

Recruitment and Application Investigations Unit

The Recruitment and Application Investigations 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]

2023 Executive Summary

Adopting new procedures played a crucial role in enhancing the efficiency of our operations. Implementing a new application process and streamlining the background investigation processes allows for more effective applicant data management and quicker turnaround times. Regarding legal and ethical considerations, the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) remained steadfast in its commitment to upholding the highest standards. All recruitment and investigation activities were conducted strictly with legal guidelines, with no significant legal or ethical concerns reported.

Performance metrics indicate growth in recruitment and investigative outcomes compared to the previous year. These metrics serve as a testament to the effectiveness of the strategies implemented and the dedication of our staff. Despite these successes, the NOPD faced challenges, particularly in resource allocation and adapting to law enforcement's rapidly changing societal expectations. Moving forward, we will continually focus on diversity in recruitment and enhanced programs to address these challenges.

In conclusion, this year has been marked by significant progress in the NOPD's recruitment and applicant investigation efforts. With a dedicated team, innovative strategies, and a commitment to continuous improvement, we are poised to build a police force that is not only effective but also reflective of the community it serves.

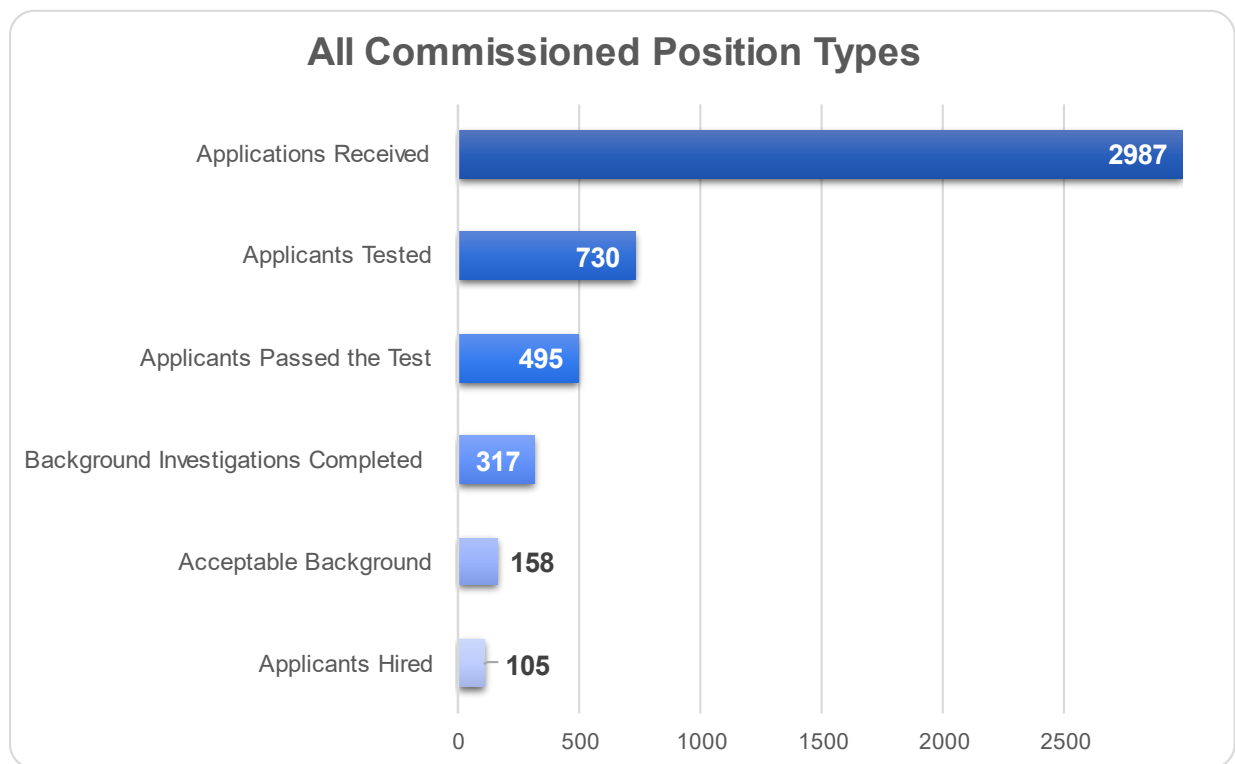
Introduction

The annual report of the New Orleans Police Department's Recruitment and Applicant Investigation Section for the fiscal year 2023 encapsulates our dedicated efforts and strategic initiatives in attracting and rigorously evaluating potential candidates for law enforcement roles. The report aims to provide a transparent and detailed insight into our processes, achievements, and challenges, underscoring our unwavering commitment to public safety and community trust. Recruitment and applicant investigation are critical cornerstones of police