



# A Guide for Campus Law Enforcement Agencies



## How to Recruit Female Officers

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**Success Stories  
Included!**

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# *A Guide for Law Enforcement Agencies:* *How to Recruit Female Officers*

The old-school method of “post and pray” – posting a job announcement and hoping for women to apply - is not effective.

Instead, the top administrator must be *intentional* and *strategic* in attracting and hiring women now, and create an active *pipeline* in the community for hiring more women later.

*Here’s how to do it, along with success stories.*

## **The Need for More Female Officers**

There is currently a lack of adequate representation of women in U.S. police forces. According to a survey done by the National Center for Women and Policing (NCWP), women are extremely under-represented in police departments, accounting for only



13% -17% of police officers across the country. Law enforcement agencies can solve this problem by recruiting female officers more effectively, with the following steps.

*We recognize that some agencies' applicant pools may be limited because of training and experience requirements. We ask you to consider new ways to expand your applicant pool.*

## **Step 1: Involve Existing Female Officers**

- **Include Females In Your Recruitment Team**
  - If women don't see other women in law enforcement jobs, they may not consider law enforcement as a career. Thus, police agencies need to showcase women recruiters at career fairs to allow potential candidates to talk with women officers about their experiences working for the police department.
  
- **Hold a "Women in Policing" Recruitment Fair**
  - Agencies can host "Women in Policing" career fairs to give females the opportunity to feel included in the job offer, hear information about the position, and ask questions about what it is like to work in a police agency.
  - ***This orientation can feature:***
    - A panel of female role models
    - Dissemination of information through handouts or presentations about:
      - The job (schedules, duties, career ladders, etc.)
      - The need for more women in law enforcement
      - The training academy
      - What it is like to work in a male dominated occupation
      - The application process
      - Physical conditioning
      - Any incentives or benefits for female officers at your agency

- ***Make sure to keep the career fair female-friendly by:***
  - Holding it on a weekend or evening for women who are currently employed
  - Providing short term day-care for women with children

**To see an effective example of a “Women in Policing” Career Fair, view this article on Michigan State Police’s 2014 event for women in law enforcement.**

URL: <http://www.wxyz.com/news/state/michigan-state-police-hosting-informational-recruiting-seminar-for-women>

## **Step 2: Create a Pipeline to the Community!**

- **Reach Out to Women’s Non-Profit Organizations**
  - ***Volunteers at domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, Big Sisters programs, and other agencies working with youth and women are excellent sources for potential candidates.***
    - You can also use the mailing lists of these non-profit organizations to contact women members for recruiting purposes.
  - ***Women’s professional groups often seek speakers for their meetings. It can be effective to send women officers to speak, encouraging women to consider a career in policing or relaying personal positive experiences with working in law enforcement.***
- **Start a Youth Outreach Program**
  - ***By fostering interest in students for a career in law enforcement at an early age, your organization can develop an ongoing pool of highly motivated, qualified applicants.***

- Programs at middle school and high school levels encourage students to aspire to a career in law enforcement.
- Mentoring systems can help identify highly desirable candidates and keep them interested in a law enforcement career over a multi-year span of time.
- Ride-alongs, internships, cadets, and Explorer Scout programs are other ways to bring women into law enforcement.
- Some law enforcement agencies have formed partnerships with local community colleges and school districts to develop programs to attract young women.
- Programs like this can be especially appealing to single mothers and minority women.

**Note: Agencies need to check with their legal counsel and elected officials to determine how to lawfully implement this type of program.**

- Program will likely fall under the “meet and confer” terms of any labor agreement.
- Implementation of a monetary incentive program may be adversely affected by Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) considerations.



**The City University of New York/New York Police Department Cadet Corps' program offers students the opportunity to combine study towards their college degree with a program of specialized law enforcement-related training and work experience.**

Following successful completion of the associate degree, participants are appointed as NYPD officers and enter the Police Academy.

