

Running head: IDENTIFYING RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Identifying Recruitment Strategies to Achieve a More Diverse Workforce in the Kinston

Department of Public Safety Fire Division

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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 language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

The problem that initiated this research was the Kinston Department of Public Safety (KDPS) Fire Division had been unsuccessful in attaining a diverse workforce that represented the demographics of the city it serves. The purpose of this applied research project (ARP) was to identify recruitment strategies to achieve a more diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division. The descriptive research method was used to answer the following research questions: a) what internal and external factors have prevented the recruitment of a diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division?, b) What methods have been identified for recruiting a more diverse workforce?, and c) What methods are other fire departments in North Carolina using to recruit a more diverse workforce?

Procedures included a literature review as well as research through interviews and questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed to KDPS Fire Division personnel as well as other North Carolina fire departments.

The results identified several factors that were preventing the recruitment of a diverse workforce. Results also identified several effective recruitment strategies for improving the diversity of a workforce. Key recruitment strategies included targeted advertising and outreach programs through ethnic churches, ethnic community organizations, and diverse educational institutions. The utilization of a variety of recruitment strategies was found to be most effective.

Recommendations included the use of a variety of recruitment strategies including targeted advertising, community outreach, recruitment initiatives at diverse high schools and colleges, and development of a candidate preparation/assistance program. Revision and continued use of the KDPS Explorer program was also recommended as well as consideration of an increase in the entry level salary for firefighter positions.

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Introduction

Recruiting and diversity have become important topics for the fire service in recent years due to a gap between our population and its representation in the fire service (Fox, Hornick, & Hardin, 2006). According to the United States Bureau of Labor statistics, the fire service is one of the least diverse of any protective service occupations. According to information reported, only 3.6 percent of firefighters employed nationally in 2010 were women, with African-Americans, Asians, and Latinos accounting for only 6.4 percent, 0.5 percent, and 9.6 percent respectively (United States Bureau of Labor, 2010). Like many other departments in the United States, the workforce of the Kinston Department of Public Safety (KDPS) Fire Division does not represent the diverse population of the city it serves.

The problem is the KDPS Fire Division has been unsuccessful in attaining a diverse workforce that represents the demographics of the city it serves. A large percentage of the fire division workforce is comprised of Caucasian males with limited representation of minority firefighters and no female firefighters. The purpose of this applied research project (ARP) is to identify recruitment strategies to achieve a more diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division. The descriptive research method will be used to answer the following research questions: a) what internal and external factors have prevented the recruitment of a diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division?, b) What methods have been identified for recruiting a more diverse workforce?, and c) What methods are other fire departments in North Carolina using to recruit a more diverse workforce?

Background and Significance

The KDPS Fire Division protects the citizens of Kinston, North Carolina and covers a response area of 17.7 square miles. The Fire Division operates out of three fire stations that

protect a primarily residential area. The residential occupancies in the city include a considerable number of low income housing units. The city has struggled to attract new industry; however, two large, industrial facilities have been built in the response area within the past two years. The fire division is comprised of 51 career firefighters, staffing five fire suppression units in three fire stations. Services provided by the division include: aircraft rescue firefighting, fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, fire prevention inspection programs, and public education programs. These services are provided to residential, commercial, and industrial occupancies (City of Kinston, n.d.).

According to United States Census Bureau statistics, the town of Kinston, North Carolina has a population of 21,406. The demographics of the population, as reported by the United States Census Bureau, are contained in Table 1 and Table 2 below. The tables contain the estimated breakdown percentage of the total population by ethnicity, race, and gender (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

Table 1

Population by Ethnicity and Race in Kinston, North Carolina

	2010 % of Total
Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino	2.4 %
Non Hispanic or Latino	97.6 %
Reporting One Race	
Caucasian	28.3 %
African-American	68.5 %
Asian	0.58 %
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.22 %
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	0.05 %
Other	1.1 %
Reporting Two or More Races	1.25%

Table 2

Population by Gender in Kinston, North Carolina

Gender	2010 % of Total
Male	45.3 %
Female	54.7 %

According to White and Escobar (2008), it is important that the racial make-up of a fire department is representative of the racial make-up of the community it serves. Having a team of responders that reflects the diversity of the community served provides benefits to the department and the citizens within the community. For the past decade, the KDPS Fire Division has been predominantly comprised of Caucasian, male officers and firefighters with only a small number of women and minorities in the workforce. During that time, women and ethnic minorities accounted for only 15 percent of the workforce. Of that 15 percent, just over 12 percent of the minorities were African-American and less than 3 percent were women. Presently, 87 percent of the KDPS Fire Division workforce is Caucasian, 13 percent is African-American, and there are no female officers or firefighters.

Typically, applicants for the KDPS Fire Division have mirrored the demographics of the workforce with the majority being Caucasian males. Over the past four years, the fire division has received 147 applications for employment. Of these 147 applicants, only 17 were ethnic minorities and 3 were women. The 17 ethnic minority applicants were comprised of 14 African-American males, an African-American female, an American Indian male and an Asian male. The remaining female applicants were Caucasian. In the most recent application process,

none of the applicants were women or ethnic minorities (G. Green, personal communication, October 12, 2011).

The aforementioned statistics demonstrate the underrepresentation of women and ethnic minorities in the KDPS Fire Division. It is also evident that the KDPS Fire Division is far from representative of the demographics of the citizens it serves. To further exacerbate the problem, upcoming retirements could reduce the number of minorities in the KDPS Fire Division creating an even more homogeneous workforce. Current recruitment strategies have failed to attract a diverse pool of applicants and the organization has therefore been unable to achieve a diverse workforce. The collective intelligence of a diverse fire service organization allows for many perspectives and different strengths that aid in effectively meeting organizational goals (McNeil, 2008). It is imperative that the KDPS Fire Division identifies effective strategies to recruit diverse candidates for future employment vacancies. Only through the recruitment of qualified, minority applicants can the KDPS diversify the mostly Caucasian, overwhelmingly male fire division to achieve a workforce that is more representative of the citizens it serves.

This ARP is directly related to the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) Executive Development course, specifically the unit on change management. Within this unit of the course, change, diversity, and equal employment opportunity are discussed including the fact that diversity is “a positive resource” and can “foster effective change” (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2001, p. SM 5-11). By identifying strategies to recruit a more diverse pool of applicants, the KDPS Fire Division can work to develop a plan to create the change needed to achieve a more diverse workforce. Additionally, the topic of this ARP supports two of the five United States Fire Administration (USFA) strategic objectives. Improving diversity supports the goal to reduce risk through prevention and education as well as the goal to improve

the capability of the fire service to respond and recover from all hazards. Through improved diversity an organization becomes more inclusive improving its ability to reach members of the community with safety messages. Diversity can also aid in overcoming cultural barriers to foster partnerships with the community and develop innovative solutions to safety challenges. Additionally, diversity strengthens a fire agency's capability to effectively respond to and mitigate emergency incidents.

Literature Review

As our communities continue to become more diverse, it is important that fire service organizations employ a diverse workforce that is representative of the citizens they serve. A diverse workforce can help to eliminate cultural barriers that can exist in diverse communities and also affords the use of cultural differences to accomplish organizational goals. The demographics of fire service organizations should be such that the citizens they serve feel their culture and beliefs are respected and understood when services are provided. Many fire service organizations struggle with efforts to recruit a workforce that is representative of the citizens they serve (McNeil, 2008).

