

Diversifying the Recruitment of the Middletown Fire Department

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An Applied Research Project submitted to the National Fire Academy

as part of the Executive Fire Officer Program

January, 2009

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 the appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas or writing of another.

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## Abstract

This action research project dealt with the diversification of the Middletown Fire Department's candidate pool. The problem facing the Middletown Fire Department is the loss of a diversified candidate pool. Over the past three recruitments, only 10% of all candidates were considered either minority or protected class citizens. The purpose of this applied research paper will be to define the diversity requirements of the City of Middletown, CT, identify the advantages of a diverse workforce and recognize potential opportunities for diversity that can help develop a strategic recruitment plan. This study answered four questions. What are the advantages to a diversified recruitment? What factors in the recruitment process can affect the diversity of a candidate pool? What recruitment methods will be most effective at targeting the minority and protected class population? Does the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) affect the diversity of a candidate pool? Research was conducted by literature review, an internet search, and a survey. The findings were structured into a strategic recruitment plan. Recommendations include adoption and implementation of the strategic hiring plan.

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## Introduction

Diversity has been at the forefront of many discussions over the past decades. It has been addressed at many levels, but its roots started when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Executive Order 11246. On September 24, 1965 the term Equal Employment Opportunity was born. Since that day the country has struggled to assure that its many agencies are represented by a diverse workforce. From 1965 to the present, there have been many initiatives, but as a whole, the workforce of many private and public sector organizations do not reflect the community's cultures. On January 20, 2009, the United States took a giant step towards diversity with the inauguration of President Barack Obama. The first African-American President stated the value of diversity in his inaugural speech: "For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness" (Obama, 2009) is an adage we all must adhere to if diversity is to succeed.

The problem facing the Middletown Fire Department is the loss of a diversified candidate pool. Over the past three recruitments, only 10% of all candidates were considered either minority or protected class citizens. If a fire department is to be a reflection of the community it serves, it must have a diversified candidate pool to choose from. The purpose of this applied research paper will be to define the diversity requirements of the City of Middletown, CT., identify the advantages of a diverse workforce and recognize potential opportunities that may increase the diversity of the recruitment pool.

Using an action research approach, this applied research paper will focus on answering four research questions: What are the advantages to a diversified recruitment? What factors in the recruitment process can affect the diversity of a candidate pool? What recruitment methods will

be most effective at targeting the minority and protected class population? Does the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) affect the diversity of a candidate pool?

### Background and Significance

The City of Middletown, Connecticut is a moderately sized community that is located in the heart of Central Connecticut. The city is comprised of approximately 47,500 residents in a 40 square mile area. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008) The city is host to several key infrastructure buildings for the State of Connecticut along with the only hospital in Middlesex County. In the hub of the city is Wesleyan University, a multi-cultural liberal arts college that is located on a sprawling 360 acres and is the home to a transient population of 2,700 that travel to the community from 47 different states and 53 different countries. (Wesleyan, 2008)

The city's cultural diversity has developed in the past century from a prominent Italian-American population to a population that is as diverse as most large cities. While still a predominately white community (80%), the city's make up is 12.3% black, 5.3% Hispanic along with .2% Asian. Women represent a 51% majority in Middletown. The State of Connecticut has similar demographics. Based on population from the U.S. Census Bureau report that was updated in 2006, Connecticut has 3,504,809 residents. Of that population base, 84.6% are white. The black community accounts for 10% of Connecticut's population, while 11.2% are Hispanic and 3.4% are Asian. Like Middletown, women represent a 51.3% majority in Connecticut. In both the city and state demographics, American Indian, Alaskan Native and Hawaiian Native make up the balance of the reporting population. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008)

The Middletown Fire Department (MFD) is a racially diverse department. However, over the last few years, the diversity has decreased due to retirements and turnover. The Middletown Fire Department is a community fire department that has 66 personnel. 64 members are sworn

fire suppression personnel in four separate divisions: administration, suppression, training, and prevention and inspection. These demographics also include two civilian secretaries, one in prevention and inspection and one is assigned to the administration.

The MFD, like the city, is predominately made up of white employees. 87% of MFD employees are white. This includes both sworn and civilian personnel along with both genders.

Table 1

Demographic Representation: City of Middletown, Connecticut				
	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Women
U.S. Census, 2006	12.3%	5.3%	.2%	51%
Firefighting Profession City of Middletown, CT Fire Department (2008)	9%	4%	0%	4.5%

The MFD has a black representation of 9%, while the Hispanic base is 4%. The department has no Asian employees, and 3 female employees between suppression and civilian staff. Only one female is a firefighter. (Table 1)

Just 10 years ago, the demographics reflected a higher minority rate than they do today. In 1998, the department had a black employment base of 13%. The Hispanic base was down to 3.8%. However, women had a representation of 8%. In 1999, the MFD lost one female employee to a career change. In 2003, a second female employee was lost due to an employment transfer of her spouse. The decrease in the black employment base was due to retirements.

Middletown is not alone in these demographics. There are similarities at both the state and national level when comparing the demographic representations of a specific area to the statistics of the firefighting workforce. Based on statistics from the Connecticut Department of Labor (2008) and the U.S. Census Bureau's statistics (2006), the ratios of minority and protected class employees within the fire service are very similar. The National Archives (2008) defines protected class citizens as any group protected from the employment discrimination by law. In

Connecticut, the black community makes up 10% of the population and 6.9% of the firefighting force. The Hispanic community makes up 11.2% of the state’s population, but only 7.9% of the firefighting force. Women account for 51.3% of all state residents but only represent 1.4% of all career firefighters in the State of Connecticut. (Table 2)

Table 2

Demographic Representation: State of Connecticut				
	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Women
U.S. Census, 2006	10%	11.2%	3.4%	51.3%
Firefighting Profession Connecticut Department of Labor Statistics (2005)	6.9%	7.9%	.8%	1.4%

On a national level, the statistics reflect a higher elevation in minority and protected class firefighters. Based on figures from the U.S. Census Bureau (2006) along with the job statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor (2006), 12.3% of the United States population is considered black. That demographic reflects 8.4% of all firefighters in the United States. The Hispanic population accounts for 12.5% of United States residents. However, they only make up 8% of the firefighting workforce. Asians account for 1.3% of all U.S. Firefighters compared to .8% in the State of Connecticut. Likewise, women are the majority gender in our country, but only account for 5.1% of all career firefighters. (Table 3)

Table 3

Demographic Representation: United States				
	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Women
U.S. Census, 2006	12.3%	12.5%	3.6%	50.9%
Firefighting Profession U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006)	8.4%	8.0%	1.3%	5.1%

The City of Middletown is aggressive when it comes to diversifying its workforce. This is reflected in the hiring goals that are put forth by the city’s Human Relations Department. The city issues its hiring goals on a three year cycle, but reviews and modifies these goals annually to



assure that there are no shifts in the workforce that would create an adverse impact on the city's employees. Both the city's fire department and police department fall under category EEO4-Protective Services. Faith M. Jackson, the Human Relations Director for the City of Middletown, has set 18 goals for the public service agencies for the fiscal years of 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010. Over this three year cycle, it has been determined that the following minority and protected class employees would be sought after to increase the city's diversity. The goals for diversifying the city's protective services are as follows: Over the three year reporting period, seven black males should be hired, three black females should be hired, two Hispanic males and one Hispanic female should be hired, along with three white females. The Human Relations Department is also requesting the hiring of one additional minority employee that does not fall into the aforementioned categories. These goals are set for both the police and fire departments for the City of Middletown. A minority or protected class hiring in either agency would help satisfy these goals. (Jackson, 2007)

The Middletown Fire Department's last recruitment drive was in 2006. The testing process consisted of both a written exam and a series of oral interviews to establish a ranked hiring list. To be eligible for the testing process, the city requires a candidate to be at least 18 years of age, possess a high school diploma, a valid Connecticut Motor Vehicle Operators License, along with a Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) card that is dated no more than six months prior to the opening of the application period. At the conclusion of the testing process, the following candidates were eligible for hire: 47 white males, two black males and three Hispanic Males. While 95 applicants applied, eight did not meet the minimum qualification and 22 did not show for either the written or oral exam. Six candidates failed the written exam and seven failed the oral exam.