- Focus on Creating Positive Community Interactions
  - ***Implement outreach programs that allow the public to interact with female police officers.***
    - Other programs that could be utilized to foster positive community interactions and an increased interest in law enforcement for females include:
      - Self-defense classes
      - Dorm/apartment security assessment and safety programs for students



## Tips for Designing Recruitment Brochures & Posters

When developing recruitment brochures and posters, use the following tips to effectively recruit women officers:

- ***Stress the important role that law enforcement officers play in working with the community*** to prevent and solve crimes. Women are typically attracted to careers in law enforcement because they want to help their communities.
- ***Feature pictures of women in uniform performing police tasks.***
- ***Include quotes from current women officers*** about why they like their job.
- ***Depict women officers performing community service functions*** such as working with children, the elderly, victims of domestic violence, or similar situations, as well as performing more traditional police services.
- ***Emphasize the benefits of becoming a police officer***, such as health insurance, maternity leave, retirement, community benefit, etc.
- ***Include as much pertinent information as possible***, including starting pay, career advancement opportunities, and information on the application and testing process.
- ***Clearly describe the agility test to be used*** and provide opportunities to help them prepare for the test.
- ***Avoid over-emphasizing the physical requirements of the job.***
- ***Describe all training programs offered***, as women like to know that they will receive a great deal of training before being expected to perform the duties of a law enforcement officer.
- ***Assert a commitment to equal opportunities and non-discriminatory selection procedures*** to assure women that they will feel accepted.
- ***Highlight the telephone number and website*** where applicants may get more information.
- ***Develop posters that show women working in law enforcement*** that summarize the information contained in the brochure.
- ***Include a tear-off form*** that allows applicants to request an application or additional information by mail.

### **Step 3: Create Attractive Recruiting Materials**

- **Feature Female Officers in Recruiting Brochures**
  - Web pages, brochures and posters with images of police officers should contain female officers in the pictures.
  - Your agency should ensure that the pictures of female officers are not limited to certain types of police work and include women working as supervisors, in special response or tactical teams and on the street.





# Examples of Effective Recruiting Tools

The following recruitment materials positively display women at the forefront of their materials, while advertising key values women relate to.

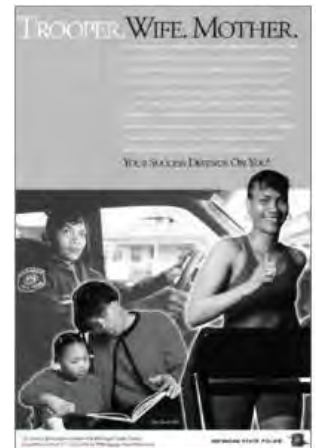
**The Los Angeles Police Department** engages women by featuring a female officer on its job flyer and advertising higher salaries clearly.



**The Michigan State Police Department** uses the faces of women on its advertising material and promotes female values of motherhood, health, and strength.



Michigan State Police Recruiting Poster



Michigan State Police Recruiting Poster

**The Austin Police Department** features women in its recruitment posters, but it truly impresses with its web series featuring women's experiences in their police department.



Austin Police Recruiting

## **Step 4: Improve Your Online Presence**

- Spruce Up Your Website
  - ***Create a Recruiting Section for Women on Your Agency's Website***
    - Most candidates will visit a department's web page before applying for employment. The information on the site, as well as the overall presentation, will affect a potential candidate's consideration of applying for employment. Thus, the website should include a special section for women who are interested in employment.

**The San Jose Police Department's Recruiting unit used this tactic and saw gains in only a year.** Sergeant Peggy Vallecilla analyzed her department's numbers in 2000 and found that in about one year's time the percentage of females in the academy had jumped from 8 percent to 50 percent, and the only change in recruitment practices was the department's creation of a "women in policing" section on its Web site.

To view their female-oriented section, visit their website here:

[http://www.iwitts.org/index.php?Itemid=277&option=com\\_content&id=139%3Athe-police-chief-magazine-recruiting-women-&view=article.](http://www.iwitts.org/index.php?Itemid=277&option=com_content&id=139%3Athe-police-chief-magazine-recruiting-women-&view=article)

# Examples of Effective Websites

The following websites feature female-designated sections that provide potential female applicants with relevant information and create an inclusive environment.

**The FBI** features a whole series titled “Celebrating Women Special Agents” on its website, which looks at the roles, challenges, and rewards of female agents.

URL:

[http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2012/may/women-agents\\_051612/women-agents\\_051612](http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2012/may/women-agents_051612/women-agents_051612)



**The San Antonio Police Department** includes a video featuring experiences of female officers and profiles of current female officers.

URL:

<http://www.sapdcareers.com/why-sapd/women-in-the-force/>



**The Tucson Police Department** has a specific section on its website for the “Women of TPD” with profiles of current female officers.