There are several factors or barriers that prevent the recruitment of a diverse workforce. A 2005 study found that the key factors for underrepresentation of minorities in academic medicine were an unwelcoming work environment and a lack of role models or mentors with whom minorities can identify. Research indicated that with numbers comes comfort and a lack of minorities within a given field can create the perception of a work environment that will be uncomfortable for minority applicants. Likewise, a lack of role models or mentors within a field can hinder minority recruitment efforts due to a lack of personnel with whom minority applicants can identify (Price et al., 2005). A study of diversity in the nursing workforce found similar

results as ethnically diverse nursing personnel reported that they felt “different and isolated from their white peers” and that the environment “was not welcoming to them and fostered isolation” (Noone, 2008, p. 135).

According to Ishaq and Hussain (2001), a key barrier to recruitment within the uniformed services has been the existence of an internal culture that has been resistant to change and consequently has not been conducive to attracting minorities. This unwillingness to change has resulted in these organizations becoming static rather than dynamic, keeping with the belief that change is not essential and the current status quo is satisfactory. As a result, these organizations have failed to see the value of a diverse workforce and, in many cases, refuse to acknowledge racism as a problem within the ranks. In some cases this has resulted in a lack of commitment toward minority recruitment efforts and a failure to monitor statistics on recruits. Roberts, Outley, and Estes (2002) agree that a subconscious desire to maintain the status quo can significantly hinder efforts to recruit qualified minority candidates. They note that personal biases, whether conscious or unconscious, create barriers to the development of pragmatic recruiting strategies.

Entrance exams have also been identified as a barrier to recruitment of minorities in the uniformed services. Occupations in the uniformed services involve work that is both physically and mentally demanding. Due to these demanding job requirements, uniformed service jobs often require written and physical entrance examinations that sometimes present a stumbling block for women and minorities that do express an interest in uniformed positions. In many cases minority applicants to the police and fire service are individuals that have decided not to pursue further education and therefore may score lower on entrance exams. Written entrance exams, if not properly designed, can result in a lower passing rate for minority applicants and/or a lower

ranking in the applicant pool for minority candidates that do pass the exam (Ishaq & Hussain, 2001).

Misguided notions of tradition have been identified as a challenge to diversity in the fire service. Many firefighters view the fire service as a “brotherhood” or “family business” and efforts to recruit women and other minorities into the service have met resistance. Perceptions such as these have, in some instances, discouraged individuals from considering the fire service as a career (Amesqua & Wirth, 2006). Firefighting is often a father-son job in which seasoned firefighters pass on information to their sons concerning entrance testing and job requirements. This information is a major advantage with regards to efforts to join a department. Furthermore, having a member of the family in the fire service provides knowledge about the pros and cons of such a career and valuable information on the role played by the fire service in the community. Due to a lack of diversity in the fire service, this is an advantage that few minorities enjoy (Murphy, 2011). Ishaq and Hussain (2001) cite a lack of awareness about a career in the fire service and a lack of conception about the exact role played by the fire service as “pivotal in the failure to attract ethnic minorities” (p. 221).

Crawford (2004) also identifies the aforementioned problems, but refers to them as regimenting and traditionalism. Regimenting refers to an informal system of transmitting information in which individuals that know someone or have a relative already in the fire department receive the benefit of information when seeking employment in the department. These benefits can include career guidance, study guides for entrance exams, interview tips, or direction for and practice of physical ability testing. He contends that regimenting provides an unfair advantage to individuals with department contacts over individuals without contacts, such as women and ethnic minorities. The process can hinder diversity efforts and perpetuate a

homogeneous workforce that carries prejudices and discriminatory practices from one generation of firefighters to the next. Traditionalism occurs when an organization fails to recognize past and present problems and refuses to make changes to improve the future. Fire departments caught up in traditionalism often refuse to see past faults such as discriminatory hiring practices or perceptions of racism within the department. They fight to keep their traditional workforce intact at the expense of qualified minority applicants.

Employee recruitment efforts can be formal or informal. Formal recruitment activities include appearances at campus fairs; posting on the Internet; placing advertisements; and use of outreach means such as professional conferences, associations, and publications. Informal recruitment operates through social networks, employee referrals and the organization's reputation. Although many of the formal recruitment activities can be effective in recruiting minority candidates, some informal activities have proven less effective. Informal social networks and employee referrals often bring forth candidates from the same ethnic background and sexual orientation. For this reason, these informal recruitment activities often fail to attract diverse candidates in homogeneous organizations (Myers & Dreachslin, 2007). An effective recruitment strategy will reach a wide audience and draw a diverse group of qualified candidates. Organizations must be proactive in their recruitment efforts and utilize a variety of strategies to engage job applicants. Techniques such as posting fliers in the community, attending employment workshops at high schools and colleges, and placing advertisements in newspapers, radio and television are useful for marketing job openings and eliciting applicants. Effective recruitment strategies will include special efforts to target female and minority candidates (White & Escobar, 2008).

Advertising is an important ingredient in a recruitment drive. Media outlets such as community radio shows and television have been identified as fruitful outlets for minority recruitment initiatives. Brochures and posters that target underrepresented groups can also enhance minority recruitment efforts. For example, a 2004 recruitment initiative, by the Oregon Center for Nurses, successfully utilized a poster that portrayed ethnically diverse nurses to attract minorities into the nursing field (Noone, 2008). Myers and Dreachslin (2007) also note the value of advertising diversity in the print media as a means to reach a wide and diverse range of candidates. They argue that imagery showcasing the visible differences throughout an organization's hierarchy can have an extremely positive impact on minority recruitment efforts.

Reaching out to organizations in identified communities can also improve efforts to recruit ethnically diverse candidates. Organizations to target include ethnic churches, ethnic community associations, and schools with a high representation of diverse students. Partnerships and collaboration with community organizations and schools can aid in providing minority role models and help in framing and understanding issues impacting minority candidates. Additionally, programs initiated at the high school level can help to promote the positive aspects of a particular career (Noone, 2008). Fridell (2001) also points out the value of reaching out to ethnic churches and educational institutions with diverse student populations as a strategy to improve minority recruitment efforts.

Research has shown that liaison with minority organizations and a presence at ethnic minority events and educational establishments have been effective strategies for improving minority recruitment within the uniformed services. Liaison with minority organizations represents an important element in a recruitment drive and provides an opportunity for partnership and involvement with minority groups. These organizations can provide advice in

matters related to equal opportunities and race relations as well as clarifications on cultural and religious issues. Ethnic minority organizations can also provide support to arrange events such as recruitment fairs and ethnic minority festivals. Events such as these can attract minorities from desired recruiting age groups and strengthen minority recruitment efforts. These events also provide a great opportunity for the uniformed services to familiarize themselves with different ethnic communities. Additionally, initiatives aimed at schools with a high representation of diverse students have improved diversity recruitment within the uniformed services. Specific recruitment initiatives involved representatives from the services visiting schools with a high concentration of ethnic minorities to publicize and promote career opportunities in the services (Ishaq & Hussain, 2001).