hiring, forming the foundation upon which the integrity and effectiveness of the police force are built. The recruitment process is not merely about filling vacancies; it is an opportunity to infuse the department with individuals who possess the necessary skills and qualifications and embody the values and ethos of the NOPD. It is a meticulous journey of attracting individuals who are ready to uphold the law and are committed to serving the community with respect, empathy, and professionalism.

The applicant investigation phase is equally crucial, serving as a rigorous vetting mechanism. This stage ensures that only those candidates who meet high standards of integrity, reliability, and moral fortitude

are selected. It involves comprehensive background checks, psychological evaluations, and thorough assessments to ascertain each applicant's suitability for the demanding and sensitive nature of police work. This process is pivotal in maintaining public trust and ensuring our officers perform their duties with the highest ethical and professional standards. As the NOPD navigates the complexities of modern policing, the roles of recruitment and applicant investigation have become more challenging and significant. The evolving societal expectations, the imperative for greater diversity and inclusion within the force, and the rapid advancements in technology and policing techniques all demand a more sophisticated and proactive approach to recruitment and investigation.

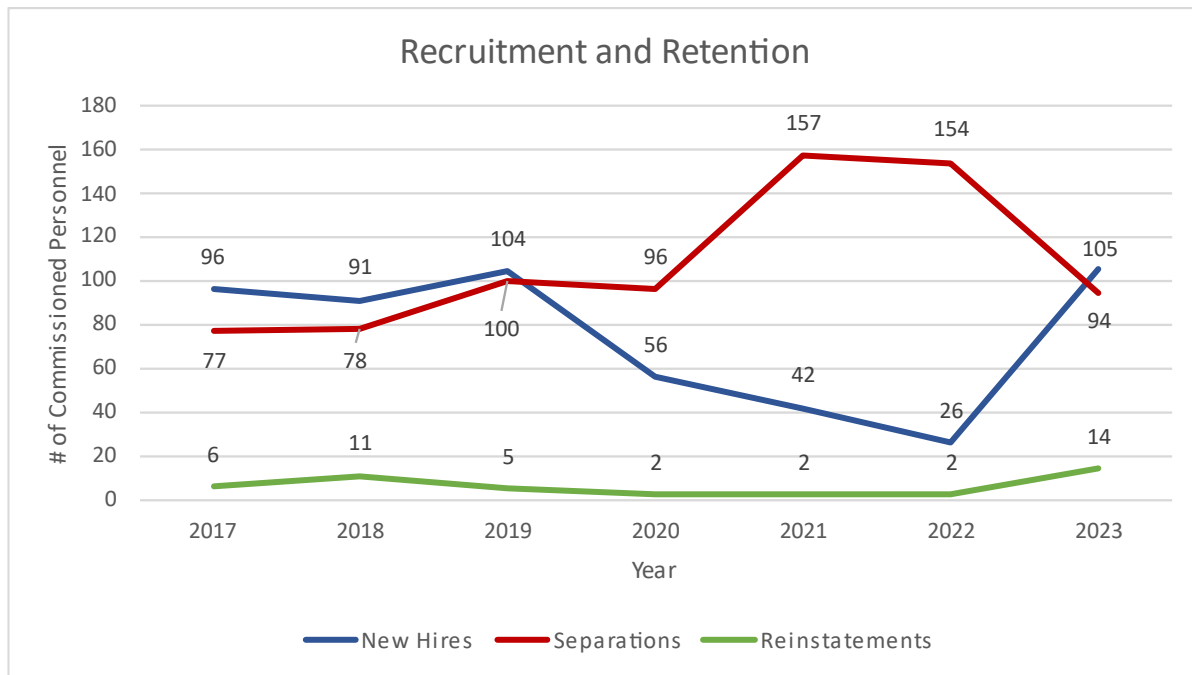
This annual report is a testament to our relentless pursuit of excellence in these areas. It reflects our strategic efforts to adapt to these changes and challenges, our successes in attracting a diverse and qualified pool of candidates, and our steadfastness in ensuring that our recruitment and investigation processes remain robust, fair, and transparent. In the following sections, we delve deeper into our strategies, achievements, and the lessons learned over the past year, providing a comprehensive view of how the NOPD is working tirelessly to build a police force that is not only effective and efficient but also reflective of and responsive to the community it serves.



