review a list of the Survey Questions, please see Appendix 2.