Alignment with trade schools, colleges and universities with a high representation of diverse students is another effective recruitment strategy. Targeted presentations on these campuses can be an effective approach to recruit diverse candidates. These educational institutions often have curriculums aimed at specific career fields and the development of relationships with professors, career counselors, or other on-campus staff can increase the visibility of an agency considerably as a potential employer (Roberts et al., 2002). In 2008, the United States Coast Guard initiated an action plan to improve diversity within the organization. As part of this plan, Flag Officers and Senior Executive Service staff began partnering with Minority, Hispanic, and Tribal Council Institutions to develop ongoing relationships and raise the Coast Guard's visibility with minority groups. Additionally, their College Pre-Commissioning Initiative Program was modified to target institutions with more diverse student populations. The program also included the initiation of a prototype extracurricular program, at a

high school with a significant minority population, in efforts to increase awareness of Coast Guard missions and improve applicant diversity (United States, 2008).

According to Rielage (2011), a successful fire service recruitment program begins with a determination of the demographics of the community. Once you understand the demographics of the community you can reach out to the diverse groups you serve to help market your department with their members. Civic groups, community centers, educational facilities, and houses of worship are all avenues to help with recruitment of a diverse applicant pool. These organizations can provide an avenue for fire departments to invite minority candidates to a fire department open house, drill, or training exercise. Events such as these will provide a way to familiarize candidates with the department, to answer questions they may have, and to forge relationships to improve diversity in the department.

A study by FIRE 20/20, a nonprofit research organization, found that important keystones for recruiting diversity include: a commitment from the top of the organization; a welcoming work environment; a focus on building relationships; and a willingness to try different things. To affect change and achieve a diverse workforce there must be a commitment from the top of the organization. Fire service leaders must actualize a commitment to diversity and take an active role in leading the recruitment effort. An effective recruitment program will require a coordinated effort with support from all levels of the organization. If a fire department is going to attract and retain diverse firefighters, the organization's environment must be welcoming for everyone. A welcoming environment goes beyond the limits of tolerance and defense mechanisms focusing on building relationships to create a team-oriented culture. Relationships are an important part of an effective recruitment strategy. Relationships with community organizations create partnerships that add value to recruitment efforts and increase the visibility

of a department's diversity initiative. Fire service leaders must think outside the box and be willing to try different things to achieve a diverse workforce. A successful recruitment strategy will employ a variety of methods to increase the diversity of applicants (Sagen, 2008).

A 2006 study, funded by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), surveyed 80 fire departments across the United States to identify recruitment methods to improve diversity in the fire service. The study revealed that fire departments with the highest levels of diversity used a combination of recruitment methods to improve the diversity of the applicant pool. One of the more successful departments utilized over 20 different methods of recruiting. Several common recruiting strategies were utilized by departments that had an excellent representation of women and minorities within their workforce. These strategies included: formal advertising targeting women and minorities; relationships with community groups; participation in community events at churches and schools; use of minority recruiters; cadet programs; and candidate preparation/assistance programs (Fox et al., 2006).

The inability of some female candidates to pass physical ability tests has hampered efforts to recruit qualified females in the fire service. Some fire departments have implemented candidate preparation programs to assist with this problem. One Kansas City department has developed a pre-cadet academy in which recruits only get didactic training for an eight week period. During this period they are given physical fitness training time each day to prepare for the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). The pre-cadet academy helps to prepare candidates for the physical requirements of the CPAT and also enables female candidates to bond with classmates and prove that they have the physical ability to be a firefighter (Sagen, 2008). Agencies in Vermont implemented a similar program to improve efforts to recruit female candidates. The nine-week pre-academy includes three key components: physical conditioning

geared toward the physical exam; women's resources and career planning; and training in technical topics specific to the profession. The camaraderie and support that students experience in the program helps to boost their sense of self-confidence and exposes female candidates to the realities of the profession (Tuomey & Jolly, 2009).

The New York Fire Department (FDNY) implemented various changes in 2007 to recruit a more diverse group of applicants. Due to problems that female applicants were having with the FDNY physical entrance test, the department changed its test from one that emphasized brute strength to one focused on endurance and consisting of a timed series of job specific tasks. The department also revised its written entrance exam after a lawsuit was filed alleging that the previous test had a disparate impact on minorities. Eligibility requirements for the entrance exam were also reduced. Previously, applicants needed 30 college credits to apply; however, now applicants are only required to have 15 college credits or a high school diploma with six months of work or military experience. Additionally, the department began a targeted advertising campaign and increased outreach events. Following the changes, a third of the applicants whose scores were high enough on the 2007 test to make hiring likely were minorities and the number of women that passed increased by 50 percent (Murphy, 2011).

In summary, this literature review revealed several barriers to the recruitment of a diverse workforce. An unwelcoming work environment, a refusal to acknowledge racism within an organization, and a lack of minority role models were key barriers. For the fire service, in particular, an internal culture resistant to change, regimenting, and a lack of awareness about a career in the fire service were identified as barriers. The literature indicated that effective strategies for improving diversity involve the utilization of multiple recruitment methods. Strategies such as targeted advertising and outreach programs with ethnic churches, schools, and

community groups have been effective at improving the diversity of applicants. In addition to the aforementioned methods, fire service agencies have utilized minority recruiters, cadet programs and candidate preparation/assistance programs to improve the diversity of applicants and achieve a more diverse workforce. Information in this literature review has provided the author with a better understanding of diversity recruitment barriers and strategies to overcome these barriers. The information influenced this ARP by providing direction for additional research to assist in the development of recommendations to improve the diversity of the KDPS Fire Division.

Procedures

The descriptive research method was used within this ARP to answer the following research questions: a) what internal and external factors have prevented the recruitment of a diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division?, b) What methods have been identified for recruiting a more diverse workforce?, and c) What methods are other fire departments in North Carolina using to recruit a more diverse workforce? Research began with a review of current literature related to recruitment and diversity. The literature review provided insight and direction for additional research.

An interview and a questionnaire were utilized to collect information on the internal and external factors that have prevented the recruitment of a diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division. An interview was conducted with Gary Green. Mr. Green is the Assistant Director of Human Resources for the City of Kinston. He was chosen due to his experience and knowledge of human resource management in both the private and public sector as well as his knowledge of the employment recruitment process within the city. The interview consisted of five questions (Appendix A) designed to gain insight on internal and external barriers to diversity that exist in the KDPS Fire Division and to identify changes or improvements that could increase the

diversity of applicants. The interview was conducted on November 4, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. Responses to interview questions were recorded with a digital recording device and then transcribed. A copy of the transcribed responses was then given to the interviewee for review and to allow an opportunity to make any desired additions or corrections to responses.

A questionnaire was also developed (Appendix B) consisting of seven questions designed to obtain feedback from KDPS Fire Division personnel on current recruitment methods and potential barriers to the recruitment of a diverse applicant pool. Questions 1 and 2 were designed to obtain the respondents' opinion of the adequacy of recruitment methods currently utilized by the fire division. Questions 3 and 4 were designed to elicit feedback on internal and external factors that are preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the KDPS Fire Division. Question 5 was designed to obtain the respondents' opinion on the value of a candidate preparation program as a strategy to increase the diversity of KDPS Fire Division candidates. Questions 6 and 7 were designed to elicit feedback on the value of the KDPS Explorer program, as a method to improve the diversity of applicants, and potential changes that could improve the program. Since the KDPS Fire Division is only comprised of 51 personnel, sampling was not performed and the questionnaire was distributed to all fire division personnel. To accomplish questionnaire distribution, the Battalion Commander for each shift was utilized to distribute the questionnaire to personnel on each shift.

