RECRUITING MINORITIES FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Recruiting Minorities for the Fire Department

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Hickory, North Carolina

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

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Abstract

The Hickory Fire Department (HFD) has not kept pace with the community transformation to a more diverse population. With no appropriate strategy to address the need toward becoming more reflective of the community served, this issue posed a range of questions worthy of exploration through research. The problem is the HFD has no minority recruitment program therefore, limiting the department's ability to effectively seek out and acquaint potential candidates to the fire department. The purpose will be to research public sector based minority recruitment programs, evaluate their overall process, and identify techniques used to effectively recruit minority applicants. An evaluative research method was based upon: (a) what public sector best practice programs are available for use by HFD in developing a program for recruiting minorities, (b) what are the demographics and educational attainment capabilities within the adjoining counties of the region, (c) what are the demographics within the city limits of Hickory and how does HFD measure against these results, (d) what adaptive applications are available for use in developing a model recruitment program for HFD.

Now more that ever, diversity will yield greater productivity and community advantage that the fire service must not ignore. Demographic changes and challenges must be addressed, for it requires the fire department to review its practices, and develop creative approaches to work with the community. A diverse workforce is a reflection of the community. HFD will take the essential steps to assemble information for recruitment with diversity as one of the department's primary missions. Through these efforts, HFD can develop a model program that is attainable and is reproducible within any fire department.

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Introduction

Recruiting Minorities for the Fire Department

Recruitment and diversity have many connotations for the fire service. A more diverse strategy for the recruitment of prospective candidates with minority potential has many positive implications. Improved human resource relations within the local community and region will improve the dialogue with potential candidates, creating a more viable fire department. Employee orientation to cultural diversity will set the stage for improving the department's perspective of the community. Organizationally, the department must keep recruitment focused toward the future as a part of succession planning. Recruitment strategies are at the forefront for continuing to build stronger community relations and department capabilities. In order for the fire service to become more adaptive to the ever-changing population and cultural transformation, it is beneficial for a department to evaluate methods used by private, public, and public safety agencies in developing a more diverse work force. The Hickory Fire Department (HFD) has not kept pace with the community transformation of a more diverse population. With no appropriate strategy to address the need toward becoming more reflective of the community served, this issue posed a range of questions worthy of exploration for this research. The problem is the HFD has no minority recruitment program, therefore, limiting the departments' ability to effectively seek out and acquaint potential candidates to the fire department. The purpose will be to research public sector based minority recruitment programs, evaluate their overall process, and identify techniques used to effectively recruit minority applicants. An evaluative research method was based upon: (a) what public sector best practice programs are available for use by HFD in developing a program for recruiting minorities, (b) what are the demographics and educational attainment capabilities within the adjoining counties of the region, (c) what are the

demographics within the city limits of Hickory and how does HFD measure against these results, and (d) what adaptive applications are available for use in developing a model recruitment program for HFD.

Through the evaluative research methodology, a comprehensive literature review for best – in - practice methodologies related to minority recruitment within the public sector and fire service were conducted utilizing the National Fire Academy Learning Resource Center to gain a perspective on available resources. Next, various search engines were used on the Internet for querying common phrases to include recruitment, diversity, minority, public law, public sector labor initiatives, and local government websites for recruitment information. Further exploration lead to evaluate the characteristics of gender and ethnicity, including current and anticipated population growth, education attainment, and workforce statistics of the Hickory, North Carolina region. Personal conversations with local human resource staff provided information to make inquiries to the Western Piedmont Council of Government -- a consortium of twenty-eight municipal and county governments within the immediate four-county region. This resulted in a review of the Future Forward document, (Future Forward, 2003) offering a general review of workforce strengths and limitations within an expanded twelve county area. Institutions of higher education, including the North Carolina School of Government at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, provided specific documents on employment law and recruitment practices used by the public sector. Discussion with the local public school system staff provided insight to an annual event for 10th Grade high school sophomores -- a career exposition designed to enlighten students about local and regional public and private sector employers. Utilization of this resource concurrently with selective track education for vocational directed students with established internship programs and community college level training could ultimately be an invaluable

resource within the next ten year period for HFD. Finally, a survey was conducted among the

North Carolina Performance Measurement Group, which is a group of fire departments involved

in annual performance measure activities since 1995 (UNC School of Government, 2008). The

survey was a tool to determine the diversity of other North Carolina fire departments using the

typical staffing and ranking structure of the fire departments. The survey was used to evaluate

the diversity of, and the placement of gender and ethnicity in the metropolitan to small township

community fire departments.

<div align="center">Background and Significance</div>

HFD is a career department protecting 43 square miles, consisting of incorporated municipal

area of 30 square miles, and a rural suburban area of 13 square miles. The department protects

over 4.2 billion dollars in assessed value with a population of 44,423. HFD operates out of six

community-based fire stations and one regional airport fire station with 125 paid and 1 part-time

personnel. Fire suppression personnel make up the largest staffed division in the department with

102 assigned to response activities with 3 individual shift supervisors, all working 24 /48 shift

schedules.

Response during the 2007-2008 fiscal year was 5,899 responses, with 60% related to medical

calls (HFD, 2008). Every two years since 2002, HFD conducts an entry level written and

candidate physical assessment process for firefighter applicants. Typically, within a two-year

period only a few positions become available with the exception of 2003, when a new fire station

was opened providing for the largest group of 19 candidates to be employed. This group was one

of the more diverse groups hired by the department. Today, 5 years later, 18 of the 19 remain

with the department.

Evaluating the HFD tenure of service, fifty-three members (47%) will be age 40 or older

during calendar year 2008, with an average age of 44.98 years old. The range in years is fifty-six

to forty years old. This group has as an average of twenty years of service to HFD. The

remaining sixty members (52%) are age thirty-nine or less. Range in years of thirty-nine to

twenty-four years old. Additionally, the HFD has four chief staff officers – the Fire Chief and the

Deputy Chief of Operations each have 40 years of fire service; the Deputy Chief of Budget

Administration has 30 years of service; the Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention has 20 years of

service, which rounds out the Chief's staff of the department. The next level of HFD senior staff

are three Battalion Chief's; one with 35 years of fire service, a second with 30 years of fire

service, a third with 29 years of fire service, and finally, an Administrative Assistant position

which has a total of 28 years of service to the department. Continuity of operations and

succession is a major point of interest to the department for researching information for

developing a proactive program for diversity and minority recruitment to meet future

requirements.

The goal of the research is to evaluate the various methodologies and strategies that are used

effectively within the fire service for creating a model toward establishing a well-defined

recruitment program for the HFD. For the fire department to respond appropriately in a timely

manner regarding the emerging issue of becoming a more diverse fire department, research was

conducted to examine adaptive methods for recruitment that will allow the department to reflect

the community's diversity. From an initial background analysis on recruitment and diversity, the

research method was narrowed to identify and use available census data depicting the

demographic diversity in the community. Inclusive to this, an evaluation and comparison was

performed of the fire department staffing to the census data along with reviewing data from the

fire department applicant list over the last five years. An examination of federal and state law specific to recruitment brought forth a need to discover common practices that can be duplicated in any community, and incorporate the elements of sound applications toward beneficial application based upon diversity in the community. The research was used to seek organizations with a focus on recruitment and diversity and evaluate best practice principles related to minorities.

Public law and state regulations are the basis for many of the practices discovered through the research. Recruitment, being the first step in the hiring process, necessitates an analysis of the department, community diversity, entry-level job requirements, education competency, and available workforce resources. Career based or combination fire departments tied to local government fall under certain basic series of rules for recruitment and employment.