To establish a ranked eligibility list, the candidates are required to interview with the chief and deputy chief of the Middletown Fire Department. It was at this time it became apparent that the administration of the MFD would not be able to meet or exceed the hiring goals put forth by the city. On three separate occasions, over the last two year period, the fire department's administration called for interviews with prospective candidates. During three interview sessions, only one Hispanic male interviewed with the department's administration. While he was recommended for hire, he was medically disqualified. Of the 52 eligible candidates, 11 white males were hired. The other minority candidates did not rank high enough in the initial testing process to be granted a chief's interview.

The issue with the lack of minority candidates is not isolated to the City of Middletown. In a recent article that ran in the *Record-Journal*, the City of Meriden, Connecticut is having a similar problem with the lack of minority and protected class applicants. While the problem was addressed citywide, the fire department has also identified a trend in the lack of minority and protected class applicants. While the city has been aggressive in diversifying its recruitment attempts, Chief Trainor, referring to the fire department's application process, was quoted as saying "We don't get a lot of minorities that take the time" (Trainor, as cited by Falcone, 2008) The Meriden Fire Department is made up of 93.6% white employees. There are six black firefighters and one Hispanic firefighter, one Asian and two female sworn employees of the Meriden Fire Department. (Falcone, 2008)

The lack of a diverse applicant pool will have a dramatic effect on the overall diversity of the department. Without minority and protected class applicants, most communities will not be able to attain diversity goals. The Middletown Fire Department is realizing the effects of a diminutive applicant pool. This applied research paper (ARP) will look to identify the factors

involved in a diminishing diverse applicant pool and any remedies that may increase the diversity figures. This ARP is being written to meet the objectives of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program class: Executive Leadership. The Executive Leadership course goal states: "The chief fire executive will develop the ability to conceptualize and employ the key processes used by effective executive-level managers." (FEMA, 2005) Furthermore, this ARP is being developed in conjunction with the United States Fire Administration's operational objective of responding appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues.

### Literature Review

In reviewing literature for the purpose of identifying advantages of a diverse recruitment, it was found that it has been well reported that over the past decades, the diversity of the United States had shifted dramatically. While still a predominately white country, there has been a significant decline in this statistic in past years. In 1990, the U.S. Census bureau reported that 76% of all Americans were classified as Non-Hispanic white. However, by 2005, that number had dropped to 70% with various ethnic groups picking up that 6%. It is estimated that by the year 2030, the ethnic population will increase to 39% of the total United States population. (U.S. Census Bureau as cited by Kelly Services, 2005)

The growth of ethnic populations in the United States will have a significant impact on the workforce. During the 15 year period between 1990 and 2005, three major ethnic groups have seen a large increase in population. Kelly Services (2005) reported that the African-American population increased a total of 21%, while the Hispanic population increased a total of 60%. The largest increase was in the Asian-American category with a total increase of 76%. The female population of the United States still holds a majority. The 2000 United States Census put

the female population at 51.3%. Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by the year 2050, minorities will make up more than 50% of the American population.

Because of this paradigm shift, one has to look at employment diversity and its associated advantages. To gain a true perspective of a diversified workplace, one must look at the private sector and how they have benefited from this philosophy. General Motors (GM) has taken an aggressive approach to a diversified workforce. The GM philosophy looks at diversity from the standpoint of not only a domestic, but a global one as well. GM believes that a diverse workforce offers a competitive advantage. Because of this, they have turned their sights to the global marketplace.

Shiny Qin, authored an article for the web site MySciNet.com on the importance of workforce diversity and GM's approach to this philosophy. Qin (2002) stated that GM believes that a diverse workforce will offer a competitive advantage and this major automobile manufacturer looks to foster a corporate environment that will offer the best opportunities for the most talented people regardless of race or gender. Because of these values, GM has become the largest manufacturing employer of minorities in the United States. GM values this employment multiplicity and views this as a way to maintain "global competitiveness in the increasingly diverse and interconnected world economy."(Qin, 2002)

The GM philosophy coincides with a 2007 *New York Times* job market poll that found that 70% of all companies that have a diversity program in place feel that it has a positive impact on business performance. gNeil.com (2008), an on-line human relations web site, cites that no company is too small to start a diversity initiative. By doing so, companies of any size can reap the benefits. This on-line resource however stresses the difference between diversity and inclusiveness. An interesting viewpoint looks at diversity's definition as bringing non-whites

into the workplace. However, that alone will not make a company instantaneously progressive or productive. A company must base a diversity program on both diversifying races and genders along with an agenda that allows for total inclusiveness. By incorporating these strategies, a company can be showered with great rewards. Benefits may include: greater productivity because employees feel valued and respected. More insightful marketing due to a diverse workforce possessing varied values and morals. A diverse and inclusive company may have fewer legal issues and may have higher sales while being viewed as a socially responsible corporation. Because of the use of diverse in-house talent and the philosophies of diversity and inclusiveness, companies such as Ben and Jerry's and Patagonia have seen increased revenues. (gNeil.com, 2008)

Ben and Jerry's, a socially and environmentally responsible ice cream company based in Vermont, started a diversity initiative prior to the year 2000. In a state that is very homogenous, this turned out to be quite the undertaking. Based on a promise of "linked prosperity" Ben and Jerry's mission was to increase diversity in its workplace and become more socially responsible in the eye of the community. In 2001, James Heard, the Social Auditor of the Ben and Jerry's Corporation, issued a letter to the corporate stakeholders on the "social" state of the organization. From 1998 to 2000, the minority workforce saw a one percent increase; however, gender diversity was just about equal. This social initiative continues today, not only at the corporate headquarters, but throughout their franchises as well. Because of these philosophies, Ben and Jerry's Homemade Holdings is one of the most successful companies and franchises in the U.S. (Ben and Jerry's, 2007)

The fire service could take a lesson from its corporate counterparts. There are many key benefits that diversity can achieve in the fire service. The fire service is not a for-profit

corporation, so the benefits may not come in the form of monetary gains. However, the benefits can be just as rich. John. J. McNeil, a retired Deputy Chief for the Atlanta, GA. Fire Rescue Department wrote a 2008 article for *Fire Engineering* that outlines the advantages of a diverse workforce. McNeil identifies that a racially and gender diverse workforce may not be easy to work with and may turn into a managerial nightmare, the benefits outweigh the detriments.