Recruitment Strategies and Efforts

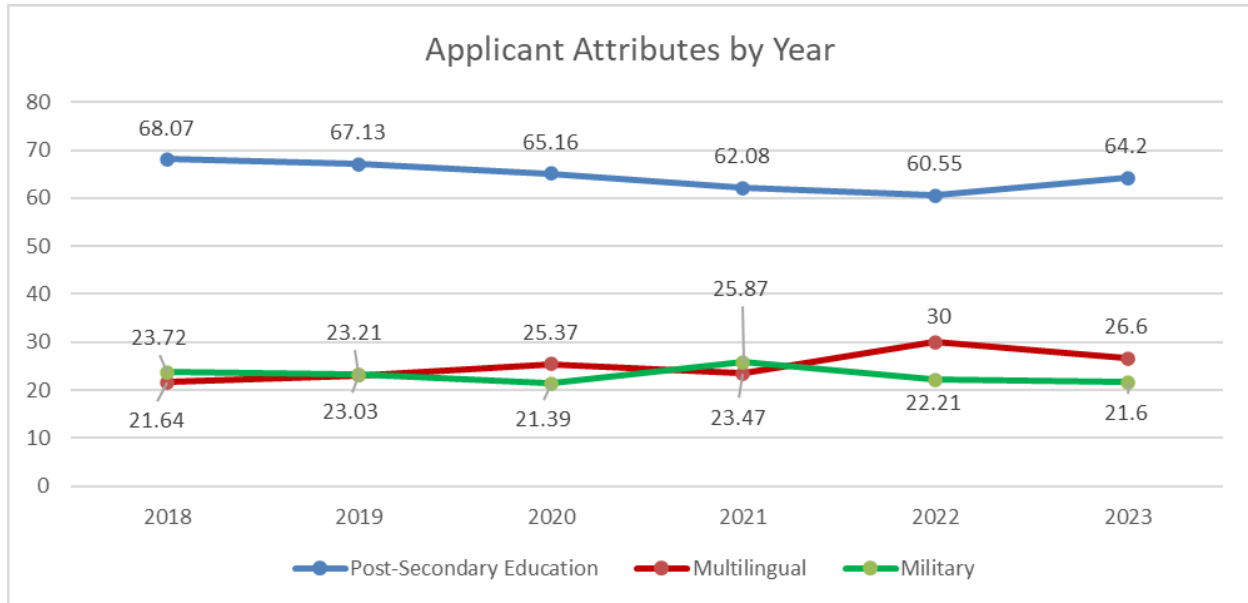
In 2023, following trends from 2021 and 2022, the Recruitment and Applicant Investigations process evolved, reflecting the transition from the COVID-19 pandemic towards a post-pandemic society. This shift in the hiring paradigm continues to be influenced by the lingering effects of