Literature Review

A variety of resources consisting of text, on-line search, journals, federal and state public laws, organizations promoting minority recruitment, and fire service organization studies formed the foundation for pertinent and easily adaptable methodologies that can be utilized to establish a program. Additionally, regional and local documents, human resource records, and demographic data were assembled to incorporate a common sense view of putting a reproducible structure together for local recruitment strategies. The issues of recruiting in general and recruiting for diversity in particular are among the most critical issues facing the fire service (Fox, Hornick & Hardin, 2006, p. i). Combining universal research documentation with common sense application, specific to the area where recruitment is needed, can be beneficial and advantageous.

Public law and state regulations are the basis for many of the practices used in the recruitment process. Recruitment, being the first step in the hiring process, necessitates an analysis of the

department, community diversity, entry-level job requirements, education competency and available workforce resources. Career based or combination fire departments tied to local government fall under certain basic series of rules for recruitment and employment. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352) has had the most impact on the terms of employment information used in advertising. Information cannot indicate preference based upon race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The county and municipal government public employment law in North Carolina reviewed clarified procedural requirements for recruitment. (Juffras, 2006) stated:

> The responsibility for adopting specific requirements for recruitment and selection is placed on the individual city and county, and is not mandated by General Statutes. The decision to advertise positions, to post vacancy announcements, to interview candidates using panels or individual interviews, and to make outreach efforts to improve minority recruitment is one to be freely made by the local government employer, and is not required by federal or state law. Obviously, however, a city or county's recruitment and selection decisions are less likely challenged successfully under federal statues prohibiting discrimination if they are based on a system that reaches a large applicant pool and gives full and fair consideration to all candidates.

The employer must demonstrate objectivity in the recruitment process utilizing media that is accessible both by the public and the fire service community. In further reviewing the policy for employment, exploration led to examine local state law. North Carolina Fire Law (Graham, 2006, p. 94), identified that information used in advertising cannot indicate preference based upon race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The information can list job-specific requirements including certifications, training, and experience needed for the position. In 1978,

Title 41 Code of Federal Regulations (41CFR60-3) Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection

Procedures were implemented. Title 41CFR60-3.2 Part C, Selection procedures states:

> These guidelines apply only to selection procedures which are used as a basis for making
>
> employment decisions. For example, the use of recruiting procedures designed to attract
>
> members of a particular race, sex, or ethnic group, which were previously denied
>
> employment opportunities or which are currently underutilized, may be necessary to
>
> bring an employer into compliance with Federal law, and is frequently an essential
>
> element of any effective affirmative action program; but recruitment practices are not
>
> considered by these guidelines to be selection procedures.

Title 41CFR60-3.17 further emphasizes that persons seeking public jobs are only limited by their

ability and that the employer, who voluntarily establishes a systematic plan based on reliable

organizational assessment and problem identification with short – and long-term goals to achieve

equal opportunities, is far more likely to apply the process than to subject themselves to potential

discrimination.

Future Forward, (Campbell & Stuart, 2003) a study initiated by a former congressional leader

within the 10th congressional district resulted in community leaders within a twelve county area

to study the inter-relationship among the counties on economics and job improvement. Research

presented valuable insight to a dynamic change in personnel resource availability, educational

strengths and limitations of the workforce, demographics and economic characteristics that can

have influence upon recruitment in general, and the extent of diversity capabilities. One of the

most profound statements about workforce attainment (Campbell & Stuart, 2003 p.iii) stated:

A key question for the future of the region will be its ability to retain the brightest and best of this student body. The somewhat less impressive data on educational attainment suggest that a number of high school graduates leave the area for college and do not return.

Competition to preserve the available workforce for not only the needs of the enterprising private sector industries but also for the public sector becomes a critical component for securing a pool of viable minority and diverse candidates. Competition for workforce resources is compounded by the proximity of Hickory, North Carolina, to the larger metro influences. Charlotte, North Carolina, to the southeast; Greensboro and Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to the east; Greenville/Spartanburg, South Carolina, to the south, and Asheville, North Carolina, to the west directly affect workforce availability.

Ethnic and cultural diversity have seen considerable change since 1990 within the Future Forward region. The report defined that Whites make up the majority in the region followed by Blacks. From 1990 to 2000 the region experienced an in-migration of Hispanic and Asian people. The Asian population tripled and the Hispanic population grew over six times (Campbell & Stuart, 2003 p.14). The greatest factor for growth in these two groups was the availability of jobs that most often are avoided by a large amount of the workforce. Projections indicated that this trend will continue. The result will be that over a quarter million people will in-migrate into this twelve-county region.

Age is another issue. Data identified that the median age within the 12 counties is slightly over 37 years of age, almost 2 years older than the rest of the state (Campbell & Stuart, 2003 p.15). Continual change will occur not only in the current citizen base due to natural aging, but there is also the expected influx of retired persons locating to the area due to recreational and retirement opportunities. The working age of people, age 35 to 64, increased from 36% to 40%

of the population from 1990 to 2000. However, the younger working age group declined from

27.5% to 23.6% during the same time period (Campbell & Stuart, 2003 p.16).

Education achievement is important to any area for continued growth and improving

workforce aptitude. The challenge is to have a workforce that is trainable (Campbell & Stuart,

2003 p.25). The region's population from age 25 and older was reviewed. The study (see Table

1) pointed to the percentages of persons that have less than a high school education, graduates of

high school, individuals with some college courses with no degree, students with an Associate

Degree or higher, and persons with a Bachelor Degree or higher education levels. In evaluating

the immediate area surrounding Hickory, the percentages varied in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell,

and Catawba counties.

Table 1 Percent of Education Attainment Comparison with Select Counties within Region

County	Less than High School Education	Graduate of High School	Some College, no degree	Associate Degree or higher	Bachelor Degree or higher
Alexander	31.3 %	35.5 %	17.7 %	6.2 %	9.3 %
Burke	29.3 %	31.8 %	17.3 %	7.1 %	14.5 %
Caldwell	33.8 %	32.1 %	18.4 %	5.3 %	10.5 %
Catawba	25.2 %	31.3 %	19.5 %	7.0 %	17.0 %
12 County Region	28.7 %	31.9%	18.7%	6.3%	14.4%

In an expanded analysis on education attainment for the 12-county region, Future Forward

(Klein, 2003) reviewed the short - and long-term capabilities of the education system. In the

study area 28.7% (226,000) of the adult population, age 25 or older, does not have a high school

diploma or equivalent. This rate is higher than the average for North Carolina, which is 21.8%

and for the US, which is 19.7% (Klein, 2003 p.3). Vocational education in agriculture, business,

health occupations, and technology are offered to middle and high school students, with only

some high schools offering apprenticeship or internship programs. Secondary to this, North

Carolina has initiated a two-track system for high school students placed into effect during the

2003/2004 school year. Students may choose the college technical preparation track - those not

headed for a four-year degree and college preparation track. The college technical program track

offers ten career paths and two arts paths. Each path has eight to ten classes. The expansion of

the college technical preparation track in the region may be a useful strategy since only 28% of

the area students are enrolled in college technical programs (Klein, 2003 p.4).

   In North Carolina there are 59 community college institutions that offer post high school

junior college academic programs, including General Education Development (GED) and

continuing education programs. Nine community colleges exist within the 12-county study area

of Future Forward (Klein, 2003 p.1).

   To address the issue of education attainment, the Catawba County School System (CCSS) in

North Carolina, has instituted a career exposition program that began in 1998. Within the CCSS

there are 5 middle grade schools and 6 high schools. On October 14, 2008, eighteen hundred

seventy-four 10th grade students attended the regions' largest one-day career exposition (Career

Day Expo, 2008). Eighty-six public and private sector exhibitors were present, allowing the

students to interact with questions and details about job requirements. Demographic information

(see Table 2) from the 2007 – 2008 school term (Catawba County Schools, 2008) defined the

number, gender, and ethnicity of the student population for the 7th through 12th grades.