McNeil perceives diversity in the fire service as a way of surviving in a rapidly growing diverse country. In addition to such simple hurdles as the elimination of language barriers at emergency scenes, a racially and culturally diverse public service agency may eliminate those cultural barriers that exist in growing communities. “The collective intelligence of a diverse organization allows for many perspectives and different strengths in effectively meeting the department’s goals.” (McNeil, 2008)

McNeil also believes that it is important for a community fire department to be a reflection of its host community. Many times, the employee make up of the fire department is culturally and racially different to that of its community. In a small community in Maine the fire department may be a mirror image of that community, but in larger municipalities, the reflection may be far different. A community should feel that its beliefs, values, cultures, and languages are respected and understood when they are in need of the service. (McNeil, 2008)

To summarize, the advantages of diversifying a department’s recruitment can be seen for both public and private sector companies and agencies. Publicly traded companies such as GM and Ben and Jerry’s have diversified and have reaped the monetary benefits. A public sector agency can benefit as well. Increased productivity, and few legal issues can benefit a fire department, but diversity can help eliminate language and cultural barriers which can have a positive life safety affect.

In reviewing literature for the purpose of identifying factors in the recruitment process that could affect the diversity of a candidate pool, it was found that obstacles may be present that affect the recruitment. Diversity is a commonplace term in this day and age, but it appears that while many public and private sector organizations are attempting to put initiatives in place, there are serious obstacles that retard these projects. While there has been research conducted on the obstacles to a diverse recruitment, it still is sparse; especially when it comes to the fire service. Organizations such as the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) have started to study this critical subject. Additionally, organizations such as the International Association of Women in Fire and Emergency Services (I-Women) and the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters (IABPFF), help to bring diversity to light and recruit and train and mentor members of their organizations.

Kathryn Fox, Chris Hornick and Erin Hardin researched and authored a 2006 study on diversity for the IAFF. This IAFF Diversity Initiative: *Achieving and Retaining a Diverse Fire Service Workforce* (2006) reviewed the demographics of the fire service across the United States. In all, Fox et al. surveyed 80 departments of various sizes and researched the demographic make up of the organizations along with diversity programs, specific recruitment tactics and the obstacles associated with diversifying a department's recruitment.

The IAFF study identified five key obstacles that may affect the diversity of a department's recruitment. The first obstacle that was discussed was a department's passive or defeatist attitude about the issues of diversity. When looking to diversify, some departments would rather be challenged legally and forced into a consent decree rather than address diversity head-on with an aggressive recruitment and retention program. Affirmative Action programs

have their purpose, but the IAFF study found that there could be negative results with these programs as well. The survey results showed that people hired under an Affirmative Action program may have a stigma attached to them for the length of their careers. Another result showed that some black candidates withdrew from the testing process when there is the premise of favoritism. (Schmit & Ryan as cited by Fox et al., 2006) Because of these consent decrees, departments have no incentive to recruit.

Another obstacle revealed by the IAFF study was that some testing processes are not validated and they do not measure the critical job skills. They discovered during this research that if a testing process does not test a wide range of appropriate skills, they will screen out diversity rather than look for it. The International Association of Women in Fire and Emergency Services confirmed these finding in research conducted for a 2008 document titled: *A National Report Card on Women in Firefighting*. Specific to a physical ability test, only 47.3% of women pass these physical aptitude tests as opposed to 83.9% of their male counterparts. Many of the physical aptitudes tests concentrate on upper body strength as opposed to aerobic capacity. It was noted in the IAFF study that these physical aptitude tests are delivering bulky men in worse shape than the incumbent firefighters.

Adding prerequisites to the testing process could limit the diversity pool and pose a third obstacle to a diversified recruitment. Departments exceed the entry level requirements by placing unnecessary restrictions on these base line positions. This is becoming a tactic of cash strapped departments that are now putting minimum requirements for entry level positions. A review of job postings nationwide found that many departments are requiring basic firefighting training along with a valid emergency medical technicians (EMT) certification upon application. These conditions may decrease diversity. Many inner-city candidates may not have access to the



volunteer fire services that offer a unique stepping stone to the career fire service. These services offer access to basic firefighter training along with EMT training. The 2006 IAFF survey found that in four large New England fire departments, 56% of white firefighters had previous experience in a volunteer fire department as compared to 21% of their black counterparts. Within these four New England departments it was also discovered that 49% of all white firefighters had a Firefighter I certification prior to employment as opposed to only 17% of black firefighters. (Fox et al., 2006)

Two other obstacles in diversifying recruitments relate back to the department itself. Many departments do not know how to target a specific audience. Likewise, these departments do not communicate a clear message of the value of diversity. Using informal methods of recruitment such as word of mouth, referrals and small print newspaper ads, may prompt homogeneity in the fire service. The research has shown that departments that do not have internal policies and values that support diversity may have counterproductive results when informal recruiting methods are used. A feeling of diversity and inclusiveness must be relayed in order to obtain a diversified candidate pool. (Fox et al., 2006)

To summarize, obstacles to diversity must be eliminated in order to achieve a multicultural department. Some departments can have a passive approach to diversity and would rather be ordered to diversify by a consent decree rather than face these issues head on. Tests should be validated and meet baseline job requirements. Placing prerequisites on entry level positions will have a limiting affect on the cultural make up of the recruitment pool. Furthermore, a department must look to unconventional recruitment techniques to meet the objectives. Informal recruitment methods will not be as affective as a targeted recruitment aimed at a desired cultural or gender group.

In reviewing literature for the purpose of identifying recruitment methods that will be affective in targeting minority and protected class candidates, the research revealed that because of the many obstacles in recruiting diversity, it becomes prudent to look at the various recruiting methods and decide on which methods will be most effective at targeting the minority and protected class citizens. The traditional avenues of recruitment are used by most fire service agencies. These include newspaper advertisements, community access television and radio and city based web sites. Most communities view recruitment as being the candidate's obligation to contact the employer. For departments having diversity issues, it should be the reverse.

The fire service is not isolated in this quest. The private sector, along with other public sector agencies, has difficulties in recruiting these specific audiences. In Hartford, Connecticut this issue prompted a national initiative with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the United States Department of Justice's Office of Community Orientated Policing Services. Since September, 2001, the police services have had a difficult time recruiting because of military call-ups. Diversity has been a concern for these public safety agencies, but the difficulties recruiting for diversity has been compounded by recent domestic and worldwide events. In March of 2004, the Hartford Police Department (HPD) identified these hiring complications and partnered with the IACP with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice. This three phase strategic plan titled "Police Recruitment and Placement-Community Collaboration Model" addresses diversity from several standpoints, but identifies the issues of a diversified recruitment as a community wide issue and not solely an administrative issue. (Tangel, 2004)

The joint strategic plan is broken into three phases that address diversity and brings key community stakeholders into the overall plan. The phases of the plan include: building block

activities; stakeholder action planning; and implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. The first phase, Building Block Activities, looks to diagnose several key issues with the overall hiring process. It attempts to diagnose the recruitment population. HPD justifies this by looking at the recruitment processes in the private sector. The private sector invests a considerable amount of time, money, and manpower to understand the attitudes and preferences of their customers. Similar to the fire service, the police services tend to pay little attention to this. By gaining a grasp on the community and its demographics, the department administrators can get a good understanding of their constituents, both for current recruitments and long term recruitments. As important as it is to understand the community demographics, it is just as important to understand the internal matters that may affect the recruitment process. An evaluation of the testing process must be conducted to assure that hiring and testing requirements are not so stringent that they have an adverse impact on recruitment diversity. (Tangle, 2004)

The second phase of this joint initiative is to identify and mobilize key stakeholders that have an interest in recruitment diversity. These stakeholders may be government officials, agency administrators and officials, union officials, community and neighborhood associations, minority interest groups and special interest groups. The process should be led by the agency's chief officers. By doing so, this will demonstrate to the community that the department is committed to and has made diversifying the workforce an agency priority. Once the key stakeholders are assembled, the strategic plan requires an orientation process to educate the stakeholders on the hiring process, administrative process and diversity obstacles that may affect the hiring goals. It is then that these people become change agents for the organization and work with city administrators to help affect the required change. (Tangle, 2004)

