

2016 Recruitment Annual Report

The Recruitment Unit will annually report its recruiting activities and outcomes, including the number of applicants, interviewees, and selectees, and the extent to which the Recruitment Unit has been able to recruit applicants with needed skills, such as problem-solving abilities or fluency in Spanish or Vietnamese, and a discussion of any challenges to recruiting highly qualified applicants. [Consent Decree ¶244]

Overview and Outcomes

NOPD was also able to beat attrition for the second straight year, hiring 114 officers while losing 109 in 2016. NOPD began four new classes in 2016: Class 176 in May, Class 177 in July, Class 178 in October, and Class 179 in December.

NOPD received 4,452 applications in 2016, about the same number that were received in 2015. Applications came from all 50 U.S. States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. We conducted 334 panel interviews of applicants and completed 333 background investigations in 2016. A total of 8 hired recruits have proficiency in foreign languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, French, Portuguese, and Korean.

In 2016, NOPD expanded our efforts to hire officers outside of Louisiana. We held 2-3 ‘out of town’ testing events every month to allow applicants to fly in and complete their initial application stages within three days. Five NOPD background investigators and a civilian recruiter traveled to North Carolina to recruit and hold testing events at Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune. A recruitment team also traveled to Dallas, Texas and Fort Hood to recruit officers there. As a result of these efforts and our national marketing campaign, NOPD experienced a significant growth in applications from outside Louisiana. In 2016, more than half of all applications came from outside the state, compared with one third of applicants in 2015.

NOPD also put enhanced resources into processing both local and out of town applicants. At the request of NOPD, Civil Service expanded entrance testing hours to include night and weekends. In close collaboration with the Monitoring Team, Civil Service and our partners at Louisiana Tech, NOPD also completed work on a new entrance exam, which will go into effect in early 2017. NOPD also requested funding from the City to hire a dedicated civilian Recruitment Director as well as four additional civilian background investigators. All of these positions were approved and NOPD is currently hiring these employees.

Recruiting Applicants with Needed Skills

In 2016 NOPD launched its first ever certified interpreter program, which provides an additional 5% pay to NOPD officers who are certified as fluent in Spanish or Vietnamese and are willing to serve as interpreters for the department. This has given the department a new tool for recruiting individuals with foreign language skills, and NOPD was able to hire more applicants fluent in a

foreign language in 2016 than in any previous year in recent memory, including officers fluent in Vietnamese and Spanish.

NOPD has also continued to focus its in-person recruitment efforts on local universities and colleges to attract applicants with critical thinking and problem solving skills. NOPD visited a number of universities in 2016, including Southern University, Grambling State, Louisiana Tech, Louisiana State University, the University of New Orleans, Southern University at New Orleans, and Dillard University.

Recruitment Challenges

Police departments faced unique recruitment challenges in 2016 as a result of the tragic events that took place in Baton Rouge and Dallas this summer. While application numbers stayed strong year-round, NOPD did hear from applicants already in the hiring process that their families had expressed concern about these events. It is possible that these events impacted the decisions of applicants to withdraw from our hiring process or not apply at all.

Additionally, NOPD's push to continue expanding its out of state recruitment efforts comes with its own difficulties. Out of state applicants have lower testing attendance rates than local applicants due to the cost of traveling to New Orleans. Additionally, out of state applicants take more processing time before hire since they must schedule trips to New Orleans and many of their background documents must be requested from agencies in other states. As a result, out of state applicants are hired slower and at a lower rate per application than local applicants.

Finally, NOPD continues to have enduring problems with applicants showing up for initial testing. In 2016, Civil Service offered walk-in testing five days a week, and for several months also offered Saturday, Sunday and weeknight testing for applicants. Despite these efforts, 60% of local applicants in 2016 never showed up for a test. This indicates that a large number of the applicants NOPD is attracting are not seriously interested in pursuing a policing career.