Table 2 Student Population 7th through 12th Grade School Year 2007 – 2008

Grade	American Indian		Asian		Hispanic		Black		White		Multi-Racial		Summary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
7	0	0	43	49	54	56	33	48	540	521	28	18	698	692
8	4	1	47	58	49	54	48	42	502	472	18	19	668	646
9	6	1	66	46	61	67	59	66	586	558	26	22	804	760
10	1	1	53	45	41	43	55	45	547	501	14	14	711	649
11	2	3	58	51	33	37	38	41	489	468	12	7	632	607
12	0	3	42	35	14	17	37	30	436	399	10	14	539	498
Total	13	9	309	284	252	274	270	272	3100	2919	108	94	4052	3852

Given these statistics, HFD must consider incorporating this background data for short- and long-term strategies to assist in structuring and implementing a process to inform students of the job opportunities available within the department. Incorporated with this, the future offering of career and technical education work-based learning experience, apprenticeship, career internship, after-school and summer programs with sophomore, junior, and senior students would need to become an integral part of the HFD master plan process. Close coordination would be essential to the overall success of offering these programs with the Hickory City, Catawba County, and Newton-Conover Public School System.

Developing candidates for a career in the HFD will require local volunteer departments within the region to strengthen their recruitment capabilities along with incorporating a more regionalized standardized training program that makes use of national and state standards (NFPA, 2008). An additional source for consideration in developing guidelines is the Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services Challenges and Solutions manual that has been recently revised (United States Fire Administration (USFA), 2007). Volunteerism for emergency services continues to be a long-standing tradition. Now more than ever, the volunteer firefighter is faced with economic, family, and career challenges that continually place a strain

on individual's ability for continued volunteer service in the community. The most recent figures from 2003 indicate that 73 %, over 800,000 firefighters, belong to the nation's volunteer departments. Volunteer fire organizations within the region are a formidable source for fire career recruitment prospects.

An opportunity exists within the Hickory region to work collectively with volunteer departments to partner in securing grant funding through the United States Department of Homeland Security Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Assistance (SAFER) for recruitment. The competitive grant program guidance document (SAFER 2008, p. 9) identified that regional requests offer the greatest opportunity and advantage in being awarded funding. Formalized regional recruitment plans coupled with a marketing plan can be the best incentive for the grant to be awarded. HFD being the region's largest career department must pursue cooperatively with regional volunteer departments in developing a regional plan to seek grant aid. Furthermore, HFD must enhance its annual career exposition presence by developing an association with regional school system career development courses that are offered to the student population annually, coupled with national and state International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) with the North Carolina Department of Insurance Office of State Fire Marshal Fire and Rescue Commission (NCDOI) firefighter training programs offered through the North Carolina Community College System. Through these efforts, HFD can develop a model program that is attainable and reproducible within any area of the country.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

Evaluative research was conducted using an extensive and comprehensive literature review in examining sources of information available for understanding various recruitment strategies. The research involved the review of federal, state, and local public law; best practice programs from

public sector fire service and fire-related organizations utilizing Internet search engines; an examination of local conditions including demographics, local government studies, school system data related to education and workforce availability; and evaluation of text, articles, and websites specific to multi-cultural and diversity strategies. A survey was conducted using members of the North Carolina Local Government Performance Measurement group to identify the diversity within and of minority groups within the rank structure of the fire departments. A comprehensive literature review collection offers an in-depth reading from Fire 20 / 20 http://www.fire2020.org ; International Association of Women in Fire & Emergency Services (IAWFES), http://www.i-women.org ; International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), http://www.theiacp.org ; International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), http://www.iaff.org ; (Fox, Hornick, Hardin, 2006); and Many Faces, One Purpose (FEMA, 1999), each provide extensive information for additional research.

   Research focused on methodologies that can assist fire departments in collecting information about recruitment. As with any process, the success of the recruitment program will vary with the community. The first research question addressed what public sector best practice programs are available for use by HFD in developing a program for recruiting minorities. Research found Minneapolis, Minnesota; San Diego, California; Montgomery County, Maryland; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and St. Louis, Missouri Fire Departments (Wong & Olson, 2009 pgs. 60-62) as examples of successful recruiting programs. Results of the programs include advancement of minority and female personnel to fire executive position, an all female firefighting company, establishment of minority recruiter position, incorporating assessment-based testing for promotion, to programs resulting from court action.

The City of New York Fire Department (FDNY) established the Fire and Emergency Services Exploring Program. The program offers high school students age 14 to 20 opportunities to engage in career opportunities, life skills, leadership experience, service learning, and character education through weekly meetings (New York City Fire Department, 2008). FDNY since the 1970s has committed resources to improve diversity in the workforce. The FDNY strategic plan (FDNY Strategic Plan, 2008, pgs.31-34) list goals and objectives for increased diversity, recruitment initiatives, and outreach program implementation.

Abbotsford, British Columbia (BC), the fifth largest municipality in BC, has a well documented and comprehensive directory available (Abbotsford, 2008). The recruitment manual contains a self-evaluation section for potential candidates, wages and benefits, an extensive list of tasks and duties of the firefighter, minimum fitness requirements, administrative processing fees charged to the candidate, interview procedures, and final selection processing for the Abbotsford Fire and Rescue Service.

Another successful recruitment based program, Blaze Fire Camp for Young Women (Blaze Camp, 2008), evolved from a mini camp hosted by the San Diego, California Fire and Life Safety Department. The original directors of the camp include representatives of Seattle, WA; San Francisco, CA; Boulder, CO; San Diego, CA; Fort Worth, TX; Oakland, CA; and Tacoma, WA fire departments. The camp sponsored by Women in the Fire Service (www.i-women.org) is conducted annually to provide young women, 16 to 19 years of age, various programs in team building, problem solving, and basic firefighting skills.

Denver Public Safety (Denver, 2005) conducted a two-year recruitment study that was the result of initial monthly meetings with management. The study identified methods for improving recruitment, selection, and diversity within the Denver Department of Safety. Key areas within

the study identify recruitment strategy, community outreach, marketing and advertising, cadet

training, and applicant preparation programs that would continually offer opportunities for a

more diverse workforce.

As a final point, Boynton Beach, Florida Fire Department (Boynton Recruitment, 2008) has

been recognized by the International Association Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Fire Service Award of

Excellence for the work and dedication in establishing a community partnership to recruit

students and residents of socio-economic, ethnic, or educational obstacles who are capable of

success in the fire and medical service. Through local research, the fire department found a

wealth of qualified and talented individuals who were lacking only the knowledge of the

offerings available from the local fire service. The program is based upon community outreach

by the fire chief and department members as mentors to individuals of the community in their

education and certification while enrolled in the Florida Fire Academy system. In 2007, Boynton

Beach Fire Department hired their first firefighter as a direct result of their efforts.

The second research question asked, asked about the demographics and educational

attainment capabilities within the adjoining counties of the region. The region known as the

Unifour Area, which includes Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties, and is

immediate to the City of Hickory, has the largest available workforce pool. The 2006 population

estimate for Alexander County, (U S Census, 2000) identified 36,177 persons that represented

17,726 (49%) female and 18,450 (51%) male. The ethnic statistics identified 91.7% White, 6.1%

Black, 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.1% Asian, and 3.3% Hispanic or Latino.

Education statistics recognized that 68.7% of persons, age 25 plus years of age, are high school

graduates with only 9.3% of the persons, age 25 plus years of age, have a bachelor's degree or

higher level of education. Additionally, nearly 14,457 persons, age 15 to 44 years of age (43%), of the population are within the potential candidate age group.