The third phase includes implementing, monitoring and evaluating the strategic plan. Implementing the strategic plan would also include the diversity stakeholders. By including these stakeholders in the implementation process, it sends a clear message to both the recruitment population and the community that the public safety agency takes diversity as a serious subject. During the third phase, it is paramount that accurate record keeping be conducted for the evaluation element of this plan. A total evaluation of the outcome will help future recruitments by identifying the limitations of the plan and suggesting future changes. (Tangel, 2004)

To grasp what recruitment methods would work for a specific target audience, it becomes imperative to look at what other agencies have done to recruit women and minorities. Fox et al. (2006) identified 27 common recruitment tactics used nationwide. These recruitment tactics range from word of mouth to roadside banners. While some are more commonplace, there are some recruitment tactics that should give merit to the objective of diversification. The five most common recruitment approaches in use today are: word of mouth, city or department web sites, job fairs, community events, and community recruitment efforts in schools, churches and neighborhood centers.

While all of these recruitment methods demonstrate value in the recruitment of minorities, they must be combined with a diversified recruitment committee. If a recruitment drive were to be conducted by a group of white males, there is a good chance that the drive would net only that class. The IAFF diversity study also identified several recruitment ideas that brought about intuitiveness and ingenuity that concluded in a successful recruitment. Such programs include a cadet program and a mentoring program. Organizations such as the IABPFF and I-Women have started mentoring programs that target specific audiences for the purpose of

mentoring potential firefighter candidates. These organizations work with their constituents in all aspects of firefighter recruitment and testing. Furthermore, they stay with the employee throughout their career and assist them with the promotional process as well. (Fox et al., 2006)

Specific to women in the fire service, it was noted in the research that unlike men, women are not brought up with a fire service career in mind. While many males are raised on the traditions of the fire service from a very young age, this is not something that readily happens with females. Recently, organizations such as I-Women are looking to rectify this. Non-profit summer camps for young women are being organized to raise awareness of fire service careers for women. In the United States, camps such as Camp Blaze, Camp Summer Heat, and Camp Inferno are targeting girls ages 14-19 and allowing them a hands-on look at a fire service career. The same is true in Canada with Camp Courage. (Sagen, 2008, p. 88)

To summarize, in an effort to recruit a more diverse employment base, an organization must evaluate its current hiring tactics. An innovative approach must be taken in order to break the old trends and traditions of recruitment. Programs such as recruit mentoring and explorer or cadet programs can help diversify the candidate pool by exposing people to the fire service at an early age. By seeking assistance from community and civic stakeholders, a department can benefit from fresh views that can aid a department in becoming more multicultural.

In reviewing literature for the purpose of identifying if the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) affects the diversity of a candidate pool; it was found that the testing process as a whole must be validated in such a way that it does not adversely affect candidate pool diversity. With testing requirements being a concern for diversification, is the fire service unknowingly discriminating against protected class and minority candidates? The CPAT exam was the offshoot of a joint venture between the IAFF and the IAFC. It started in the developmental stage

in 1996 and was rolled out soon after. It was designed as an employment pre-qualifier to identify recruits that would have the best chance for success in a fire service career. CPAT is a combination of eight aerobic and anaerobic exercises that are job specific to firefighting. These tests are conducted under environmental and temperature dependant conditions. Additionally, these tests are time based with cut off times used as a pass or fail criteria. This venture included the United States Department of Justice as an active participant in the development of this test. Under the watchful eye of this federal agency, CPAT now offers a test that is validated and acknowledges that it does not cause an adverse impact towards protected classes and females. (Piskura, 2001)

In 2000, CPAT was adopted by the Indianapolis Fire Department (IFD). In the same year, it was used as the exclusive physical ability test in the recruitment process. The initial edition of CPAT that was delivered by the IFD required all candidates to view a video showing all aspects of the CPAT exam. Upon completion of a written examination score of 80% or higher, candidates were invited to a series of interviews. Based on the passing scores of the interviews, candidates were then invited to participate in the CPAT exam. In addition to any written materials and the previously viewed videos, candidates were allowed to ask questions about the CPAT exam and were allowed up to 40 hours of unscheduled practice time at the CPAT facility. IFD training personnel were available to assist and answer questions during the practice sessions. (Muegge, Zollinger, Saywell, Moffatt, Hanify, and Dezelan, 2002)

The initial test delivered successful results for the IFD and scored passing grades for all races and offered a 50% pass rate for females. In total, 206 participants took IFD's initial CPAT examination with 179 passing the exam. The black candidate pool had a 77.4% pass rate with the white candidate pool offering an 88.4% pass rate. Hispanics had a 100% pass rate. However, it

was reported that only one Hispanic male took the exam. The pass rate based on age in all races and genders offered declining results based the age of the candidate. 90.7% of all candidates age 20-24 passed the exam, while only 66.7% of candidates aged 35-39 passed the exam. (Muegge et al., 2002)

These numbers were satisfactory for the IFD in 2000 and over the course of the next few years CPAT became a popular physical ability test. The inclusion of CPAT in a municipality's testing process allowed for several benefits: first, it removed the onus of physical ability testing from the municipality. CPAT was viewed as a validated test and was endorsed by a federal agency. Second, it was able to save a community the cost of testing by having the candidates take the exam prior to application. In Connecticut, most communities require the candidate to bear the cost of testing, thus saving the municipality the testing expense. (Piskura, 2001)

In 2005, the validity of CPAT was questioned. In July of that year, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) completed a five year investigation of a discrimination charge filed by a female applicant for the Austin, Texas Fire Department (AFD). The EEOC found a reasonable cause to believe that the "cut off" times were not validated properly and by using this exam, the Austin Fire Department discriminated against 25 female candidates. The EEOC found that in the initial edition of CPAT, the training and mentoring component of the CPAT was strictly voluntary. It was also found that by requiring a mandated mentoring program, the pass rates rose dramatically. (Garza, 2006)

At the 2006 Human Relations Committee Meeting of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Rich Duffy of the IAFF gave a presentation of the second revision of CPAT. In the 2006 edition, Mr. Duffy reported that as a direct result of the AFD EEOC discrimination suit, a mandatory mentoring and practice program for all candidates will be included in the CPAT

licensing agreements. To follow suit, the Connecticut Fire Academy adopted the IAFC's recommendations and required an eight week training and mentoring program. (Piskura, 2008)

The Vulcan Society, an organization of black firefighters in New York City has questioned the validity of including CPAT in the city's entry level testing process. By including CPAT, a pass/fail examination, will not allow all candidates to be ranked solely on written test scores. Captain Paul Washington, the leader of the Vulcan Society, has questioned the testing process of the New York City Fire Department. Captain Washington "has long contended that the multiple-choice exam has a disparate impact on black candidates, who historically don't perform as well on standardized exams as whites and other groups." (Washington, as cited by Otis, 2006) Mr. Washington contends that a graded physical exam is a "color-blind" exam and would allow for higher diversity rates among firefighter candidates. (Otis, 2006)

To summarize, CPAT is a validated test that has proven beneficial to the fire service. The 2006 revision of this exam has had success in increasing the pass rate of all candidates. While this test may have limitations in areas such as a pass or fail grade, many other limitations can be overcome by tailoring equipment towards the female gender. The validation of this exam by federal agencies far outweighs the limitations.