An interview was also utilized to collect information on methods that have been identified to recruit a more diverse workforce. An interview was conducted with Richy Huneycutt. Ms. Huneycutt is the Director of Marketing and Recruiting for Lenoir Community College. She was chosen due to her knowledge and experience with regard to marketing and personnel recruitment. The interview consisted of five questions (Appendix C) designed to gain

insight on advertising, marketing, and recruitment methods that could improve workforce diversity. The interview was conducted on November 9, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. Responses to interview questions were recorded with a digital recording device and then transcribed. A copy of the transcribed responses was then given to the interviewee for review and to allow an opportunity to make any desired additions or corrections to responses.

To determine methods that other fire departments in North Carolina are using to recruit a more diverse workforce, a second questionnaire (Appendix D) was developed for distribution to other North Carolina fire departments. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions designed to elicit feedback on the demographics of the department, recruitment methods the department utilized, and methods that were the most successful at recruiting a diverse applicant pool. Questions 1 and 2 were designed to obtain the respondents' opinion on the success of current recruitment methods, with regard to the organization's level of diversity. Questions 3-5 were designed to obtain the size of the department and the percentage of staff that were women and ethnic minorities. Questions 6 and 7 were designed to obtain the number of personnel that had been hired in the past five years as well as the percentage of new hires that were women and ethnic minorities. Questions 8 and 9 were designed to obtain feedback on the recruitment methods or strategies that the department utilized to obtain a diverse applicant pool. Question 10 was designed to obtain the respondents' opinion regarding the three most successful recruitment methods utilized to obtain a diverse workforce.

To determine the population for the questionnaire, a directory of North Carolina fire departments was retrieved from the Internet. Since the KDPS is a career department, only North Carolina fire departments that were career or mostly career were included in the population. The directory was reviewed and a list of the departments that were categorized as career or mostly

career was generated including the mailing address for each department. The list included 80 fire service agencies (Fire Department Directory, 2010). To select a sample from the 80 fire service agencies, the sample size calculator program by Raosoft, Inc. was utilized. This program is a free computer software program available on the Internet. According to the program, the typical margin of error utilized is 5 to 10 percent and the typical confidence level utilized is 90 to 95 percent. The program also recommended using a 50 percent response distribution rate in order to get the largest sample size. Utilizing this program, the appropriate sample size was determined based on a 10 percent margin of error, 90 percent confidence level, population size of 80, and a 50 percent response distribution rate. The recommended sample size was 37 (Raosoft, Inc., 2004).

Systematic sampling was utilized to select the sample. A systematic sampling procedure involves the selection of every n^{th} case in a list. The process involves dividing the total number in the population by the sample number to determine the interval at which the sample is selected from the list. For an uneven interval number, the nearest whole number is selected. The critical step in this procedure is to select the first case randomly. To accomplish this one of the first few elements (names, groups, etc.) in the list is selected by randomly drawing it from a container or some other random selection method. Once the first element is randomly selected then each n^{th} element ($n = \text{interval}$) thereafter is selected (Bouma & Ling, 2004). The total population of 80 fire service agencies was divided by the sample size of 37 which resulted in an interval of 2.16 or 2 when rounded to the nearest whole number. The first three fire agencies on the list were written on small pieces of paper and placed into a container. One of the pieces of paper was then randomly drawn out of the container to determine the first fire agency in the sample. Starting with this fire agency, every other fire agency in the list was selected until the sample of 37 fire

agencies was complete. A list of the fire agencies in the sample is included in Appendix E. The questionnaire was then mailed to each of the fire agencies in the sample along with a brief explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire and a self-addressed envelope to return the questionnaire after completion.

Several limitations exist with this research project. First, it is assumed that questionnaire respondents understand diversity and potential recruitment issues related to ethnicity and gender. Additionally, only two professionals were interviewed and the population for the questionnaires was limited to KDPS personnel and other career or mostly career fire departments in North Carolina.

Results

Research conducted through an interview (Appendix A) and questionnaire (Appendix B) provided insight on internal and external factors that are preventing the recruitment of a diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division. When inquiring about internal factors that are preventing the recruitment of a diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division, G. Green (personal communication, November 4, 2011) noted that targeted advertising is not utilized for City of Kinston employment vacancies, including fire division job openings. Positions are advertised through an internal job list and on the city's website. Additionally, positions are advertised in the local newspaper and through local agencies such as the Employment Security Commission. He also suggests that internal factors such as the entry level salary for fire division positions and the physical nature of the job could be affecting the number of minority applicants. He suggests that external factors affecting the diversity of fire division applicants include: social subsidies or programs that provide assistance and encourage some minorities in the community not to seek employment; a push toward technical jobs rather than jobs requiring intense physical labor; and

competition for qualified applicants from surrounding industries that offer more desirable or attractive positions. He notes that advertising in diverse areas of the community and improved marketing of fire division positions could aid in improving the diversity of fire division applicants.

Responses from a questionnaire (Appendix B) distributed to KDPS Fire Division personnel also identified several internal and external factors preventing the recruitment of a diverse workforce in the KDPS Fire Division. The survey was completed and returned by 39 members of the fire division, representing a 78 percent response rate. Fifty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they felt that the current recruitment methods used by the KDPS Fire Division do not adequately target women and ethnic minorities. Sixty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they felt that the KDPS Fire Division does not commit the necessary resources for personnel recruitment. Respondents were asked to identify internal factors that they felt are preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the fire division. Respondents were given a list of factors and asked to mark all that were applicable. Respondents were also given space to indicate other factors not included on the list. Table 3 contains their responses.

The highest percentage of respondents, 38.5 percent, identified the current lack of diversity in the fire division as an internal factor preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities. Additionally, 23.1 percent of respondents felt that a lack of minority role models in the fire division was an internal recruitment barrier. An unwelcoming work environment and an internal culture resistant to change were each identified by 17.9 percent of respondents as an internal factor affecting minority recruitment. Only 7.7 percent of respondents felt that perceptions of racism or discrimination was an internal issue in the division and 28.2 percent of

respondents felt that there were no internal factors preventing the recruitment of minorities. A lack of community outreach and lower salaries compared to other fire departments were other internal factors identified by respondents.

Table 3

Internal Factors Preventing the Recruitment of Women and Ethnic Minorities in the KDPS Fire Division

Internal Factors	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Unwelcoming work environment	7	17.9%
The current lack of diversity in the division	15	38.5%
Perceptions of racism/discrimination	3	7.7%
Lack of minority role models in the division	9	23.1%
An internal culture resistant to change	7	17.9%
None	11	28.2%
Other		
Lack of community outreach	3	7.7%
Low salary compared to other fire departments	3	7.7%
Dangerous job conditions	1	2.6%
Lack of interest in a fire service career	1	2.6%
Lack of recruiting in target rich environments	1	2.6%
Total "Other" Responses	9	23.1%

Note: Some respondents chose multiple factors.

Respondents were also asked to identify external factors that they felt are preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the KDPS Fire Division. Respondents were given a list of factors and asked to mark all that were applicable. Respondents were also given space to indicate other factors not included on the list. Table 4 contains their responses. The highest percentage of respondents, 48.7 percent, identified a lack of awareness about a career in the fire service as an external factor preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the KDPS Fire Division. Additionally, 35.9 percent of respondents felt that competition for qualified minority candidates from surrounding fire agencies with higher salaries was an external recruitment barrier. Competition for qualified minority applicants from other local industries was

identified as an external factor by 20.5 percent of respondents. Only 12.8 percent of respondents felt that there were no external factors preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the fire division.