The 2006 population estimate for Burke County, (U S Census, 2000) identified 90,054 persons that represented 44,846 (49.8%) female and 45,207 (50.2%) male. The ethnic statistics identified 88.5% White, 6.9% Black, 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.2% Asian, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 4.9% Hispanic or Latino. Education statistics recognized that 67.6% of persons, age 25 plus years of age, are high school graduates with only 12.8% of the persons, age 25 plus years of age, have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Additionally, nearly 36,882 persons, age 15 to 44 years of age (40.96%), of the population are within the potential candidate age group.

The 2006 population estimate for Caldwell County, (U S Census, 2000) identified 79,841 persons that represented 40,592 (50.8%) female and 39,249 (49.2%) male. The ethnic statistics identified 93% White, 5.4% Black, 0.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.5% Asian, and 3.6% Hispanic or Latino. Education statistics recognized that 66.2% of persons, age 25 plus years of age, are high school graduates with only 10.4% of the persons, age 25 plus years of age, have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Additionally, nearly 31,389 persons, age 15 to 44 years of age (39.3%), of the population are within the potential candidate age group.

The 2006 population estimate for Catawba County, (U S Census, 2000) identified 153,784 persons that represented 71,803 (50.7%) female and 69,882 (49.3%) male. The ethnic statistics identified 87.4% White, 8.5% Black, 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native, 2.9% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 8.4% Hispanic or Latino. Education statistics recognized that 74.8% of persons, age 25 plus years of age, are high school graduates with only 17% of the persons, age 25 plus years of age, have a bachelor's degree or higher level of

education. Additionally, nearly 62,041 persons, age 15 to 44 years of age (43.8%), of the population are within the potential candidate age group.

The next research question reviewed the demographics within the city limits of Hickory and how the HFD measures against these results. The most recent population estimate for the City of Hickory is 40,583. Based on data collected from the 2000 census (US Census, 2000), Hickory's population was 37,222, with 19,310 (51.9%) female and 17, 912 (48.1%) male. The ethnic statistics identified 77.2% White, 14.1% Black, 0.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.9% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 7.7% Hispanic or Latino. Education statistics recognized that 79.1% of persons, age 25 plus years of age, are high school graduates with only 28% of the persons, age 25 plus years of age, have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Additionally, nearly 16,854 persons, age 15 to 44 years of age (45%), of the population are within the potential candidate age group.

Since 2003, HFD has advertised for firefighter candidates on three occasions. In 2003, the largest group of applicants filed for the position of firefighter due to community growth and the construction of a new fire station. The applicants consisted primarily of White male and female, several Black males, Hispanic males, and Asian male applicants. There are no records of gender or ethnicity available for this group. In 2006, 130 applications were received by the City of Hickory Human Resources Department for the position of firefighter (City of Hickory, 2008). One hundred twenty six applicants were male of which 5 were Asian, 6 were Black, 2 were Hispanic, and 113 were White. Out of these 130 applications, there were only four White female applicants.

In 2008, 140 applications were filed with the City of Hickory Human Resources Department for the position of firefighter. One hundred-thirty eight applicants were male, of which 1 was

American Indian, 2 were Asian, 2 were Black, 2 were Hispanic, and 131 were White. In addition, there were 2 female applicants - - 1 Black and 1 White. The HFD, as of September 30, 2008, employs 126 fire department personnel, 117 male and 9 female. The ethnic groups are represented by 119 White, 5 Black, 1 Asian, and 1 Hispanic. At a glance the City of Hickory Police Department (HPD) has more of a distinct representation of the community. The community policing concept has offered better opportunity of involving the public across a wider perspective; therefore, allowing an adaptive change of improving community relations. Incorporated into the public expectation, police strategies have concentrated on the involvement in and police presence throughout every established city neighborhood association. Police staff level officers attend or are members in various civic organizations in the community and have incorporated school resource officers throughout the city school system. Evaluating the police department employment numbers (Human Resource Department, 2008), the data identified that the current workforce is staffed by 144 full-time personnel. The staff includes 107 males and 37 females, with an ethnic representation of 123 White, 11 Black, 5 Asian, and 5 Hispanic sworn and civilian staff. The police department has no formal recruitment program other than the community involvement strategies identified and offering police officer trainee candidate's salary / employment benefits while enrolled in the basic law enforcement training at the local community college as part of their required certification for the entry-level position. The most recent addition to the HPD recruitment process has been the implementation of a recruitment video (www.hickorygov.com/police).

    The final research question focused on adaptive applications that are available for use in developing a model recruitment program for HFD. The evaluative research provided conclusive information for effective recruitment, which involves the fire department first identifying with

the community. Initial data collection of demographics including cultural, gender, and ethnicity inclusive of the local community and surrounding region provide initial observations for program development (Wong & Olson, 2009 pp. 130 – 224). Analysis of trends of past applicant neighborhoods, education attainment, and certification achievement prior to candidates applying for firefighter positions can offer important insight as to where emphasis is needed to promote a recruitment program. Understanding the capabilities and potential offerings of private and public educational systems; local civic, church, and community activity programs of minorities and women including neighborhood associations is a continuous resource of opportunities to gain insight and incorporate the department's message for recruitment. The Ontario, Canada Office of the Fire Marshal (Recruitment, 2008) offers a comprehensive worksheet related to tasks, marketing, communication, and logistical requirements. Incorporating fire related camp programs (Blaze Fire Camp) can offer a venue for high school age young women within the region to identify with and focus on skills that are useful in career opportunities.

Second, further exploration by HFD in partnering with career exposition programs conducted locally do offer certain appropriate use of available resources utilizing career and technical education development staff sources for use in structuring more effective recruitment information (Catawba County Schools, 2008). Finally, HFD can use time tested techniques utilized by metropolitan public safety studies and initiatives, public service groups, and local fire/rescue departments to incorporate basic common practices, policies, and guidelines found through the research. Formal program development can only be obtained through raising the department's awareness of the diverse community assets. Use of City of Hickory Human Resources Department staff, legal staff, and city management staff offer direction and additional resource ability for developing a recruitment program.

Sixteen copies of the feedback form (see Appendix A) were distributed to fire departments (see Appendix C) involved in the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, School of Government Performance Measurement Project for the survey process. The selection criteria would offer information from only a specific group. Information was solicited through Internet access via the performance measurement coordinator for each city (see Appendix B). The information obtained from the feedback was reported by job function and raw numbers of gender and ethnic classifications.

One of the limitations to the survey was the lack of information on the organizational structure of each department. Additionally, each department rank structure or titles used for specific job functions may not have been common terminology utilized on the survey form. Another limitation was the amount of accessible information from the fire departments that have recruitment programs to relay conclusive details of the journey they have taken to develop and maintain recruitment programs.

Definition of Terms

Affirmative action – Legally mandated programs with the objective to increase the employment or educational opportunities of groups that have been disadvantaged in the past.

Consent decree – An out-of-court settlement whereby the accused party agrees to modify or change behavior rather than plead guilty or go through a hearing on charges that have been brought to court.

Culture – A way of life developed and communicated by a group of people, consciously or unconsciously, to subsequent generations. It consists of ideas, habits, attitudes, customs, and traditions that help to create standards for a group of people to coexist, making a group of people unique.

Discrimination – The denial of equal treatment to groups because of their racial, ethnic, gender, religious, or other form of cultural identity.

Diversity – Acknowledging, understanding, accepting, and valuing the differences among people with respect to their age, ethnicity, gender, and physical and mental ability.

Dominant culture – Refers to the value system that characterizes a particular group of people that dominates the value systems of other groups or cultures.

Ethnic group – A group of people who perceive of themselves or who are regarded by others, as alike because of their common ancestry, language, and physical characteristics.