#### Procedures

The purpose of this applied research paper will be to define the diversity requirements of the City of Middletown, identify the advantages of a diverse workforce and recognize potential opportunities that may increase the diversity of the recruitment pool. It has become evident that over the past three recruitments, the diversity of the candidate pool has diminished. The procedures to accomplish this are as follows:



1. A comprehensive literature review including; trade journals, newspaper articles, and an intense search using Google and Dogpile search engines.

2. A survey that was distributed to 70 Executive Fire Officer students and graduates

After conducting the literature review and evaluating best practices from fire departments nationwide, it was determined that a survey should be conducted to determine if the problems facing the Middletown Fire Department are isolated. A survey was developed that looked at specific demographic and cultural information of each department that could be used as a baseline reference tool. 70 Executive Fire Officers (EFO) students and graduates were selected to be solicited for this survey. The EFO students that were selected were from fire departments around the country that had similar demographics to the Middletown Fire Department. However, it was decided to use departments of differing sizes. The web site Surveymonkey.com was used to distribute to the participants. On Tuesday, January 6, 2009, this survey was distributed to the participants via electronic mail (email). A cover letter was included on the email requesting participation (Appendix B). The survey was left open for a period of five days allowing ample time to respond to the nine question feedback instrument. The responses to the survey can be found in Appendix C and the results can be located in Appendix D.

This applied research project realized the following limitations. The comprehensive literature review offered a limited selection of fire service journal articles and periodicals on the subject of a diversified recruitment. There was a wealth of information on the subject of fire service diversity in general, but in terms of diversifying a candidate pool, information was sparse. There was a great deal of information specific to a diversified recruitment from the private sector and other government agencies.

A second limitation was the meager response to the survey. This informational tool had a return rate of 33% (23 responses out of 70). The survey was left online for a period of five days. During the survey's test phase, it was determined that it took approximately 10 minutes to complete this survey. A higher response was expected but not received.

#### Definition of Terms:

**Protected Class:** The groups protected from the employment discrimination by law. These groups include men and women on the basis of sex; any group which shares a common race, religion, color, or national origin; people over 40; and people with physical or mental handicaps. Every U.S. citizen is a member of some protected class, and is entitled to the benefits of EEO law. However, the EEO laws were passed to correct a history of unfavorable treatment of women and minority group members. (The National Archives, 2008)

**Minority:** The smaller part of a group. A group within a country or state that differs in race, religion or national origin from the dominant group. According to EEOC guidelines, minority is used to mean four particular groups who share a race, color or national origin. (The National Archives, 2008)

#### Results

The first research question that was investigated was concerning the advantages of a diverse workforce. Research and documentation have shown that the United States is in the midst of a paradigm shift. While we are still a predominantly white country, diversity among races is increasing. If the estimates hold true, there will be a 39% ethnic population in the United States by the year 2030. Because of this, we must look at our workforce and allow it to mirror the communities we serve.

There are specific advantages to a diverse workforce. To view this, we have to look no farther than the private sector and the automobile giant General Motors. GM has taken the diversity philosophy and has used it to gain a competitive advantage. The GM philosophy uses the diverse workforce to foster a corporate culture that offers the best opportunities to the best employees. This is true with other private sector companies as well. It was reported that an overwhelming majority of companies that have a diversity program felt that it has a positive impact on their overall business performance. Private sector diversity benefits include: increased productivity, more insightful marketing, few legal issues, and a socially responsible reputation.

While a public sector agency such as a fire department cannot reap the financial benefits, they can become a responsible community partner. By diversifying our fire department workforce, the fire service can bring multicultural views that will not only diversify our employment base, but it will also expand department perspectives and strengths. Many believe that a fire department should be a reflection of the community it serves. While this is not always the case, it should be a determinant. The survey conducted for this ARP specifically asked if the survey participant's fire department reflects the ethnic make up of the community. The results are relatively equal with 47.8% believing that their department does reflect the cultural make up of the community and 52.2% that their department does not mirror the cultural make up of the community.

The survey indicated that the majority of our fire service is still made up of white employees. While this survey reflects a very small sampling of the fire service nationwide, it does portray an accurate snapshot when compared to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistical Report of 2006. As of 2006, the Bureau of Labor reported that 82.3% of all United States career firefighters are white. The survey indicated that of the sample departments that

reported, 86.87% of firefighters were white. Results for the other races had very similar results. Women faired better in the survey when it comes to employment in the fire service. As of 2006 the Bureau of Labor reported that 5.1% of United States career firefighters were female. The survey indicated women represent 6.33% of this workforce statistic. (Table 4)

Table 4

Answer Options	Response Average
White	86.87%
Black	12.83%
Hispanic	3.60%
Asian	0.90%
Female	6.33%
Other	1.30%

The second research question that was investigated was concerning the factors in the recruitment process that could affect diversity. Key fire service organizations such as the IAFF, the IAFC, IABPFF, and I-Women have attempted to tackle diversifying the ranks of the fire service. There have been many good initiatives that have come from these organizations. The common obstacles that have been identified start with a department’s passive or defeatist attitude about the diversity subject in general. While diversity should be fought head on, many departments would rather live by consent decrees. Because of the decrees, fire departments have no incentive to recruit minority and protected class citizens.

Other obstacles in the diversity process may include non-validated testing and prerequisites to the testing process in general. Entry level requirements should be reflected in the testing process. By adding to the list of minimum requirements, the levels of diversity will be affected. Testing requirements should be validated and the test should measure only the critical job skills. Some physical ability tests are not achieving this. By concentrating on upper body

strength over aerobic ability, the testing may be discriminating against the most qualified candidates.

Other obstacles in recruitment diversity may fall on the shoulders of the departments and municipalities themselves. The research has shown that most departments do not know how to target a specific audience and may not be communicating a clear message of the value of diversity. The survey indicated that an overwhelming amount of people responding to the survey felt that their departments had a difficult time of recruiting women and minorities (Table 5). 72.7 % of respondents indicated that it was difficult to recruit in these categories. However, most departments responding to the survey (86.4%) indicated that their department does not target a specific audience for recruitment.

Table 5

<b>Do you feel that your department has difficulties recruiting women and minorities?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	72.7%	16
No	27.3%	6

The third question that was researched was concerning recruitment methods that would be most effective at targeting the minority and protected class populations. Most department and municipalities rely on the same recruitment methods. The survey confirmed that the most popular recruitment methods were: local newspaper ads, word of mouth and community or department web sites. While these are effective and can usually net a generous candidate pool, these tactics may not be effective in delivering a diversified candidate pool (Table 6).

Table 6

Answer Options	Response Frequency
Community Web Site	54.5%
Job Search Engine (Monster.com, Careerbuilder.com)	27.3%
Community Events	31.8%
Job Fairs	54.5%
Ads in Local Newspapers	72.7%
Ads in Major Newspapers	36.4%
Radio Ads	0.0%
Network TV Ads	4.5%
Cable TV or Local Access TV	27.3%
Public Service Announcements	4.5%
Direct Mail Interest Cards	9.1%
News Stories	9.1%
Cadet or Explorer Programs	36.4%
Word of Mouth	63.6%
Other	31.8%

The research that was found focused on a recruitment tactic that was developed by the police services. The “Police Recruitment and Placement –Community Collaboration Model” was developed to diversify their recruitment pool. This is a three phase plan that addresses both internal and external recruitment issues while bringing key government and community stakeholders together to address the problem. Addressing the diversity problem in this manner will demonstrate to the community that the city and administration take diversity seriously and are working with the community to address the issue.