COVID-19, which introduces a layer of uncertainty for prospective applicants and is further complicated by the fallout from high-profile police incidents in various regions of the United States. The Bureau of Justice Assistance, in collaboration with the Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services, released a comprehensive report in October 2023 to assist law enforcement agencies nationwide in addressing recruitment and retention challenges. This period has seen a decline in active officers, juxtaposed against a rising population. The factors contributing to the reduced interest in law enforcement careers are multifaceted, including altered public perception, generational shifts, and an escalation in violent criminal activities, all contributing to the recruitment crisis. Although the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) has seen an incremental increase in hiring rates compared to previous years, the 2023 numbers still lag behind the pre-pandemic levels, with 105 commissioned hires. NOPD initiated four batches of recruits in 2023: Class 197 commenced with 19 recruits in January, Class 198 with 21 recruits in March, Class 199 with 33 recruits (including one returning recruit), and Class 200 with 23 recruits (including four returning recruits) in November. There were 14 reinstatements with officers who left the force previously for various reasons and have returned to their posts. Notably, 2023 marked the inception of a Lateral Class, comprising three officers, tailored for individuals already P.O.S.T. certified in Louisiana, indicating a strategic shift towards leveraging existing law enforcement talent.



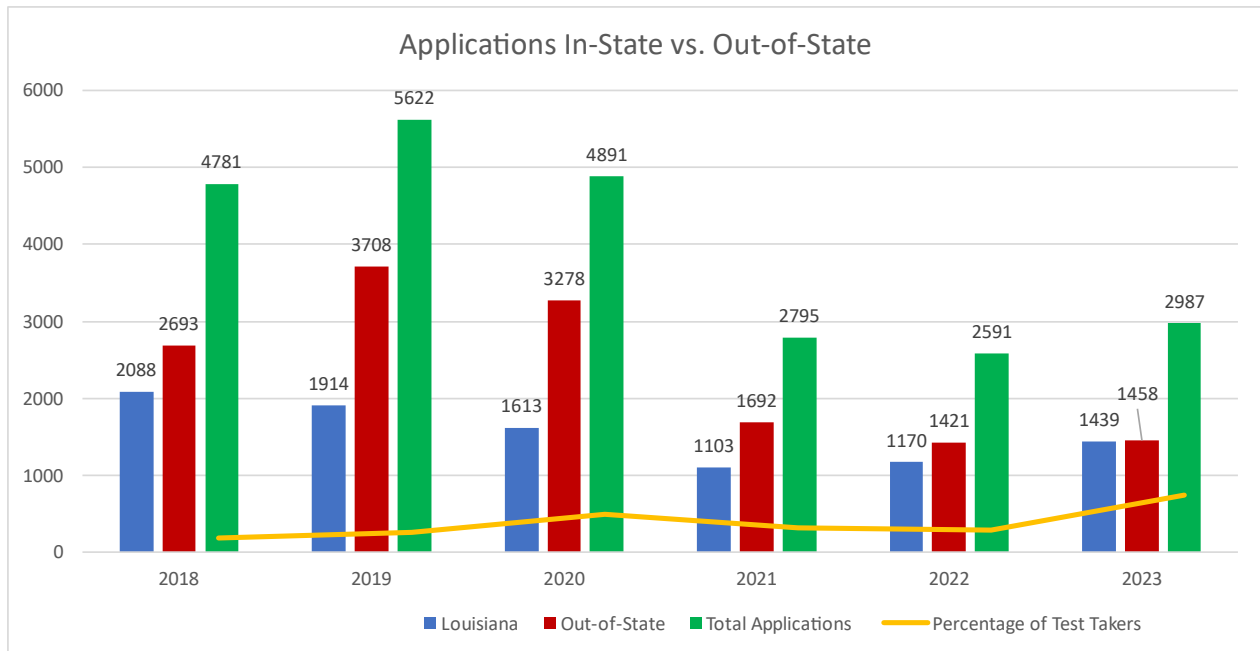
While we are experiencing a decrease in applications from pre-pandemic years, the interest in joining the NOPD from candidates within the state, across the United States, and internationally continues to be robust. In 2023, the NOPD saw a significant uptick in applications, receiving 2,987, which marks a 13.25% increase from the 2,591 applications in 2022 and approximately a 6.43% increase from the

2,795 applications in 2021. Consistent with previous years, these applications came from a wide geographical spread, including all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the British Virgin Islands, and various countries. This resulted in a richly diverse pool of applicants, with 16.6% indicating they are multilingual, 11.6% having a background in the military, and 34.2% possessing some post-secondary education.