Ethnicity – Broadly characterizes a religious, racial, national, or cultural group.

General Education Development – a group of five tests when passed certifies that the individual has high school-level academic skills.

In-migration – To move into a different region, or come to live in a region or community, especially as a part of a large-scale and continuing movement of population.

Minority – Any group or person who differs from the dominant culture.

Race – A group of persons of common ancestry.

Recruitment - The art of recruiting personnel for a position requires understanding the job requirements, communicating to the prospective candidate through a variety of advertising media, identity of the essential skills expected to perform the job, pre-requisite education or certification standards, the guidelines or sequence within the application process, and any written and physical examinations connected to the job requirements.

Recruitment incentives – Financial and other incentives to recruit women and minorities where such programs are lawful.

Recruitment strategies – Approaches used by organizations to attract and bring in job applicants and candidates to enable a diverse workforce.

Results

1. What public sector best practice programs are available for use by HFD in developing a program for recruiting minorities?

As with any process, the success of the recruitment program will vary with the community. Research identified Minneapolis, MN; San Diego, CA; Montgomery County, MD; Chattanooga, TN; and St. Louis, MO Fire Departments (Wong & Olson, 2009 pgs. 60-62) as examples of successful recruiting programs. Programs varied by advancement of minority and female personnel to a fire department executive-level position, the establishment of an all female firefighting company, the creation of a minority recruiter position, provisions for assessment-based testing for greater promotion opportunities, to programs that resulted from court action.

The City of New York Fire Department (FDNY) has established a Fire and Emergency Services Exploring Program. The program offers high school students, age 14 to 20, options to engage in career opportunities, life skills, leadership experience, service learning and character education through weekly meetings (New York City Fire Department, 2008). Since the 1970s, FDNY has committed resources to improve diversity in the workforce. The FDNY strategic plan (FDNY Strategic Plan, 2008, pgs.31-34) list goals and objectives for increased diversity, recruitment initiatives, and outreach program implementation.

Abbotsford, British Columbia (BC), (Abbotsford, 2008) has a comprehensive recruitment manual that offers a self-evaluation section for potential candidates, identifies wages and benefits, has an extensive list of tasks and duties of the firefighter candidate to review, including their minimum fitness requirements, defining administrative processing fees charged to the

candidate, interview procedures, and final selection processing for the Abbotsford Fire and Rescue Service.

Another successful recruitment program, Blaze Fire Camp for Young Women (Blaze Camp, 2008) with on going sponsorship through Women in the Fire Service (www.i-women.org) conducts an annual program to young women, 16 to 19 years of age, with an assortment of programs in team building, problem solving, and basic firefighting skills.

Denver Public Safety (Denver, 2005) two-year recruitment study identified methods for improving recruitment, selection, and diversity within Denver Department of Safety. Key areas within the study focused on recruitment strategies, community outreach, marketing and advertising, cadet training, and applicant preparation programs that would continually offer opportunities for a more diverse workforce.

Finally, Boynton Beach, Florida Fire Department (Boynton Recruitment, 2008) has been recognized by the International Association Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Fire Service Award of Excellence for their work and dedication in establishing a community partnership to recruit students and residents. Through their research, the fire department found a wealth of qualified and talented individuals who were lacking only the knowledge of the offerings available from the local fire service. The program is based on community outreach and mentoring by fire department members to individuals enrolled in education and certification programs within the Florida Fire Academy system. In 2007, Boynton Beach Fire Department hired their first firefighter, as a direct result of their efforts.

2. What are the demographics and educational attainment capabilities within the adjoining counties of the region?

The region known as the Unifour Area, which includes Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties, and is immediate to the City of Hickory, has the largest potential workforce

pool. The population (US Census, 2000) identifies the combined population of the area is at 359,856 persons. The gender distribution for the region includes Alexander County with 36, 177 persons, 17,726 (49%) being female and 18,450 (51%) being male; Burke County with 90,054 persons, 44,846 (49.8%) being female and 45,207 (50%) being male; Caldwell County with 79,841 persons, 40,592 being female and 39,249 (49.2) being male; and Catawba County with 153,784 persons, 71,803 (50.7%) being female and 69,882 (49.3%) being male. Within the region 144,769 persons (40.2%), age 15 to 44 years of age, are within the potential recruitment age group.

Ethnic group statistics (US Census, 2000) identify (White population; Alexander County [91.7%], Burke County [88.5%], Caldwell County [93%], Catawba County [87.4%]; Black population; Alexander County [6.1%], Burke County [6.9%], Caldwell County [5.4%], Catawba County [8.5%]; Asian population; Alexander County [1.1%], Burke County [3.2%], Caldwell County [0.5%], Catawba County [2.9%]; and Hispanic population; Alexander County [3.3%], Burke County [4.9%], Caldwell County [3.6%], Catawba County [8.4%]).

Common to the Unifour area and presenting the largest challenge is the education attainment (US Census, 2000). Within the region the percent of persons, age 25 plus years of age, who have graduated from high school range between 68.7% for Alexander County, 67.6% for Burke County, 66.2% for Caldwell County, to 74.8% for Catawba County. Additionally, within the region the percent of persons, age 25 plus years of age, which have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education, range between 9.3% for Alexander County, 12.8% for Burke County, 10.4% for Caldwell County to 17% for Catawba County.

3. What are the demographics within the city limits of Hickory and how does HFD measure
    against these results?

The most recent population estimate for the City of Hickory is 40,583. Based on data collected

(US Census, 2000), Hickory's population was 37,222 with 19,310 (51.9%) female and 17, 912

(48.1%) male. The ethnic statistics identified; 77.2% White, 14.1% Black, 0.2% American

Indian or Alaska Native, 3.9% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 7.7%

Hispanic or Latino. Education statistics recognized that 79.1% of persons age 25 plus years of

age are high school graduates with only 28% of the persons age 25 plus years of age have a

bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Additionally, nearly 16,854 persons age 15 to 44

years of age (45%) of the population are within the potential candidate age group.

Since 2003, HFD has advertised for firefighter candidate on three occasions. In 2003, the

largest group of applicants filed for the position of firefighter due to community growth and the

construction of a new fire station. There are no records of gender or ethnicity available for this

group. In 2006, 130 applications were received by the City of Hickory Human Resources

Department for the position of firefighter (City of Hickory, 2008). One hundred twenty six

applicants were male, of which 5 were Asian, 6 were Black, 2 were Hispanic, and 113 were

White. Out of the130 applicants, there were 4 White female applicants.

In 2008, 140 applications were filed with the City of Hickory Human Resources Department

for the position of firefighter. One hundred-thirty eight applicants were male; 1 was American

Indian, 2 were Asian, 2 were Black, 2 were Hispanic, and 131 were White. Out of the 140

applicants, there were 2 female applicants, 1 was Black and 1 was White. HFD currently

employs 126 fire department personnel (City of Hickory, 2008); 117 are male, with an ethnic

representation of 111 White, 5 Black, and 1 Asian; 9 female employees are representative of 8 White and 1 Hispanic.

To further expand on the evaluation research, a survey was conducted (Human Resources, 2008) to identify the gender and ethnic representation within the Hickory Police Department (HPD). The survey evaluated, if HPD had a more similar representation within the work force that may be more representative of the community served. Hickory Police Department's community policing concept has, or at least at face value, possible opportunity to connect with students by HPD school resource officer's throughout the city school system, improving community relations and gaining interest for police officer recruitment. Further evaluation of HPD identified a police presence within every established city neighborhood association and that staff level officers are members of various civic organizations in the community. HPD employment data (Human Resource Department, 2008) identified that the current workforce is staffed by 144 full-time personnel, 107 were male and 37 were female. Of the 144 HPD sworn officers and civilian staff; 123 were White, 11 were Black, 5 were Asian, and 5 were Hispanic. The police department has no formal recruitment program other than the community involvement strategies identified, participation in career expositions and offering police officer trainee candidate's salary / employment benefits when enrolled in the basic law enforcement training at the local community college as part of the police officer's required certification for the entry level position. The most recent addition to the HPD recruitment process has been the implementation of a recruitment video (www.hickorygov.com/police) that portray, police career opportunity and activity.