To address the issues of targeted recruitments, an intuitive and innovated approach must be used to pursue diversity. Several departments have used this approach successfully. Several of the professional organizations have started mentoring programs to assist recruit candidates with all aspects of the testing process. Other departments have started cadet programs. The most innovated program was the summer camp program for girls aged 14-19. This program gives girls hands on experience with the tools and equipment used in the firefighting profession.

Table 7

Has your department targeted a specific race or gender for employment?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	13.6%	3
No	86.4%	19

The survey asked the participants if their department has ever targeted a specific class for employment (Table 7). While the majority of departments do not, those that did utilize department members that are the same genders and races that they are attempting to target. Other departments have used their explorer and cadet programs to target minorities and protected class employees while another department will go to colleges and paramedic programs to recruit minorities and females.

The fourth research question that was investigated was concerning the CPAT exam and its affect on diversity. The research determined that this is a physical ability test that was designed in conjunction with the IAFF and the IAFC and validated by the United States Department of Justice. However, in 2005 the validity of the exam was questioned when a lawsuit was filed on behalf of female candidates of the Austin, Texas Fire Department. Because of the lawsuit, the exam was revised to include a mandatory training and mentoring period.

Other issues have been brought up that are related to CPAT. In New York City, the Vulcan Society, an organization of black professional firefighters is questioning CPAT and the reduction in diversity it will cause because CPAT is strictly a pass or fail exam. The Vulcan Society is arguing that the inclusion of CPAT into the city's testing process will discriminate against black candidates because these candidates historically do not score well on standardized exams.

Table 8

Does your department use a physical ability exam such as the Candidate Physical Ability Exam (CPAT) as part of your entry level examination process?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	95.5%	21
No	4.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

For the purpose of this ARP, the survey asked two questions regarding CPAT and physical ability testing in general. In all, 95% of all respondents use a physical ability test to qualify potential candidates (Table 8). But when asked if the use of CPAT could affect the diversity of a candidate pool, the majority of respondents felt that it could. 54.5 % of those participating in the survey felt that the use of a CPAT style exam could affect the diversity pool of potential candidates (Table 9).

Table 9

In your opinion, do you feel an exam such as CPAT can affect the diversity of the recruitment process?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	54.5%	12
No	45.5%	10
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

The product of this applied research paper is the development of the *Middletown Fire Department Strategic Recruitment Plan* (Appendix A). This plan was developed as a direct result of the efforts of both the research conducted and the information supplied in the ARP survey. This strategic plan addresses the diversity issues of the City of Middletown in the terms of a short, midrange, and long term goals. The short term goal will be aimed at the 2009 recruitment effort. This effort will include the use of minorities and females at the spring time



job fairs that MFD participates in. In the past, the department was forced to hire for these job fairs from the rotational overtime list. Working in conjunction with the firefighters union, compensatory time will be offered, thus allowing the department administration to staff these job fairs with these critical employees.

The midrange goal of this strategic plan addresses the recruitment of 2011. The midrange goals include targeted advertising towards minorities and females. The department has not updated its informational brochure since 1989. The new informational packet will contain a strong message on diversity and inclusion. Also included in the midrange goals will be formation of an explorer program. This program will look to mirror what has been started in the city's police department. While the department will not be able to certify these explorers as firefighters because of the age restrictions, the foundation will be set. The Middletown Police Department offers a total of five additional points on the final test score if a candidate participated in the explorer program for two or more years. This could also be included in the fire department explorer program. Finally, the long range goal looks to partner with the Board of Education to develop a program that would offer high school students an internship with the MFD. This internship will benefit the student in several ways: first, it will offer testing points for participation. Second, it will offer such benefits as an Emergency Medical Technician certificate and finally, a Firefighter I certification if the candidate is over the age of 18.

#### Discussion

This applied research paper uncovered some very interesting results. As a direct observation of the Middletown Fire Department's recruitment process, it was ascertained that the diversity factor must be addressed in future recruitments. The fact that limited minorities and females made it to the final interview was very surprising. Just as surprising was the fact that out

of the 95 total applicants of the 2006 recruitment; only 11% were representative of minorities and no females even started the process. When the same statistics were requested for the previous recruitment drives, the results were similar. In 2003, 118 started the application process. Of the 118 individuals that showed interest in a career in firefighting, 13 % were minority and one applicant was female. Once the 2006 testing concluded, 6.6% of minorities were eligible for the position and the one female had dropped out prior to the oral exam.

If you compare these results to Middletown Fire Department's 1999 recruitment, minorities and females had a far greater representation on both the initial application and the final eligibility list. 22% of applicants were minority in 1999 with 14% eligible for the position. 4.5% of applicants were females with 3% remaining on the eligibility list. The common denominator in these statistics is the CPAT exam. In the 1999 recruitment, CPAT was not required. The physical ability test was conducted in-house and consisted of more aerobic rather than strength exercises.

It is understood that CPAT is a validated exam that is job specific to firefighting tasks. However, there are mitigating factors when it comes to CPAT and diversity. The Vulcan Society addressed the use of a pass or fail exam when it comes to ranking candidates. While the rankings affect on diversity are not a direct result of the use of CPAT, there may be valid concerns. A physical agility test can be viewed as a "color blind" test because it is based on the physical capabilities of the candidate. If this were a graded or ranked test, the results would be averaged with written scores. If CPAT was a ranked exam, the playing field may be leveled, but as a pass/fail exam, the final candidate rankings are weighted heavily on written scores. Captain Paul Washington reiterated this in a 2006 article in *The Chief* "Captain Washington declined to comment on possible changes to the written exam, but reiterated his preference that candidates'

rank on the hiring lists be determined "by a graded physical exam - which is color-blind."”  
(Washington as cited by Otis, 2006)

There are other concerns with the use of CPAT that can have a direct affect on the diversity of a candidate pool. First, the equipment is not tailored for women. The fact that women usually have shorter torsos than men can affect the outcome of the test. The shorter torso of the female will allow the CPAT vest to fall in a different position than if it were worn by a male. This will cause the knees and thighs to contact the vest during the various exercises. If this is the case, the female will have the weight not only on her shoulders, but she will be forced to raise the vest with her legs, thus creating a more strenuous exercise than intended.

The second issue with CPAT is the cost. Most municipalities do not bear the cost of this exam; it is borne by the candidate. Since the second revision required a mandatory training and mentoring period, the cost of the exam went up proportionally with the amount of contact hours required to conduct the validated test. The State of Connecticut raised the cost from \$65 prior to 2006 to \$150 post revision date. This could cause a monetary hardship for minority candidates in low income communities. Mr. Piskura reported that the City of Hartford, Connecticut addressed this issue by contracting with the Connecticut Fire Academy (CFA). The CFA runs the test and bills the City of Hartford for the candidates that tested. The City of Hartford also absorbs all transportation costs for the candidate. This is a very realistic and viable option for the Middletown Fire Department. However, it will become a monetary constraint. Based on the past recruitment and the current cost of CPAT, the department would have to budget approximately \$19,000. While it can be included in the current budget process, it is very unlikely to pass the budget process in these dire economic times.