Applicant Recruitment and Investigation Procedures

In 2023, the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) witnessed a notable improvement in the conversion of applicants to test-takers compared to previous years. The total applicant pool stood at 2,987, which, while nearly half the size of the 2020 pool, yielded a promising conversion rate with 730 applicants taking the entrance test. This increase is attributed to the implementation of online testing and the scheduling of additional test events in the fall. In March 2023, NOPD switched to the National Testing Network (NTN) for online testing. This allowed out-of-state Police Recruit applicants to take the entrance exam online before coming to New Orleans for further assessments. This change was beneficial as it involved a small fee of \$55 for online testing, generally cheaper than traveling to New Orleans for in-person testing at Civil Service. Our recruiters' diligent follow-up calls and messages were met with increased success and demonstrated a genuine interest among applicants in joining the NOPD. However, challenges persist. Despite failing to meet our hiring goals for 2023 of 120 officers, this year's progress is fruitful and productive.



Our Applicant Investigation Procedures are integral to the recruitment process, ensuring we select the most qualified and suitable candidates for our force. In 2023, these procedures underwent further refinement to bolster their effectiveness and integrity. Each applicant undergoes a comprehensive background check, including reviews of criminal records, employment history, and personal references. This is augmented by a rigorous psychological evaluation by licensed professionals to determine the candidate's mental fitness and suitability for the high-pressure environment of law enforcement. Additionally, applicants are subjected to a voice stress test to ascertain the veracity of the information they are provided with and identify any undisclosed issues. A physical fitness test remains essential to assess the candidate's ability to meet the job's physical demands. The process culminates in a detailed interview by experienced officers to gain insight into the applicant's motivations, character, and potential fit within the NOPD. In 2023, our Background Investigations team completed 317 background investigations, surpassing the 267 conducted in 2022. Of these, 158 were deemed acceptable, while 145 were rejected due to criminal history, drug use, past employment history, untruthfulness, or failure to submit necessary documentation. An additional 14 investigations were suspended due to various rectifiable issues. Looking ahead to 2024, we aim to enhance our recruitment efforts, diversify our tactics, and engage more intentionally with the community. This meticulous approach to applicant investigation upholds our commitment to public safety and ethical conduct. By staffing NOPD with individuals who are not only skilled and knowledgeable but also deeply committed to serving with integrity and honor, we continue to build a force that embodies the values and trust of the community we serve.

Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment

In 2023, the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) faced the evolving challenge of recruiting and hiring police officers amid a dynamic market landscape. With a declining population of eligible

applicants in our primary market, New Orleans, we recognize the need to expand our recruitment efforts to secondary markets across the U.S., aiming to diversify our applicant pool without diminishing opportunities or resources for local applicants.

Despite concerted efforts, Vietnamese and Hispanic officers continue to represent a small fraction of our commissioned workforce. Addressing this imbalance remains a significant challenge, particularly in recruiting Spanish and Vietnamese-speaking officers. Our recruitment team has been actively engaging with the Vietnamese community in eastern New Orleans to foster trust and interest among potential Vietnamese recruits. Initiatives such as participating in community events and making announcements in the Mary Queen of Vietnam Church bulletin have been instrumental in bridging gaps in a traditionally self-reliant community. For the first time, NOPD participated in the National Asian Peace Officer Conference, which drew national attendance from all over the country. These efforts underscore the New Orleans Police Department's commitment to diversity and inclusion within our ranks and our approach to community engagement. By actively participating in events like the National Asian Peace Officer Conference and fostering close ties with local communities, NOPD sets a strong foundation for building a more representative and culturally competent police force. This is a critical step towards ensuring that our officers can effectively serve and protect the diverse population of New Orleans.

Similarly, our ongoing relationship with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana has been a valuable conduit for reaching potential Hispanic officers. This year, we participated in two career fairs hosted by the local Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Serving Institutions Career Fair, reinforcing our commitment to overcoming language barriers and cultural sensitivities that might impede our ability to serve these communities effectively.