4. What adaptive applications are available for use in developing a model recruitment

program for HFD?

The evaluative research provided conclusive information that for effective recruitment, the

fire department must first identify with the community. Initial data collection of demographics

must include cultural, gender and ethnicity inclusive of the local community and surrounding

region to provide initial observations for program development (Wong & Olson, 2009 pp. 130 –

224). Analysis of trends should take into account, where past applicants for the fire department

have lived, including their neighborhood locations. Education attainment, prior to job application

may offer an impression of technical or vocational interests, along with certification achievement

prior to candidates applying for firefighter positions can offer important insight to where

emphasis is needed to promote a recruitment program.

Understanding the capabilities and potential offerings of private and public educational

systems, local civic, church, and community activity programs for minorities and women,

including neighborhood associations are a continuous resource of opportunities to gain insight

and incorporate the HFD message for recruitment. In Ontario, Canada, the Office of the Fire

Marshal (Recruitment, 2008) offers a comprehensive worksheet related to tasks, marketing,

communication, and logistical requirements that are essential to conducting recruitment

programs. Fundamental fire related camp programs (Blaze Fire Camp) can offer a venue for high

school age young women within the region to identify with and focus on skills that are useful in

career opportunities.

Finally, HFD can use time tested techniques utilized by metropolitan public safety study

initiatives, public service groups and local fire/rescue departments to incorporate basic common

practices, policies and guidelines found through the research. Formal program development can

only be obtained through initially raising the department's awareness of the diverse community in which we live and use of community assets available. HFD must use of City of Hickory Human Resources Department staff, Legal Department staff, Hickory Community Relations Council, Hickory Youth Council and Hickory management staff in pursuing an appropriate direction in developing a recruitment program.

Discussion

Now more that ever, diversity will yield greater productivity and community advantage that the fire service must not ignore. Demographic changes and challenges must be addressed, for it requires the fire department to review its practices, and develop creative approaches to work with the community. A diverse workforce is a reflection of the community. The value of individual differences can create an environment for learning and organizational growth. HFD has not kept pace with the community transformation to a more diverse population. With no appropriate strategy to address the need, toward becoming more reflective of the community served, this issue posed a range of questions worthy of exploration through research.

Recruitment and diversity have many connotations for the fire service. A more diverse strategy for the recruitment of prospective candidates with minority potential has many positive implications. Unless there is a strategy in place, written and practiced, HFD may well be obligated to meet recruitment and hiring polices as a result of affirmative action requirements. Improved human relations within the local community served and the region will only improve the dialogue with potential candidates, creating a more viable fire department. Employee orientation to cultural diversity will set the stage for improving the departments' perspective of the community.

Organizationally, the department must keep recruitment focused toward the future as a part of continuity of operations and succession planning. Recruitment strategies must be at the forefront for continuing to build stronger community relations and department capabilities. In order for the fire department to become more adaptive to the ever-changing population and cultural transformation, it is beneficial for HFD to evaluate methods used by the private sector, public sector and public safety agencies in developing a more diverse workforce.

To achieve diversity in the workforce, public law and state regulations must become the basis for many of the practices used in the recruitment process. Recruitment being the first step in the hiring process necessitates an analysis of the department, community diversity, entry-level job requirements, education competency and available workforce resources. Career based or combination fire departments tied to local government, fall under certain basic series of rules for recruitment and employment.

The Civil Rights Act (Public Law 88-352) had the most impact on the terms of employment information used in advertising. Information cannot indicate preference based upon race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. North Carolina Fire Law (Graham, 2006, p. 94), identified that information used in advertising cannot indicate preference based upon race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The information can list job-specific requirements including; certifications, training, and experience needed for the position.

Title 41 Code of Federal Regulations (41CFR60-3) Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures were implemented during 1978. Title 41CFR60-3.2 Part C, Selection procedures clearly states;

These guidelines apply only to selection procedures which are used as a basis for making employment decisions. For example, the use of recruiting procedures designed to attract

members of a particular race, sex, or ethnic group, which were previously denied

employment opportunities or which are currently underutilized, may be necessary to

bring an employer into compliance with Federal law, and is frequently an essential

element of any effective affirmative action program; but recruitment practices are not

considered by these guidelines to be selection procedures.

Title 41CFR60-3.17 further emphasized that persons seeking public jobs are only limited by their

ability and that the employer who more importantly establishes voluntarily, a systematic plan

based on reliable organizational assessment and problem identification with short - and long-

term goals to achieve equal opportunities are far better to apply the process than to subject

themselves to potential inequity.

Within the region, Future Forward (Campbell & Stuart, 2003) resulted in community leaders

within a twelve county area to study the inter-relationship among the counties on economics and

job improvement. Future Forward has presented valuable insight to the dynamic change in

personnel resource availability, educational strengths and limitations of the workforce,

demographics and economic characteristics that have influence upon recruitment in general and

the extent of diversity capabilities. Competition to preserve the available workforce for not only

the needs of the enterprising private sector commerce but also for the public sector becomes a

critical component for securing a pool of viable minority and diverse candidates. Competition for

workforce resources is compounded by the proximity of Hickory, NC to the larger metro

influences of Charlotte, NC, Greensboro, NC, Winston-Salem, NC, Greenville, SC, Spartanburg,

SC, and Asheville, NC, each separately drawing from and affecting future workforce availability.

Ethnic and cultural diversity have seen considerable change since 1990 within the 12 county

region. From 1990 to 2000 the region experienced an in-migration of Hispanic and Asian people.

The Asian population has tripled, along with the Hispanic population, which has grown over six times in the previous decade (Campbell & Stuart, 2003 p.14). The greatest factor for growth in these two groups was the availability of jobs that most often have been avoided by many others in the current workforce. Projections defined that this trend will continue, with an end result that over a quarter million people will in-migrate into this 12 county region.

Age, another issue, identified that the median age within the 12 counties is slightly over 37 years of age. This is nearly 2 years older than the rest of the state (Campbell & Stuart, 2003 p.15). Continual change will occur not only in the current citizen base due to the natural aging within the community, there is the expected influx of retired persons locating to the area, due to recreational and retirement opportunities. Working age persons from the 1990s to 2000, age 35 to 64 have increased from 36% to 40% of the population. However, the younger working age group has declined from 27.5% to 23.6% during the same time period (Campbell & Stuart, 2003 p.16).

Results from evaluating HFD permanent status of service identified that, continuity of operations and succession is a major point of interest to the department for researching information for developing a proactive program for diversity and minority recruitment to meet future requirements. The evaluation identified fifty-three members (47%) of the rank and file will be age 40 or older during calendar year 2008. This is an average age of 44.98 years old. This group has as an average of twenty years of service with HFD, with an age span between 40 and 56 years old. The remaining sixty members (52%) are age 39 or less, with an age span between 39 and 24 years old. Additionally, four chief staff officers – the Fire Chief and the Deputy Chief of Operations each have 40 years of fire service; the Deputy Chief of Budget Administration has 30 years of service; the Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention has 20 years of service, which rounds

out the Chief's staff of the department. The next level of HFD senior staff are three Battalion Chief's; one with 35 years of fire service, a second with 30 years of fire service, a third with 29 years of fire service, and finally, an Administrative Assistant position which has a total of 28 years of service to the department. The loss due to retirement of this entire group will have profound effects on the future of HFD, if a program is not implemented during the next 2 fiscal years.