Because CPAT is a validated test that has been in existence for over 10 years, it would not be beneficial to abandon this exam and return to in-house testing. Since 2006 when the CFA adopted the revisions that were recommended by both the IAFF and the IAFC, the success rate of the exam has increased dramatically in Connecticut. Mark Lewendowski, the Assistant Director of Training at the Connecticut Fire Academy, was able to supply the pass/fail statistics for the following years: In the fiscal year 2005-2006, 1,080 candidates took the CPAT exam. There were 709 candidates that passed (66%) and 371 candidates that failed (34%). In the fiscal year 2006-2007, 754 candidates took the exam. There were 590 candidates that passed the exam (79%), while 164 failed (22%). In the fiscal year 2006-2007, 841 candidates took the exam. There were 785 candidates that passed the exam (93%), while 56 failed (7%). When asked about the significant reduction in failures, Mr. Lewendowski attributed the success of the program to the mandatory mentoring and training time. This philosophy is supported in an article that ran in WFS Quarterly. Before the 2006 revision of CPAT, Phoenix Fire Department had a 12 week mandatory training program. When compared with the CPAT pass rates that were reported in 2002, Phoenix had a 42% pass rate for women as compared to a 10% pass rate from other states. (Jones, 2002, p. 15) The fact that CPAT is a validated physical ability exam; it would make sense to stay the current course of action and maintain CPAT as the preferred examination process.

The advantages of a diverse workforce speak for themselves. A community such as Middletown is representative of a diverse community and the need to diversify its workforce. To accomplish an objective such as diversity will take commitment from the entire organization, but it must start at the top. Both the city and department administrations must identify critical issues such as diversity and work hand-in-hand to meet the lofty goals that will reverse such practices.

This ideal is confirmed in many publications, and it was addressed in a 2006 article in *Fire* magazine. Author Jagtar Singh identified several points that can make the process of diversity faster. Singh stressed that leadership from the top is essential, but it must be shown at all levels. There is a need to recognize that all individuals must be accountable for an inclusive environment. By setting clear targets, an organization that commits to the diversity principals can realize a positive outcome. (Singh, 2006)

To see why diversity initiatives should matter to a community, we do not have to look any farther than our fire prevention initiatives. Fire 20/20, a non-profit organization, has looked at fire prevention programs in diverse communities. The researchers have found that the fire prevention message in multicultural communities may not be being delivered and received in the capacities necessary to educate our populations of even basic fire prevention messages. (Sagan and Pini, 2008) When communities identify these gaps in prevention education, they must be addressed. This was the case in Atlanta, Georgia when they identified a serious gap in the Afro-Caribbean population. By identifying this gap, Atlanta reduced the number of fire related deaths in this demographic by recruiting and hiring candidates of the Afro-Caribbean community which brought an understanding of this culture into the fire department of Atlanta. (McKay and Singh, 2006) Successful initiatives, such as the one conducted in Atlanta, must be brought into communities such as Middletown. By doing so, the community can be safer by understanding the fire safety messages that the fire department works to deliver.

While diversity is proven to have many advantages, there are many factors that can affect the make up of a candidate pool. The research uncovered some specific obstacles that can be related directly back to the employer. The IAFF Diversity Study had identified obstacles such as prerequisites and additional entry level requirements can hinder the diversity process. (Fox et al.,

2006) The City of Middletown never had these prerequisites prior to this contract, but it has now fallen into this trap. During the previous contract negotiations, EMT has now become a requirement upon application. This was done as a money saving measure. It will not be known until the closing of applications if this will have an impact on the diversity of the candidate pool.

The commitment to diversify the candidate pool must start with the administration of both the city and department, but it will take a major cultural shift to accomplish this. In addition to diversifying the recruitment process, there must be an internal training process that accompanies this. Top-down training can be a very affective tool to accomplish the internal cultural change that needs to conquer such feats as diversity. Currently, the department conducts annual training on such subjects as diversity, inclusion and harassment which is conducted in a top-down training model. "Top-down training is often used as a vehicle to drive cultural change." (Wilkinson, 2006, p. 58) This vehicle is a common tool of the Middletown Fire Department, and will continue for the foreseeable future. Committing to internal training on diversity and inclusiveness will help the diversity process as a whole. The Corporation for National and Community Service (2006) reiterates this fact by stating in their training manual that creating an inclusive environment recognizes and uses the skill and strengths of every employee. "An inclusive environment sees individuals, not stereotypes." (The Corporation for National and Community Service, 2004)

The research has uncovered several very unique programs that can have a positive impact on the diversity of the recruitment pool. The one that stands out is a cadet or explorer program. The City of Middletown currently offers an explorer program in the city's police department. A similar program could allow for interested candidates to gain a background in the fire service from a young age. Targeting the lower income areas in the city could prove beneficial in not

only potentially diversifying the candidate pool, but it may reduce crime in that demographic area due to the new found community involvement. In Sagen's 2008 *Firehouse* article, he discussed the benefits of a targeted recruitment. With programs such as the summer camps that are aimed at young females, the exposure increases with every contact. This same philosophy can be used in both a cadet program and an internship that could come from a partnership with Middletown's Board of Education. Both can be advantageous to the objective of diversity.

The Middletown Fire Department must alter its recruiting tactics to eliminate any diversity hurdles and gain a well rounded candidate pool. Staying the current course of action will not have a positive impact on diversity. Regionally, this has been addressed by the Hartford Police Department. The article by Tangle, (2004) outlines what can happen when you put the area stakeholders in play and include them in the hiring process. While it may take the actions of several city agencies to start the process, it is worth investigating and should be included in any strategic plan.

A down-turned economy may be a benefit for objectives such as diversity. With the unemployment rate trending upward, a new resource may be available to accomplish an objective such as diversity. The City of San Francisco has taken advantage of this tactic. The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Authority has aggressively pursued laid off airline workers. They see this as a viable pool and are averaging 1,500 applications per week. (Porter as cited by California Job Journal, 2008) Using tactics like this can increase the candidate pool exponentially.

#### Recommendations

As a result of this applied research project, it is recommended that the City of Middletown adopt the *Middletown Fire Department Strategic Recruitment Plan* in its entirety.

Over and above adoption, it is recommended that the strategic plan be reviewed and evaluated at the conclusion of each recruitment period to assure that the goals of the plan are in-line with current events and trends that may affect the City of Middletown. Furthermore, it is also recommended that this strategic plan be shared with the Middletown Firefighters Local 1073 and the support of the union sought to assure that diversity is not just an administrative issue, but a department issue as well.



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Appendix A  
Strategic Recruitment Plan

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## MIDDLETOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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### *Strategic Recruitment Plan*

#### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this strategic recruitment plan is to increase the diversity of the fire department's candidate pool. During the 2006 recruitment that established an eligibility list that was valid by city ordinance from 2006 until 2008, only a limited number of minority candidates applied for the entry level position of firefighter. Fewer yet passed the exam and were placed on the eligibility list. There were no females that applied for the position of firefighter. This is a trend that has been constant since the 1999 recruitment.

Because of this reason, the administration of the Middletown Fire Department has developed the Strategic Recruitment Plan. This plan is intended to take an aggressive approach at the recruitment of females and minorities and is designed to work in conjunction with the goals set forth by the Human Relations Department of the City of Middletown. This three part plan is designed to take immediate steps to increase diversity and look for long term solutions to the critical issue.

**SCOPE:**

The scope of this strategic plan shall include the administrators of the Middletown Fire Department working in conjunction with the Human Relations Department and the Personnel Department under the direction of the Mayor's Office.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This strategic plan is being put forward with three goals in mind: short range goals, midrange goals, and long range goals. For the purpose of this plan, the short term goals shall include the 2009 recruitment drive that will take affect in the spring of 2009. All goals established in the short term plan shall be carried forward into future recruitments unless specifically eliminated during the evaluation process. The midrange goals shall be established for the 2011 recruitment drive. Like the short term goals, these midrange goals shall be carried forward to future recruitment unless eliminated during the evaluation process. The long range shall be established with the future in mind. All long range goals are expected to be established for recruitment drives past the year 2013.