The NOPD remains committed to enhancing our recruitment strategies to reflect the diversity of our communities. As we move into 2024, we are optimistic that our sustained efforts since 2018 will continue to yield positive results, deepening our connections with Vietnamese and Hispanic communities. This dedication to diversity and inclusion is not just about staffing; it's about enhancing our capacity to provide quality service and fostering a more profound sense of trust and understanding between the NOPD and the diverse communities we proudly serve.

Recruiting and Retaining

In the past year, the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) has taken significant strides in its recruitment efforts through an extensive advertising campaign and competitive compensation enhancements. Understanding the crucial role of advertising in reaching potential recruits and engaging with the community, we embarked on a multifaceted campaign.

Our advertising strategy included placing local billboards across key areas of the city, ensuring high visibility for our community partnership and safety message. In collaboration with iHeart Radio, we launched a regional broadcast campaign, reaching a diverse audience spanning different age groups and communities. Partnering with The Advocate, we initiated targeted Google ad campaigns to bolster our digital presence, recognizing the growing importance of online engagement.

In addition, we leveraged the popularity of local sports by collaborating with the Saints Football and Pelican Basketball organizations, placing advertisements that resonated with a broad sports fan base. Our television commercials, run through COX Media, expanded our reach into regional households. Our presence in the 'Where Y' At magazine further integrated our message into the local culture, ensuring our recruitment efforts were aligned with the city's unique vibe. The NOPD Cadet Program will be revived in 2024 for those not quite 21 years of age to become familiar with the procedures and culture of the department. A cadet trainee program is also being created for high school students interested in law enforcement careers.

To remain competitive and attract the best candidates, the NOPD increased the starting salary for recruits to \$42,499. This salary escalates to \$59,014 or \$61,014 with a bachelor's degree after one year of service. Furthermore, recruits hired before October 24, 2024, are eligible for a \$4,000 bonus after nine months and an additional \$5,000 bonus in their second and third years. Recognizing the value of linguistic diversity and experienced officers, we also offered similar incentives to bilingual officers and lateral transfers who are P.O.S.T. certified in Louisiana.

Our commitment to our existing officers remains unwavering. We have provided a \$5,000 bonus for every five years of service, up to 20 years. Additionally, we assured pay raises for 2024 and 2025, along with the provision of take-home vehicles, to acknowledge and reward their dedication and service. These initiatives reflect the NOPD's dedication to attracting qualified, diverse candidates and retaining our valuable existing officers. By enhancing our advertising reach and offering competitive compensation, we strive to maintain a skilled workforce that reflects the community we serve.

Conclusion

As we conclude this annual report for the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), we reflect on a year marked by challenges and significant achievements. Throughout 2023, our department has navigated a rapidly evolving landscape and addressed complex issues while steadfastly upholding our commitment to public safety and community trust.

Our recruitment and applicant investigation processes have undergone substantial enhancements, driven by a determination to attract a diverse and skilled workforce. Through innovative recruitment strategies, comprehensive applicant investigations, and a deepened focus on diversity and inclusion, we have made notable progress in building a force that truly represents the community it serves. Our extensive advertising campaigns and competitive compensation structures further underscore our commitment to attracting the best candidates to the NOPD. The challenges we faced this year have been significant, particularly in the context of a changing societal perception of law enforcement and a competitive job market. Yet, these challenges have also been catalysts for growth and innovation within our department. We have responded with agility and determination, adapting our strategies to meet these challenges head-on.

Looking ahead to 2024, the NOPD remains committed to continuous improvement and excellence. We are dedicated to enhancing our engagement with the community, further refining our recruitment processes, and nurturing the professional growth of our officers. We aim to maintain public safety and foster a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration between the NOPD and the community we are privileged to serve.

We sincerely thank our officers, staff, and community partners for their unwavering dedication and support. Through our collective efforts, we continue to make New Orleans a safer and more inclusive city. We move forward with renewed focus and optimism, ready to face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the service of our community.