In an expanded analysis on education attainment for the 12-county region, Future Forward (Klein, 2003) reviewed the short - and long-term capabilities of the education system. In the study area 28.7% (226,000) of the adult population age 25 or older does not have a high school diploma or GED. This rate is higher than the average for North Carolina (21.8%) and within the United States, which is 19.7% (Klein, 2003 p.3). To address some of the issue of education attainment, the Catawba County Schools (CCS), NC has instituted a career exposition program that began in 1998 (Career Day Expo, 2008). HFD must incorporate in the development of its recruitment plan, partnerships, not only with the CCS system consisting of five middle grade and six high schools, but with Hickory City School System and Newton-Conover School System each having additional middle grade and high schools within their jurisdiction. Implementing such a process to inform these students now of future job opportunities may generate additional career and technical education work-based learning experience, apprenticeship, career internship, after-school and summer programs to current sophomore, junior and senior students as well as students who are now only in the middle grade years of their education. Close coordination will be essential to the overall success of offering these programs with the Hickory City, Catawba County, and Newton-Conover Public School System.

Local volunteer departments within the region need to strengthen their recruitment and

retention capabilities along with incorporating a more regionalized standardized training program

making use of national (NFPA, 2008) and state standards. Use of the Retention and Recruitment

for the Volunteer Emergency Services Challenges and Solutions manual, recently revised by the

United States Fire Administration (USFA, 2007) can be of substantial use in developing this

program. An opportunity exists with HFD to work collectively with volunteer departments to

partner in securing grant funding through the United States Department of Homeland Security

(SAFER) grant for recruitment. The competitive grant program guidance document (SAFER

2008, p. 9) identified that regional requests offer the greatest opportunity and advantage in being

awarded funding. Formalized regional recruitment plans coupled with a strong marketing plan

can be the best incentive for the grant to be awarded. HFD being the regions' largest career

department must pursue cooperatively with regional volunteer department's in developing a

regional plan to seek grant aid.

FDNY's establishment of their Fire and Emergency Services Exploring Program offered to

high school students age 14 to 20 is an excellent model to engage local students in career

opportunities, life skills, leadership experience, service learning and character education through

weekly meetings (New York City Fire Department, 2008). Abbotsford, BC well documented and

comprehensive directory (Abbotsford, 2008) offers an additional model for use in the

implementation of a self-evaluation questionnaire section for potential candidates, explanation of

wages and benefits, tasks and duties of the firefighter, fitness requirements, administrative fees

where appropriate and final selection processes .

Another successful recruitment based program, Blaze Fire Camp for Young Women (Blaze

Camp, 2008) is one of the more proactive programs designed to provide young women, 16 to 19

years of age, various programs in team building, problem solving, and basic firefighting skills.

Denver Public Safety (Denver, 2005) two year recruitment studies that was the result of initial

monthly meetings with management identify methods for improving recruitment, selection, and

diversity within Denver Department of Safety. Key areas within the study identify recruitment

strategy, community outreach, marketing and advertising, cadet training, and applicant

preparation programs that would continually offer opportunities for a more diverse workforce.

Boynton Beach, Florida Fire Department (Boynton Recruitment, 2008) recognized by IAFC

Fire Service Award of Excellence is another example of proactive thinking by a fire chief and

staff members in establishing a community partnership to recruit students and residents faced

with obstacles, which are capable of success in the fire and medical service. The fire department

found a wealth of qualified and talented individuals who were lacking only the knowledge of the

offerings available from the local fire service. Community outreach by the fire chief, and

mentoring by department members, provides assistance to individuals in their education and

certification programs using the Florida Fire Academy system.

The evaluative research provides conclusive information that for effective recruitment, the

fire department must first identify with the community. Understanding the capabilities and

potential offerings of private and public educational systems, local civic, church, and community

activity programs of minorities and women including neighborhood associations are a

continuous resource of opportunities to gain insight and incorporate the departments' message

for recruitment.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

The Hickory Fire Department has not kept pace with the community transformation of a more

diverse population. Therefore, with no appropriate strategy to address the need and no minority

recruitment program, this has limited the departments' ability to effectively seek out and acquaint potential candidates to the fire department. The first recommendation is to contact the Legal Department and Human Resources Department staff within the City of Hickory to determine the extent of public law and state regulations related to the recruitment process and incorporate the findings into the program development.

The second recommendation is for HFD to identify with the diversity of the community served, by meeting with the Hickory Community Relations Council, Junior Women's Club, Central Latino and Hmong culture organizations that are within Hickory. Additionally, HFD will conduct an analysis of the department entry-level job and education requirements utilizing the education attainment criteria discovered during the research. Incorporate into the study more in-depth local and regional data that is available through the Western Piedmont Council of Government for a comprehensive assessment of community diversity and human relations resources. In an addition, HFD will need to compile entry level requirements into a comprehensive document using the Abbotsford, British Columbia Fire and Rescue Service Recruit manual as a template.

The third recommendation is to work collectively with the Catawba County Firefighters Association (CCFFA). The organization is representative of volunteer, combination and career departments in Catawba County. HFD being the regions' largest career department must pursue cooperatively with CCFFA in developing a regional plan and partner in securing grant funding through the United States Department of Homeland Security (SAFER) program for recruitment. The fourth recommendation is for HFD to initiate and become a lead agency toward adopting a county-wide standard for individuals interested in the fire service. This effort will require local departments within the county to strengthen their recruitment capabilities along with

incorporating a standardized training program. Again, using the CCFFA as a point of contact along with the Catawba Valley Community College, in Hickory, NC, expand on the fire academy concept. The program would be specific to acquiring certification based on NFPA Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications 1001 and the NCDOI Fire and Rescue Live Burn qualifications. The program objectives will be to establish this program as a minimum entry level requirement for membership within any Catawba County, NC, fire department.

The fifth recommendation involves a three-tiered strategy. Initially, HFD will work with Hickory High School, the largest, most diverse and only high school in the Hickory City School System, toward developing a pilot program for recruitment. Second, HFD will expand its annual career exposition presence using a diverse group of fire fighters within the department to work in conjunction with HFD Public Information Officer and her staff. Third, as a result of the pilot recruitment program results, expand into the Catawba County and Newton-Conover School System area high schools to further enhance program opportunities and capabilities.

The sixth recommendation is, considering the impact of the potential number of HFD personnel that are near retirement within the next 5 to 10 years a strategy needs to implemented to use the research for establishing short-and long-term goals that will have a direct impact upon the continuity of operations and succession planning for the future for HFD. Acknowledging and incorporating this as an integral part of the HFD accreditation master plan, the department, can in the future, offer career and technical education work-based learning experience, apprenticeship, career internship, after-school and summer programs with sophomore, junior and senior students within the area.

The final recommendation is for the Fire Chief to appoint a member within the department or consider the implementation of a position of fire department recruiter to oversee the project. This

person will need to develop goals and objectives with time-certain dates in order to accomplish the task. This person should consider the overall impact to HFD, the creation of community partnerships, leadership and professionalism in a diverse society, and a public safety approach to specific cultures, minorities, and women located in the area.

In conclusion, based upon the findings of this research project, the HFD should take the essential steps to assemble information for recruitment with diversity as one of the department's primary missions. Through these efforts, HFD can develop a model program that is attainable and is reproducible within any fire department.

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Appendix A

North Carolina Performance Measure Group Employee Classification Survey

The following questions and table were emailed to the members of the University of North Carolina School of Government, North Carolina Performance Measure Project members.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is George Byers a Deputy Chief with the City of Hickory Fire Department. I am enrolled in the National Fire Academy Executive Officer Program. As a student of the program, I am required to complete an applied research project.