**SHORT TERM GOALS**

The short term goals are being established to provide a realistic increase in the diversity of the firefighter candidate pool. The short term goals are as follows:

- Increase the amount of job fairs that the fire department participates in. These job fairs shall include but not be limited to: the Middletown High School Job Fair, the Wesleyan University Job Fair and the Middlesex County Job Fair.
- Staffing for each job fair must include minority members of the Middletown Fire Department.

- Increase the recruitment advertising to include minority publications. Furthermore, the Middletown Fire Department and the Personnel Department shall make a conscious effort to increase recruitment campaigns at the local churches and social clubs along with the area's civic organizations.

#### MIDRANGE GOALS

The midrange goals are being established for the 2011 recruitment campaign.

- Update the Middletown Fire Department's informational packet. This informational packet shall include pertinent information of the City of Middletown and the Middletown Fire Department. While this goal may be realistic in the short term goals, it is being added to the midrange goals due to time constraints needed for photographs and printing. The fire department administration feels a longer window is needed to satisfy this goal.
- Establish a fire department explorer program. Similar to the explorer program used for the Middletown Police Department, the program would be used as a recruitment tool for the future generation of firefighters. This tool would be used to target high school age residents that may have an interest in firefighting. The police department has a high diversity rate in their program (41%). If the MFD targets the lower income areas, the results could be similar. If approved by the Personnel Review Committee, five testing points could be granted for a two year commitment to the program.

#### LONG RANGE GOALS

- The long range goal to diversify the recruitment of the Middletown Fire Department would be to partner with the Middletown Board of Education. It would be the intent of the fire department to offer an internship that could offer several benefits to the



students. If added to the high school curriculum, the fire department could train the interns in emergency medicine and prepare them to test for Emergency Medical Technician at the conclusion of the internship. Firefighter certification could also be an option if approved by the Board and parental permission is granted. This would also be contingent on the student's age, due to the age restrictions under OSHA and the State of Connecticut Fire Academy.

#### CONCLUSION:

It would be the intent of the fire department administrators to evaluate the strategic plan after each recruitment period. Evaluation would be in conjunction with the fire department, Human Relations Department, and the Personnel Department. The goal of diversity is everyone's responsibility. With a proactive and intuitive approach this goal can be accomplished.

Appendix B

Fire Service Diversity Study

Cover Page

Greetings:

My name is Rob Kronenberger and I am the Deputy Fire Chief of the Middletown Fire Department in Connecticut. I am a fourth year Executive Fire Officer student at the National Fire Academy.

I am completing my final applied research project on the diversification of our recruitment process. I would like to ask if you would take ten minutes to complete a short nine question survey on the demographics of your department and your recruitment tactics.

Please use the link attached to this email.

Thank you in advance for you time.

Robert Kronenberger  
Deputy Fire Chief  
Middletown Fire Department  
860-343-5045

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=YtvNtX7GgUeNVOEEpmAUYA\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=YtvNtX7GgUeNVOEEpmAUYA_3d_3d)

Appendix C  
Fire Service Diversity Study  
Survey

1. How many members are employed in your organization? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the cultural make up of your organization? Please base your answer in percentages, but please use whole numbers with no percentage signs or decimal points.

White \_\_\_\_\_

Black \_\_\_\_\_

Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_

Asian \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does your department reflect the ethnic make up of your community?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you feel that your department has difficulties recruiting women and minorities?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

5. What recruitment methods does your department currently employ? Please check that all that apply.

Community Web Site

Job Search Engine (Monster.com, Careerbuilder.com)

Community Events

Job Fairs

Ads in Local Newspapers

Ads in Major Newspapers

Radio Ads

Network TV Ads

Cable TV or Local Access TV

Public Service Announcements

Direct Mail Interest Cards

News Stories

Cadet or Explorer Programs       Word of Mouth

Other

6. Has your department targeted a specific race or gender for employment?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

7. If you answered yes to question 6, please explain what recruitment methods were used to target that specific gender or race.

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8. Does your department use a physical ability exam such as the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) as part of your entry level examination process?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

9. In your opinion, do you feel an exam such as CPAT can affect the diversity of the recruitment process?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D  
Fire Service Diversity Study  
Results

Fire Service Diversity					
How many members are employed in your organization?					
Participant #1	150	Participant #9	70	Participant #17	80
Participant #2	1723	Participant #10	72	Participant #18	84
Participant #3	143	Participant #11	67	Participant #19	40
Participant #4	101	Participant #12	61	Participant #20	79
Participant #5	218	Participant #13	300	Participant #21	79
Participant #6	83	Participant #14	104	Participant #22	56
Participant #7	1,893	Participant #15	62	Participant #23	120
Participant #8	12	Participant #16	70		

Fire Service Diversity			
What is the cultural make-up of your organization? Please base your answer in percentages, but please use whole numbers with no percentage signs or decimal points.			
Answer Options	Response Average	Response Total	Response Count
White	86.87	1998	23
Black	12.83	231	18
Hispanic	3.60	54	15
Asian	0.90	9	10
Female	6.33	114	18
Other	1.30	13	10
<i>answered question</i>			23
<i>skipped question</i>			0

Fire Service Diversity		
Does your department reflect the ethnic make-up of your community?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	47.8%	11
No	52.2%	12
<i>answered question</i>		23
<i>skipped question</i>		0



Fire Service Diversity		
Do you feel that your department has difficulties recruiting women and minorities?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	72.7%	16
No	27.3%	6
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Fire Service Diversity		
What recruitment methods does your department currently employ? Please check all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Community Web Site	54.5%	12
Job Search Engine (Monster.com, Careerbuilder.com)	27.3%	6
Community Events	31.8%	7
Job Fairs	54.5%	12
Ads in Local Newspapers	72.7%	16
Ads in Major Newspapers	36.4%	8
Radio Ads	0.0%	0
Network TV Ads	4.5%	1
Cable TV or Local Access TV	27.3%	6
Public Service Announcements	4.5%	1
Direct Mail Interest Cards	9.1%	2
News Stories	9.1%	2
Cadet or Explorer Programs	36.4%	8
Word of Mouth	63.6%	14
Other	31.8%	7
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Fire Service Diversity		
Has your department targeted a specific race or gender for employment?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	13.6%	3
No	86.4%	19
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Fire Service Diversity	
If you answered yes to question 6, please explain what recruitment methods were used to target that specific gender or race. Responses to follow below:	
Answer Options	Response Count
	4
<i>answered question</i>	4
<i>skipped question</i>	19

1. The department will send out the members of a specific race, gender, and orientation to the like areas of town to recruit.
2. We targeted our Explorer program to high school that was predominantly African American. We are in the process of working with Minority Civic leaders to recruit minority candidates.
3. Besides the items checked off in question 5. We go to colleges and paramedic programs to put on specific presentations geared towards minorities.
4. N/A

Fire Service Diversity		
Does your department use a physical ability exam such as the Candidate Physical Ability Exam (CPAT) as part of your entry level examination process.		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	95.5%	21
No	4.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Fire Service Diversity		
In your opinion, do you feel an exam such as CPAT can affect the diversity of the recruitment process?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	54.5%	12
No	45.5%	10
<i>answered question</i>		22
<i>skipped question</i>		1