Table 4

External Factors Preventing the Recruitment of Women and Ethnic Minorities in the KDPS Fire Division

External Factors	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Competition for qualified minority candidates from other local industries	8	20.5%
Competition for qualified minority candidates from surrounding fire agencies with higher salaries	14	35.9%
Lack of awareness about a career in the fire service	19	48.7%
None	5	12.8%
Other		
Background issues of some minority applicants	1	2.6%
Not interested in a fire service career	1	2.6%
Total "Other" Responses	2	5.1%

Note: Some respondents chose multiple factors.

In addition to internal and external factors affecting the recruitment of women and minorities, respondents were asked to provide input on the value of candidate preparation/assistance programs and cadet explorer programs. Sixty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they felt a candidate preparation/assistance program could improve the diversity of KDPS Fire Division applicants. When asked about the KDPS Explorer Program, 79.5 percent of respondents indicated that they felt that the program could positively impact the recruitment of minorities. Additionally, 82 percent of respondents felt that changes to the current explorer program could improve its ability to increase the diversity of fire division applicants. Table 5 contains respondents' responses with regard to changes that could improve the KDPS Explorer Program and its ability to impact the recruitment of minorities. The highest percentage of respondents, 64.1 percent, indicated that greater involvement at local high schools was a key

area to improve the current explorer program. Additionally, 43.6 percent of respondents felt that the content of the program should be changed. Incorporation of special activities and events to improve participation was also identified as an area for improvement by one-third of respondents, while 17.9 percent of respondents felt that no changes were needed.

Table 5

Changes that Could Improve the KDPS Explorer Program and Its Ability to Improve the Diversity of KDPS Fire Division Applicants

Changes Needed	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
More involvement at local high schools promoting the program and fire division	25	64.1%
Changes to the content of the program/renewed focus	17	43.6%
Incorporation of special events/activities to increase participation	13	33.3%
None	7	17.9%
Other		
Increased involvement in the program by minority members of the fire division	1	2.6%
Total "Other" Responses	1	2.6%

Note: Some respondents chose multiple factors.

Research conducted through an interview (Appendix C) provided insight on methods that have been identified for recruiting a more diverse workforce. When inquiring about methods to recruit a more diverse workforce, R. Huneycutt (personal communication, November 9, 2011) suggests that targeted advertisement through a variety of methods and focused recruiting in high schools and community colleges are key methods. She notes that targeted advertising demonstrating diversity will attract minority groups and demonstrate a welcoming environment. Print advertisements in publications geared toward minority groups and brochures that showcase diversity in the organization work well. She also suggests that radio advertisements, with stations in the area that have a diverse audience, can aid in recruiting minority candidates. She notes that radio advertisements work better than television advertisements as people are typically in their

cars more than they are in front of the television. The use of smart phone advertisements and passing out computer flash drives at recruitment events can also be effective. The organization's logo can be printed on the flash drives and information about the organization can be placed on the drives providing an inexpensive way to get information out about opportunities in the organization. She also notes the recent increase in the use of smart phone advertising by many organizations. This type of advertising is being used more by employers due to the fact that most everyone today, or at least some member of their family, has a smart phone.

Ms. Huneycutt suggests that focused recruiting at high schools and community colleges with a diverse student population can aid in recruiting a more diverse workforce. Focused recruitment programs provide an opportunity to partner with the schools to bring members of the organization in to mentor and market the organization. She notes that these programs can work well for public sector organizations such as fire and police agencies. Through mentoring programs you get an opportunity to interact with students one on one, much like the military does, and market what the fire department has to offer. This one on one interaction can make a huge difference in minority recruitment efforts (R. Huneycutt, personal communication, November 9, 2011).

A questionnaire (Appendix D) was used to research the methods that other fire departments in North Carolina are using to recruit a more diverse workforce. The questionnaire also elicited information on the size of the departments, the demographics of the departments, and the effectiveness of current recruitment methods with regard to desired diversity levels. The questionnaire was distributed to 37 fire departments and 21 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 56.8 percent response rate. Only 23.8 percent of respondents indicated that they felt that recruitment methods utilized by their department were effectively achieving the level of

diversity desired. Additionally, 85.7 percent of respondents indicated that the demographics of their department were not representative of the community served. The size of responding departments varied with regard to total personnel employed. Respondents were categorized in groups and this data is included in Table 6. Both small and large career and mostly career fire departments were represented with the lowest number of respondents, 14.2 percent, in the 51 to 75 category.

Table 6

Size of Responding North Carolina Fire Departments

Number of Personnel	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Less than 50	6	28.6%
51 to 75	3	14.2%
76 to 100	6	28.6%
Greater than 100	6	28.6%
Total	21	100%

Data on the level of diversity of responding departments is included in Table 7. The highest percentage of respondents, 42.8 percent, indicated that less than five percent of personnel employed by their department were women. Only 4.8 percent of respondents indicated that women accounted for greater than 10 percent of department personnel. Additionally, 23.8 percent of respondents' fire departments had no female personnel. The highest number of respondents, 38.1 percent, also indicated that ethnic minorities accounted for less than five percent of personnel within their department. However, 19 percent of respondents indicated that greater than 20 percent of department personnel were ethnic minorities. Only 4.8 percent of respondents indicated that no personnel within their fire department were ethnic minorities.

Table 7

Percentage of Female and Ethnic Minority Personnel in Responding North Carolina Fire Departments

Percentage of Minority Personnel	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Percentage of Total Personnel – Women		
0	5	23.8%
Less than 5%	9	42.8%
5 to 10%	6	28.6%
Greater than 10%	1	4.8%
Total	21	100%
Percentage of Total Personnel - Ethnic Minorities		
0	1	4.8%
Less than 5%	8	38.1%
5 to 10%	5	23.8%
11 to 20%	3	14.3%
Greater than 20%	4	19%
Total	21	100%

Data on the diversity of personnel hired by responding departments, in the past five years, is included in Table 8. Some respondents were very specific indicating the total number of women and the total number of ethnic minorities hired separately. Other respondents, however, only indicated a total number of minority candidates hired and did not distinguish between the two groups. Therefore, data in the table was combined and does not distinguish between women and ethnic minorities. The highest percentage of respondents, 42.8 percent, indicated that 11 to 25 percent of total personnel hired in the past five years were women or ethnic minorities. Additionally, 19 percent of respondents indicated that greater than 40 percent of personnel that had been hired in the past five years were women or ethnic minorities. Only 9.6 percent of respondents indicated that none of the candidates that had been hired in the past five years were minorities.

Table 8

Minorities Hired in the Past Five Years by Responding North Carolina Fire Departments

Percentage of Total Personnel Hired - Minorities	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
0	2	9.6%
1 to 10%	3	14.3%
11 to 25%	9	42.8%
26 to 40%	3	14.3%
Greater than 40%	4	19%
Total	21	100%

Respondents were asked about types of assistance that are provided to applicants, with regard to written or physical entrance exams. Data from this portion of the questionnaire is included in Table 9. The highest percentage of respondents, 42.9 percent, indicated that they provide practice sessions for the physical abilities entrance test. Additionally, 19 percent of respondents indicated that they provide applicants a written study guide. One-third of the respondents indicated that they did not provide applicants with any type of assistance for written or physical exams. Online practice tests, handouts, videos of the physical abilities test, and a career readiness certification exam were also provided by some responding departments to assist applicants. Respondents that hired the largest percentage of minorities in the past five years all indicated that they provide applicants some type of assistance for entrance exams. Many provided more than one type of assistance which included some form of assistance for the physical abilities test through either a video, written handout, or practice sessions for the entrance test.