The purpose of the project and research is to identify methods and strategies used by the public sector and fire service in developing, coordinating, and implementing recruitment programs. My particular interest is in collecting information in regards to diversity recruitment policy or procedures that can be used to develop a model program for the Hickory Fire Department.

I would appreciate your assistance in completing the information about the specifics of your department. Please fill in the appropriate information and return by email to Karen Hurley, City of Hickory Performance Measures Coordinator or direct to me at my email address that has been attached gbyers@ci.hickory.nc.us

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

George F. Byers, III
Deputy Chief

Fire Department:

Number of authorized full time employees as of July 1, 2008:

<u>**Employee Classification Criteria**</u>

Use Column 1 and Column 2 to identify the number of male or female fire department employees by the type of work performed.

Use Columns 3 through 8 to identify the combined number of male and female fire department employees for the race class identified. Race classification descriptions: Native American will include American Indian and Alaska Native. Asian will include Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Hmong. Hispanic will include Hispanic and Latino.

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter							
Engineer							
Company Officer							
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)							
Administrative Chief Officer							
Clerical							
Fire Inspector							
Plan Reviewer							
Fire Investigator							
EMS / Rescue							
Fire Educator							
Fire Mechanic							
Other (identify by position type)							
Total							

Follow-up Questions

Does the fire department have a program for applicant recruitment? Yes ___ No ___

Briefly describe the process or add as an attachment the specifics of the recruitment program for your department.

Contact Person / Phone Number:

Information will be used as part of an Executive Fire Officer Applied Research Project for

Recruitment Development Program with the National Fire Academy in Emittsburg, Maryland.

Appendix B

Classification Survey Reports

The following information is the result of the request to members of the North Carolina

Performance Measure Project. The survey was to evaluate the various departments in North

Carolina by classifying the rank by type of work performed with gender and ethnic types of

current fire department employees.

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement Group

Asheville, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	96	4	0	90	3	1	6
Engineer	45	3	0	39	3	1	2
Company Officer	53	1	0	49	1	0	3
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	9	0	0	8	1	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	6	0	0	6	0	0	0
Clerical	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
Fire Inspector	7	2	0	8	1	0	0
Plan Reviewer	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other (identify by position type)							
Total	222	13	0	209	9	2	11

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Carrboro, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	20	1	0	19	1	1	0
Engineer	4	1	0	5	0	0	0
Company Officer	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Clerical	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Fire Inspector	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Plan Reviewer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other (identify by position type)							
Total	34	3	0	34	2	1	0

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Cary, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	92	6	0	95	1	1	1
Engineer	42	0	0	40	2	0	0
Company Officer	43	1	0	43	1	0	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	5	1	0	5	1	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
Clerical	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
Fire Inspector	3	1	0	3	1	0	0
Plan Reviewer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Fire Marshal)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other (Fire Code Official – Temp)	5	1	0	5	1	0	0
Total	195	13	0	199	7	1	1

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Charlotte, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	507	13	0	440	68	3	9
Engineer	170	7	1	160	16	0	0
Company Officer	235	16	0	220	29	0	2
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	17	16	1	29	3	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	10	4	0	12	1	1	0
Clerical	12	19	0	24	6	1	0
Fire Inspector	18	6	0	16	7	0	1
Plan Reviewer	4	3	0	5	2	0	0
Fire Investigator	7	0	0	7	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fire Educator	2	3	0	5	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Other (identify by position type)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	985	87	2	921	132	5	12

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Concord, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	79	2	0	79	0	0	2
Engineer	48	1	0	44	5	0	0
Company Officer	31	0	0	30	1	0	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	6	0	0	6	0	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	7	0	0	7	0	0	0
Clerical	0	10	0	7	3	0	0
Fire Inspector	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plan Reviewer	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Fire Mechanic	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other (Logistics)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	176	14	0	178	10	0	2

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Gastonia, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	65	2	0	52	12	0	3
Engineer	30	0	0	23	7	0	0
Company Officer	29	1	0	27	3	0	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	5	0	0	3	2	0	0
Clerical	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
Fire Inspector	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Plan Reviewer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Assistant Fire Marshal)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	136	5	0	112	26	0	3

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Greensboro, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	242	21	0	203	54	0	6
Engineer	83	0	0	75	8	0	0
Company Officer	92	2	0	79	15	0	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	17	0	0	14	3	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	9	1	0	9	1	0	0
Clerical	2	9	0	10	1	0	0
Fire Inspector	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plan Reviewer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	5	0	0	5	0	0	0
Other (Logistics)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other (SCBA Tech)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	452	33	0	395	84	0	6

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Matthews, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	6	1	0	6	1	0	0
Engineer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Company Officer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Clerical	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Inspector	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plan Reviewer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (identify by position type)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	1	1	7	1	0	0

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Raleigh, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	246	11	0	205	46	0	0
Engineer	119	1	0	105	15	0	0
Company Officer	107	2	0	103	5	0	1
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	15	1	0	16	0	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	5	0	0	4	1	0	0
Clerical	0	5	0	4	1	0	0
Fire Inspector	11	0	0	9	2	0	0
Plan Reviewer	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
Other (Information Technology)	3	0	0	2	1	0	0
Other (Finance and Planning)	1	1	0	2	0	0	0
Other (Facilities and Equipment)	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Other (Training)	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Total	521	21	0	464	71	0	1

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Wilmington, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	91	5	0	91	2	0	3
Engineer	47	1	0	44	3	0	1
Company Officer	48	1	1	39	9	0	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	9	0	0	8	1	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
Clerical	0	4	0	3	1	0	0
Fire Inspector	6	0	0	5	1	0	0
Plan Reviewer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
Fire Mechanic	4	0	0	3	1	0	0
Other (Fire Marshal)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other (Training Officers)	4	0	0	3	1	0	0
Other (Computer Tech)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	213	14	1	204	18	0	4

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Wilson, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	30	4	0	25	8	0	1
Engineer	26	1	0	23	4	0	0
Company Officer	17	0	0	11	5	1	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Clerical	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fire Inspector	2	1	0	2	1	0	0
Plan Reviewer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Investigator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fire Mechanic	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other (Deputy Chief, Geographic Information Tech, Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal, Battalion Chief Special Operations)	5	1	0	6	0	0	0
Total	87	7	0	72	20	1	1

Work Force Analysis
North Carolina Performance Measurement

Winston-Salem, North Carolina Fire Department

Classification by Type of Work Performed	Male	Female	Native American	Caucasian	African American	Asian	Hispanic
Firefighter	171	7	0	123	52	0	3
Engineer	70	2	1	56	15	0	0
Company Officer	69	3	0	50	22	0	0
Battalion Chief or District Chief (assigned to shift)	9	0	0	3	6	0	0
Administrative Chief Officer	7	0	0	4	3	0	0
Clerical	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
Fire Inspector	2	1	0	2	1	0	0
Plan Reviewer	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Fire Investigator	6	1	0	6	1	0	0
EMS / Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Educator	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Fire Mechanic	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Other (identify by position type)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	338	19	1	251	102	0	3

Appendix C

Participating North Carolina Fire Departments

Asheville Fire & Rescue, Asheville, NC

Carrboro Fire & Rescue, Cary, NC

Charlotte Fire Department, Charlotte, NC

Concord Fire & Rescue, Concord, NC

Gastonia Fire Department, Gastonia, NC

Greensboro Fire Department, Greensboro, NC

Matthews Fire Department, Matthews, NC

Raleigh Fire Department, Raleigh, NC

Wilmington Fire Department, Wilmington, NC

Wilson Fire Department, Wilson, NC

Winston-Salem Fire Department, Winston-Salem, NC