URL:

<http://www.tucsonaz.gov/police/women-tpd>

## Women of the Tucson Police Department



Officer Melizza Ayun (doc)



Lieutenant Sharon Callan (doc)



Officer Adalitz Cruz (doc)



Sergeant Nancy Fatura (doc)

- Create a Female-Designated Email List
  - ***Create an Email List Sign Up Specifically for Women***
    - You can include an E-list sign up on the women’s section of your website by using a free, easy-to-maintain email list to allow the department to send emails to multiple potential applicants at once.
      - Emails can contain tips on preparing for the physical agility test, benefits or incentives offered to women, recruitment materials, key dates, and information on the application process.

## **Step 5: Broaden Your Recruitment Locations**

- Recruit From Female-Populated Places
  - To attract female candidates, your agency should seek out alternate recruiting sources such as high schools, women’s colleges or liberal arts colleges.
    - Examples of Effective Recruitment Sources: (From PoliceOne)
      - ***Women Likely to be Physically Fit:*** gyms, women’s sports teams, outdoor clubs (i.e. rock climbing), sports outfitting stores, martial art schools, adult sports leagues, soccer clubs.
      - ***The Military:*** women in the army reserves, military bases, ROTC
      - ***Women with Traditionally Male Hobbies or Volunteer Activities:*** Aviators (99s, International Association of Women in Aviation), gun clubs, women volunteering as EMTs/firefighters.
      - ***Colleges and Universities:*** University sporting teams; women in majors such as criminology, psychology, sociology, social work, foreign languages, mechanics, electronics, and engineering.

- **Minority Populations:** community centers in minority neighborhoods; associations for Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, African-Americans.
  - **Women Connected to the Employer:** civilian workers, Public Service Aides, ride-a-longs, daughters, sisters, wives.
- Expand outreach by posting applications, brochures, and posters throughout the community (especially in places frequented by women) and not just at the law enforcement facility.

### **Step 6: Remove Obstacles in the Selection Process**



Policing today involves more communication skills and negotiating ability than in the past. Due to the changes in society and innovations in technology and crime suppression, it is necessary to find new ways to evaluate an applicant's suitability for policing.

Law enforcement agencies need to change their hiring process to reflect the reality of modern policing in order to make sure that well-qualified women applicants are not lost through an outdated and biased process of selection and hiring.

- **Provide Opportunities for Success in Physical Testing**
  - No research shows that the physical agility and strength tests actually predict performance in the job of a community police officer.



- Your agency should aim to use a “fitness model” for entry-level hiring and then train recruits during the academy to reach the level of agility proven to be necessary for the job. Techniques required to perform the job are best taught in the academy setting.

**The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department uses a “fitness model”, removed physical agility testing for applicants for entry-level positions, and gives all recruits physical conditioning training.**

Applicants are required to pass the California Peace Officers Standards & Training agility test before they can graduate from the academy. If anyone fails the test, they are offered positions as custody assistants until they can re-test.

*This approach has allowed the Sheriff’s Department to increase the numbers of women hired.*

- Provide opportunities to practice the test. If a physical test is to be given, applicants should be provided with information about the type of physical testing to be performed and given opportunities to practice the test.
  - A training course is best done through a training course given for a minimum of 8 weeks immediately prior to the administration of the test.
  - Your agency can work with local colleges and health clubs to ensure these kinds of courses are offered.
  - It has been shown that such courses, if properly conducted, substantially improve female candidates’ performance on the test.
- Use a Pass/Fail System. Physical tests should be used on a pass/fail basis and not ranked by a score.

- ***Utilize Fair Written Examinations***
  - These tests may have an adverse impact on women and men of color, and if they do, they must be demonstrated to be job-related.
  - Your agency shouldn't use tests that include technical policing questions or that seek to measure knowledge of specific statutes or laws because these concepts are taught in training.
  - If subject matter experts are used to develop types of questions, women officers should be included as experts.
- ***Ensure Accepting Oral Interviews***
  - Select and Train Diverse Interview Panels
    - Oral interview panels should be diverse with respect to gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. and include members of the local community.

Make sure that panelists are supportive of employing women as police officers. Any rater that consistently scores equally qualified women lower than men should be removed.