Table 9

Assistance Provided to Applicants by Responding North Carolina Fire Departments

Assistance Provided for Written/Physical Exams	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Written study guide	4	19%
Practice sessions for physical ability tests	9	42.9%
Pre-cadet preparation program	1	4.7%
None	7	33.3%
Other		
Handout describing physical ability test	2	9.6%
Career readiness certification exam	1	4.7%
Online practice test	1	4.7%
Video of physical ability test	1	4.7%
Total "Other" Responses	5	23.8%

Note: Some respondents chose multiple types of assistance.

Respondents were asked to indicate the methods they utilized to aid in the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities. Respondents were given a list of recruitment methods and asked to mark all that were applicable. Respondents were also given space to indicate other methods not included on the list. Table 10 contains their responses. Outreach to ethnic minority churches and community organizations along with recruitment initiatives at colleges and universities with a diverse student population were utilized by the highest percentage of respondents. Each of these methods was used by 61.9 percent of respondents. Additionally, 52.4 percent of respondents indicated that they utilized recruitment initiatives at high schools with a diverse student population. Print materials featuring minority personnel, newspaper advertisements, and minority recruiters were each utilized by 47.6 percent of the respondents. The Internet, recruitment initiatives at ethnic minority events, and explorer/cadet programs were also each utilized by more than one-third of respondents. No specific efforts were utilized by 23.8 percent of respondents. Respondents that hired the largest percentage of minorities in the past five years all utilized multiple recruitment methods, some utilizing as many as nine different methods.

Table 10

Methods Used to Aid in Recruiting Women and Ethnic Minorities by Responding North Carolina Fire Departments

Recruitment Methods	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Print materials (brochures/posters) featuring minority personnel	10	47.6%
Videos featuring minority personnel	3	14.3%
Radio advertisements	5	23.8%
Television advertisements	1	4.8%
Newspaper advertisements	10	47.6%
Internet	9	42.9%
Outreach to ethnic minority churches and community organizations	13	61.9%
Recruitment initiatives at ethnic minority events	8	38%
Recruitment initiatives at high schools with a diverse student population	11	52.4%
Recruitment initiatives at colleges and universities with a diverse student population	13	61.9%
Use of minority recruiters	10	47.6%
Explorer/cadet programs	8	38%
No specific efforts	5	23.8%
Other		
Word of mouth	2	9.5%
Recruitment initiatives aimed at women athletes in university sports programs	1	4.8%
Middle school fire camp after school program	1	4.8%
Youth leadership academy	1	4.8%
Total "Other" Responses	5	23.8%

Note: Some respondents chose methods.

In the final question respondents were asked to list the three recruitment methods they utilized that were the most successful in recruiting women and ethnic minorities. Only 57.1 percent of respondents answered this question and some did not list three methods. Table 11 contains the respondents' responses. Community outreach at ethnic churches and organizations was indicated as one of the three most successful methods by 58.3 percent of respondents. Additionally, 50 percent of the respondents included recruitment initiatives at schools as one of

the most successful methods. Use of minority recruiters was indicated as one of the most successful methods by 25 percent of respondents.

Table 11

Most Successful Minority Recruitment Methods Utilized by Responding North Carolina Fire Departments

Recruitment Method	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Community outreach to ethnic churches and organizations	7	58.3%
Recruitment initiatives at high schools/colleges	6	25%
Use of minority recruiters	3	37.5%
Newspaper advertisements	2	16.6%
Word of mouth	2	16.6%
Radio advertisements	2	16.6%
Contact with ethnic community leaders	2	16.6%
Minority employees reaching out	2	16.6%
Internet	1	8.3%
Explorer program	1	8.3%
Print materials	1	8.3%

Discussion/Implications

Many fire service organizations struggle with efforts to recruit a diverse workforce that is representative of the citizens they serve (McNeil, 2008). Research conducted during this ARP demonstrates that this is the case with many North Carolina fire departments. A large percentage of the North Carolina fire departments responding to the questionnaire utilized in this ARP indicated that recruitment methods they utilized were not effectively achieving the level of diversity desired. Additionally, the majority of respondents indicated that the demographics of their department were not representative of the community they served. It is obvious that the KDPS Fire Division is not the only fire organization that is having problems recruiting a diverse workforce. One of the respondents commented at the end of the questionnaire that the most qualified applicants they receive continue to be young, Caucasian males. The KDPS Fire

Division has experienced a similar trend and must improve in its recruitment efforts targeting women and ethnic minority candidates for open positions. Targeted advertising is not currently utilized for City of Kinston employment vacancies, including fire division job openings (G. Green, personal communication, November 4, 2011). Improvements are needed to increase the number of minority candidates that are applying for fire division vacancies. Many of the fire division personnel agree that improvement is needed in the area of personnel recruitment. Over one-half of KDPS questionnaire respondents indicated that they felt that the current recruitment methods used by the fire division do not adequately target women and ethnic minorities. Additionally, the majority of the respondents indicated that they felt that the KDPS Fire Division does not commit the necessary resources for personnel recruitment.

Minority recruitment is affected by several internal and external factors. According to Price et al. (2005) an unwelcoming work environment and a lack of minority role models within an organization can affect minority recruitment. A lack of minorities within a workforce can create the perception of a work environment that will be uncomfortable for minority applicants and without minority role models, minority applicants do not have personnel with whom they can relate. Noone (2008) also notes that these issues can create an environment where minorities feel different and isolated. Research for this ARP revealed similar findings as the highest percentage of KDPS questionnaire respondents identified the current lack of diversity in the fire division as an internal factor preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities. Additionally, research indicated that the lack of minority role models in the fire division and an unwelcoming work environment were seen as barriers to minority recruitment by KDPS personnel. The KDPS Fire Division, like other fire agencies, is comprised of mostly Caucasian, male employees. Only through the recruitment and hiring of more minority personnel can the

KDPS Fire Division improve its level of diversity, thus creating a more welcoming environment for minority applicants. Likewise, minority employees within the fire division must be encouraged to participate in mentoring activities. Minorities within the division must also be utilized in recruitment efforts to market the organization to minority candidates.

Traditionalism within the fire service and an internal culture resistant to change has also been documented as a barrier to minority recruitment (Ishaq & Hussain, 2001; Amesqua & Wirth, 2006; Crawford, 2004). An unwillingness to change has, in some cases, resulted in the belief that the current status quo is satisfactory. As a result, some fire organizations have failed to see the value of a diverse workforce and have refused to acknowledge racism as a problem within the ranks. This can result in a lack of commitment toward minority recruitment efforts. This ARP revealed that only a small percentage of KDPS personnel feel that racism or discrimination is an issue in the fire division. However, an internal culture resistant to change was perceived as a barrier by many of the questionnaire respondents. It is important that the KDPS does not settle for the status quo of mostly Caucasian, male applicants and makes changes to increase the number of female and ethnic minority candidates applying for open positions.

A lack of awareness about a career in the fire service or the role played by the fire service in the community has also been identified as a barrier to minority recruitment (Ishaq & Hussain, 2001; Murphy, 2011). Research during this ARP also identified this as an external factor preventing the recruitment of minorities. Nearly one-half of KDPS questionnaire respondents indicated that a lack of awareness about a career in the fire service was a recruitment barrier for the KDPS Fire Division. Research also revealed other barriers that were not identified during the literature review. For example, KDPS personnel indicated that a lack of community outreach, competition for qualified minority candidates from other local industries, and competition for

qualified minority candidates from surrounding fire agencies with higher salaries were each barriers to the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities within the fire division. It is important to note that the starting salary for a firefighter in the KDPS Fire Division is several thousand dollars lower than other surrounding municipal fire departments as well as some entry level positions within new industries in the area. G. Green (personal communication, November 4, 2011) also noted that competition from surrounding industries with more attractive and less physically demanding positions was a factor affecting the recruitment of minorities in the KDPS Fire Division. He also noted that some governmental subsidies or programs encourage minority candidates in the area not to seek employment. Although this may be true, this is an external factor that cannot be controlled by the KDPS. Additionally, due to the current state of the economy and downturns in city revenues only so much can be done with regard to the entry level firefighter salary.

Effective recruitment efforts will utilize a variety of strategies including special efforts to target female and minority candidates (White & Escobar, 2008; Sagen, 2008). Previous research has shown that targeted advertising through radio, television, and print materials, such as brochures and posters, can positively impact minority recruitment efforts. Print materials that showcase diversity within the organization and its hierarchy have the greatest impact (Myers & Dreachslin, 2007; White & Escobar, 2008; Noone, 2008). Recruitment initiatives involving community outreach through ethnic churches, ethnic community organizations, and educational institutions with a diverse student population have also proven effective at recruiting diverse candidates. Such initiatives provide an opportunity for partnership and involvement with minority groups in the community (Fridell, 2001; Noone, 2008; Rielage, 2011). Recruiting at high schools and colleges with a high representation of diverse students has been an effective

strategy for the uniformed services. Recruitment events at schools have provided a means to publicize and promote career opportunities in the services (Ishaq & Hussain, 2001; Roberts et al., 2002; United States, 2008).

Research for this ARP identified recruitment methods consistent with previous research. R. Huneycutt (personal communication, November 9, 2011) also identified targeted advertising through a variety of methods and focused recruiting in high schools and community colleges as key recruitment methods for improving the diversity of applicants. While she did not discuss community outreach through churches and community organizations, she discussed how focused recruitment programs at high schools and colleges work well for public sector organizations providing an opportunity to bring members of the organization in to mentor and market career opportunities within the organization. Additionally, she identified the use of computer flash drives and smart phone advertisements as effective ways to market an organization and recruit more diverse applicants. Each of these methods provides a cost effective way to reach and attract a more diverse group of applicants.

Previous research indicates that fire departments with the highest levels of diversity use a combination of recruitment methods to improve diversity including: formal advertising targeting women and minorities; relationships with community groups; participation in community events at churches and schools; use of minority recruiters; cadet programs; and candidate preparation/assistance programs (Fox et al., 2006). In addition to targeted advertising and increased community outreach events, FDNY made changes to its physical entrance test and reduced eligibility requirements for the written entrance exam in efforts to improve the diversity of recruits (Murphy, 2011).

Research for this ARP revealed that North Carolina fire departments are using recruitment tactics similar to those identified in previous research. Outreach to ethnic churches and community organizations along with recruitment initiatives at colleges and universities with a diverse student population were utilized by the highest percentage of responding North Carolina fire departments. A large percentage of the departments also utilized minority recruiters as well as targeted advertising, including print and media. Over one-half of the departments indicated that they utilized recruitment initiatives at high schools with a diverse student population and explorer/cadet programs were utilized by more than one-third of the departments. The KDPS currently has an explorer program in place. When asked about the program, a large percentage of KDPS Fire Division respondents felt that the program could positively impact the diversity of fire division applicants if changes to the program were made to improve participation.

Responding North Carolina fire departments that hired the largest percentage of minorities in the past five years all utilized multiple recruitment methods and indicated that they provide applicants some type of assistance for entrance exams. Many provided more than one type of assistance which included some form of assistance for the physical abilities test. When asked about the value of a candidate assistance program, the majority of the KDPS respondents indicated that they felt a candidate preparation/assistance program could improve the diversity of KDPS Fire Division applicants. Although the KDPS Fire Division does not have a written entrance exam, a physical entrance and agility test is utilized by the department. The division's physical entrance test is currently under revision. The new physical abilities test will be a modified version of the nationally validated Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT).

The literature review and research conducted in this ARP show that simply placing employment ads in the local news paper and on an organization's website are not enough to recruit a diverse pool of applicants. A successful recruitment program will employ a variety of strategies to market the organization and attract a diverse pool of candidates for open positions. Many fire and rescue agencies, like the KDPS Fire Division, continue to struggle with diversity. Research in this ARP has shown that targeted advertising and outreach programs focused in target rich environments can help to improve the diversity of job candidates.

Recommendations

The results of this ARP have identified a variety of effective recruitment strategies for improving the diversity of a workforce. The KDPS Fire Division should consider the following recommendations for improving employee recruitment and the diversity of applicants. First, it is recommended that the KDPS Fire Division use a variety of recruitment strategies including special efforts to target female and minority candidates. It is imperative that appropriate resources to support these strategies are available and included in the department's operating budget.

It is recommended that the fire division coordinate with the City of Kinston Human Resources Department to implement a targeted advertising campaign. Advertising mediums should include radio, television, and print materials. Radio and television stations with a diverse audience should be an area of focus. Print materials, such as posters and brochures, should showcase diversity within the fire division and its hierarchy.

Additionally, it is recommended that the KDPS Fire Division implement a community outreach program to aid with firefighter recruitment. The program should focus on partnering with ethnic churches and community organizations and their leaders to raise the fire division's

visibility with minority groups in the community. Outreach initiatives should include a presence at events in diverse areas of the community to interact with minority groups and to promote the fire division.

It is recommended that the KDPS Fire Division begin recruitment initiatives at local high schools, colleges, and universities with a diverse student population. Efforts should be made to develop an ongoing relationship with the campus staff to develop targeted presentations to promote an awareness of fire service careers. The use of minority personnel as recruiters should be strongly considered for these recruitment initiatives. Additionally, computer flash drives containing the fire division logo and information about the division should be considered as a recruitment aid to disseminate to students.

It is recommended that the KDPS Explorer Program be continued as a recruitment strategy. Additionally, it is recommended that the content of the explorer program be changed incorporating greater involvement at local high schools along with special activities and events to improve participation.

It is recommended that the KDPS Training Division develop a candidate preparation/assistance program to aid firefighter recruit candidates with the physical entrance exam. The program should, at a minimum, include an overview of the hiring process as well as handouts and practice sessions for the entrance test.

Lastly, it is recommended that the KDPS Fire Division conduct a pay study and consider increasing the entry level salary for firefighter positions when economic conditions improve and the budget permits. Increasing the salary should improve the fire division's ability to compete with surrounding fire agencies and other industries for qualified minority candidates.