- *Train panelists thoroughly on:*
  - Discrimination law and concept of adverse impact
  - How personal bias can distort the rating process (even at a subconscious level)
  - Job description and the knowledge, skills, and abilities the rater should be looking for
  - Policing philosophy of the organization
  - Questions to be asked



- Rules about follow-up questions
  - Types of questions that should never be asked
  - Explanation of the rating/scoring system
  - The fact that their ratings will be reviewed and evaluated for reliability and possible gender bias
- Use Non-Discriminatory Job-Related Questions
    - Questions used during the interview should measure the skills and abilities needed to de-escalate violence, communicate with all types of people, mediate disputes, engage in problem-solving, and other skills needed for community policing.
    - Use exactly the same questions for each candidate.

### **Examples of Types of Questions to Include in Oral Interviews:**

- 1. Please describe what you have done for your community without receiving pay for doing it.**
  - Reveals whether the person has a commitment to the community and to public service.
- 2. Have you ever known a victim of domestic violence? What types of things do you think would be important to do for a victim of domestic violence?**
  - Indicates if candidate understand issues of domestic violence and the need to provide assistance to the victim, as well as if the candidate is sympathetic.
- 3. When would it be appropriate for a husband to use physical force against his wife or children?**
  - Further probes attitudes about domestic violence.
- 4. What types of people do you have the most trouble dealing with in tense situations? Why?**
  - May identify biases.
- 5. Have you ever been involved in a physical altercation? What led up to it? How did you feel about the outcome of it?**
  - Seeks information about resorting to physical force.
- 6. Imagine that you are a police officer and have been sent to a call about a neighborhood disturbance. When you arrive, you discover two men yelling at each other and pushing each other. They are fighting about who owns a power tool. How would you handle this situation?**
  - Looks for mediation skills, not for knowledge of police procedures or the law.
- 7. If you were a police officer, what do you think would be the biggest challenge in working with a partner of the opposite gender?**
  - Examines possible gender bias.

○ ***Avoid Discrimination in Background Investigations***

- Background investigations can be very subjective, creating the possibility for discrimination. Investigators with biases against women as police officers may overstep their boundaries in looking for reasons to disqualify candidates.
- Investigators should be screened for bias against women and other unlawful biases, be diverse, and receive training on possible discriminatory tactics used in background investigations.
- Applicants should be informed of the reasons they failed the background investigation, so that they are able to remedy the situation and reapply in the future.

○ ***Create an Unbiased Psychological Evaluation***

- Psychological evaluations can cause women to be disqualified due to bias on the part of the testing psychologist. Some hold erroneous beliefs about the ability of women to perform law enforcement duties.



An emphasis should be to screen in candidates with the ability to de-escalate violence, good communication skills, and compassion.



- Psychologists should be screened for gender bias and their support of women as police officers.
- Psychologists should be required to submit a written report documenting the reasons for rejection of any candidate.
- ***Develop Clear Criteria for the Medical Evaluation***
  - Medical evaluation may be a cause of problems in the selection of women candidates. Some of the common issues to be challenged are breast, ovarian or uterine cancer, and menstrual problems, past depression, complications from pregnancy, or other issues unique to women.
  - Your agency should develop clear criteria for what is to be tested during the medical examination.
  - Medical personnel should be screened for gender bias and any history of improper behavior with patients.

**The Fairfax County (VA) Police Department’s Occupational Health Center employs a central doctor who oversees and acts as a “quality control” point for disqualified candidates and exceptional cases.**

By using one coordinating physician who is highly trained on the medical/physical issues of police service to evaluate classifications and appeals, they believe they achieve more consistency and fairness in the process. In addition, a female physician’s assistant is available to assist with the medical examination process for female candidates.

- Women should not be screened out due to abortions or recovery from forms of cancer unique to women.
- Medical personnel should be required to submit a written report documenting the reasons for rejection of any candidate, a copy of which is provided to the candidate.

- ***Hire Eligible Applicants***– Most law enforcement agencies use some type of ranking system that places candidates on an eligibility list for hire. This raises several areas of concerns given the many ways gender bias may artificially depress the scores of women candidates through the testing process. The primary problem with any type of ranking system commonly lies in that a minor difference in scores does not necessarily mean that one person is better qualified than another.

- Score each part of the testing process on a pass/fail basis (aka “Rule of the list” system)

- Candidates who pass all portions of the selection process should be placed on an eligibility list. The appointing authority should then develop a non-discriminatory method for selection of candidates.



- Utilize Banding of Scores

- If Civil Service rules require that a score be given to be placed on an eligibility list for hire, banding can be used to increase diversity.

- Under this approach, a certain ground of scores are banded together and any person within that group may be hired.
- Expand the “Rule of 3”
  - If a civil service system requires the appointing authority to choose from among the three top scoring persons on the eligible list, it may be possible to convince the Civil Service Board to expand to a Rule of 5 or 10, thereby giving the appointing authority more leeway.

### **Step 7: Retain Female Officers**

- Start Mentoring
  - Since women are underrepresented in law enforcement, they may face additional challenges such as sexual harassment and gender discrimination. In order to help with retention and promotion of



female employees, departments can establish mentoring programs where new officers are paired up with veteran officers who can provide them with advice or support.

- Develop an Incentive Program
  - Some law enforcement agencies have developed an incentive program that rewards officers for bringing in a recruit who is qualified to perform the duties of a police officer and who has the knowledge, skills, and experience the department is seeking. Your

agency can use a similar incentive program to recruit female officers.

- Your agency can provide rewards such as money, extra time off, or other benefits.

- Create Family-Friendly Policies

- Many women leave the police force quicker than men because of family-related issues (i.e., pregnancy and childcare). Thus, your department should develop a comprehensive policy regarding pregnancy and childcare issues.



- Your department's policy should cover:
  - ***Eligibility for and duration of pregnancy and childcare leave***
    - Your agency should strive to allow longer periods of pregnancy and childcare leave.
    - Your agency should structure leave so that the taking of leave doesn't hinder performance ratings or opportunities for advancement.

**A positive example is the NYPD, as the agency allows employees up to 1 year of unpaid leave, which is an extension of the state's permitted 7 months.**

- ***Light duty***
  - Many pregnant women in law enforcement positions will want the option of moving to a light duty assignment at some point in their pregnancy. Without option of light duty assignment, many women will have to take unpaid leave.
  - Light duty policies should be flexible, have no time limit on how long a pregnant woman can be assigned to light duty, leave the decision as to when to commence a light duty assignment to the pregnant officer and her physician, and stipulate that officers on light duty will continue to receive normal promotion and pay increases while in that status, and that retirement benefits will not be affected.
  
- ***Range Qualifications***
  - Exposure to lead poisoning and noise from firing weapons are harmful to fetuses, so many departments have eliminated range qualifications for pregnant officers until they return to work, whereupon they are tested to ensure safety.
  - Safeguards may include: providing lead-free ammunition; providing sound silencers for the pistols; using firearms simulation technology and removing the requirement that a pregnant woman test on the department shotgun.
  - Departments should also provide lead-free ammunition for women who are breastfeeding.

**The NYPD eliminated range qualification for pregnant women; they are tested once they return from maternity leave.**

**The Portland Police Bureau created safeguards to allow women to continue to fulfill their weapon requirement while pregnant.**



▪ ***Uniforms***

- Provide pregnant employees who wear uniforms on a day-to-day basis with maternity uniforms.
  - This can help make women feel valued by your department.
  - It also sends a strong message that women police officers can be both mothers and police officers.



▪ ***Disability Insurance & Paid Leave Benefits***

- Some states provide “temporary disability insurance” so that agencies can pay partial wages to women during time off from work for medical problems, including those of pregnancy.
  - Federal law requires that these benefits be afforded to women disabled by pregnancy on the same basis as they are provided for other temporary disabilities.
- Your agency should notify employees about what kinds of disability benefits are available and have a designated person to assist the employees in determining how much time they can take in full-pay status as well as reduced pay status.

- ***Childcare Issues***

- Your agency can provide an on-site or off-site childcare facility, as well as job sharing and part-time schedules.

**The Portland Police Bureau has a childcare facility at its headquarters building.**

The program, The Day Watch, is operated by a state-certified childcare business under contract with the Police Bureau, and it offers full-time, part-time and drop-in childcare.

- ***Flexible Work Options***

- Law enforcement agencies that offer flexibility to their employees on issues of shifts, part-time work, and leave will be more attractive to potential recruits.
  - When using these flexible work options, agencies must ensure that employees who exercise these options are not stigmatized or treated less seriously for promotion than employees holding traditional full-time positions.

**The Sacramento Sheriff's Department's program features flexible work options through on-call reserve deputies.**

This program provides an alternative to full-time service for individuals who wish to retire or resign, but still work part-time as deputy sheriffs. Employees with family-care issues who need to have a very flexible work schedule have used this system. Deputies may sign up to work certain shifts or days of the week. They may refuse work if it does not fit their needs. If desired, the deputy may apply to return to full-duty status.

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