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Appendix A

Interview Responses

Interviewee: Gary Green, City of Kinston Assistant Director of Human Resources

Date of Interview: November 4, 2011

1. What internal factors do you feel are preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the KDPS Fire Division?

Answer: I do not see any internal issues, with regard to the Human Resources Department, that would discourage or limit the number of minority applicants. We make an effort to advertise and make job vacancies known. We do not target any specific group with regards to advertising. Applications are filled out for specific jobs and we do not steer applicants toward any specific department. The position desired is indicated on the job application. Applicants must meet the minimum job requirements for the position and completely fill out the application. For example, a failure to sign the release for a background check will result in an application being held. If this occurs, we make every effort to contact the applicant to resolve the issue; however, the application cannot be processed until such an issue is resolved.

Follow-up Question: Do you see the starting salary, for the fire division, as an internal factor affecting minority recruitment?

Answer: When you look at it like that I would say yes, but I would consider that more of an environmental than internal factor. The City of Kinston attempts to make salaries competitive, but can only afford to set the pay at a certain level. What is interesting is that the rate of unemployment is high, but we are not getting qualified applicants. Perhaps it is a marketing issue and we are not getting the word out concerning what we have to offer.

Maybe we are not making our jobs as attractive as jobs from other employers seeking qualified minority applicants.

2. What external factors do you feel are preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the KDPS Fire Division?

Answer: In some cases I think that social subsidies or programs may be providing assistance that encourages individuals not to apply. Also, we are in a technological age when there is a push toward technical jobs where less physical labor is required.

Firefighting is physical and often labor intensive. Another issue is that many individuals are looking to come into an organization in a supervisory level position and this is difficult in fire service jobs. Fire division jobs are typically entry level positions. To be a supervisor in the fire division requires experience that must be gained by working your way through the ranks of the organization. Additionally, you have competition for qualified applicants from surrounding industries that offer more desirable or attractive positions.

3. What methods are currently used to advertise open positions within the KDPS Fire Division?

Answer: All available jobs are posted on the Internet utilizing the City of Kinston website. A list of available jobs is sent out to all city departments every week. This job listing is also sent to external employment agencies in the community such as the Employment Security Commission. Local job fairs are utilized and advertisements are placed in the local newspaper. Certain technical and management positions are also advertised in professional magazines.

4. What changes or improvements do you feel could increase the diversity of KDPS Fire Division applicants?

Answer: We need to be more competitive and figure out how to make individuals consider becoming a firefighter. To improve we need to find a way to highlight the benefits of the job and do a better job of marketing firefighter positions.

5. Please feel free to add any additional comments concerning diversity and recruitment.

Answer: We as a city promote equal employment. Are there methods out there to improve the recruitment of certain demographics? I am sure there are. Do we need to do more advertising in diverse areas of the community? I don't know, maybe. I think that it is important to get information on available jobs out and we try to do that as best we can with the resources we have available.

Appendix B

EFO Questionnaire - Recruitment and Diversity in the KDPS Fire Division

Please check the appropriate box or write in your response.

1. Do you feel that the current recruitment methods used by the KDPS Fire Division adequately target women and ethnic minorities?

Yes

No

2. Do you feel that the KDPS Fire Division commits the necessary resources for personnel recruitment?

Yes

No

3. What internal factors do you feel are preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the KDPS Fire Division?

Unwelcoming work environment

The current lack of diversity in the division

Perceptions of racism/discrimination

Lack of minority role models in the division

None

Other (please specify below)

--

4. What external factors do you feel are preventing the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities in the KDPS Fire Division?

- Competition for qualified minority candidates from other local industries
- Competition for qualified minority candidates from surrounding fire agencies with higher starting salaries
- Lack of awareness about a career in the fire service
- None
- Other (please specify below)

5. Do you feel that the implementation of a candidate preparation/assistance program, to assist applicants with preparing for the firefighters entrance and agility test, could improve the diversity of KDPS Fire Division candidates?

- Yes No

6. Do you feel that the current KDPS Explorer Program can positively impact the recruitment of a more diverse applicant pool?

- Yes No

7. What changes do you feel could improve the KDPS Explorer Program?

- More involvement at local high schools promoting the program and fire division
- Changes to the content of the program/renewed focus
- Incorporation of special events/activities to increase participation
- None
- Other (please specify below)

Appendix C

Interview Responses

Interviewee: Richy Huneycutt, Lenoir Community College Director of Marketing and Recruiting

Date of Interview: November 9, 2011

1. What methods or strategies have been identified for recruiting a more diverse workforce?

Answer: First of all, it is important to look at institutional effectiveness and how you can tap into certain target groups. Try to target publications geared toward a particular minority group in the area. Try to utilize radio stations that have a diverse audience and publications that are within or are in a close proximity to your area. Use marketing material and get it into high schools, partnering with the schools to bring people from your organization in to market what you have to offer.

2. How can public sector organizations, such as the fire service, improve their ability to compete for qualified female and ethnic minority candidates?

Answer: Focus recruiting efforts toward high schools and community colleges. Community colleges today are made up of students of a variety of age groups. Within the high school population, the top ten percent will typically go off to a four year college. The next ten to fifteen percent may go to college and return because it was not their thing or they were unhappy with the move. The remaining group is what we call the neglected majority or the group of students that really did not get the attention and were not recruited by anyone. This group is where the opportunity lies. They want to be a part of a bigger group, so they may end up at a community college or end up looking for some kind of buy in elsewhere. Through a mentoring program you can bring the neglected majority group in and recruit them similar to the military. You can interact one on one

with them and push what the public sector organizations, such as fire and police departments, have to offer.

3. What is the best strategy for targeting women and ethnic minorities when advertising employment opportunities?

Answer: Brochures work well, especially those that showcase the diversity within an organization. With any advertising method it is important to demonstrate a level of diversity that will attract minority groups and demonstrate a welcoming environment. This helps to gain buy in and interest. Online advertising is useful, especially when it involves interactive components. A particular method, which we have utilized here at the college, is passing out flash drives at recruiting events. Flash drives are relatively inexpensive and you can put your logo on them and download an interactive application from your website. First it sparks interest as individuals get a free flash drive, but the drive also provides a means to distribute information that highlights the organization and what it has to offer. I think that radio advertising is more effective than television because you are typically in your car more than you are in front of a television. Smart phone advertising is also becoming more popular as most everyone today has a smart phone or at least some member of their family has one.

4. What marketing strategies have proven most effective for demonstrating that diversity is valued by an organization?

Answer: Make sure that everything you put out in your marketing program shows a diverse audience. If it is a radio advertisement, use the voices of different minority groups. In television advertisements, showcase the diversity of the organization. Build an

image or brand that highlights the desire for diversity as well as a desire for the best of the best.

5. Please feel free to make any additional comments regarding diversity and recruitment.

Answer: Put on every publication that you are an equal opportunity employer, but put teeth behind the statement with materials and marketing. Try not to stigmatize a particular group and work to project a level of diversity that will be attractive to minority groups in or around the community.

Appendix D

Executive Fire Officer Questionnaire - Fire Department Diversity and Recruiting

Please mark or write in your response to the question.

1. Do you feel that the recruitment methods utilized by your department are effectively achieving the level of diversity desired?

Yes No

2. Do you feel that the demographics of your department are representative of the demographics of the community it serves?

Yes No

3. How many personnel are employed by your department?

4. What percentage of fire personnel, in your department, are female?

5. What percentage of fire personnel, in your department, are ethnic minorities?

6. How many personnel has your department hired in the past five years (FY 2006-present)?

7. How many of the personnel hired by your department in the last five years (FY 2006-present) were women or ethnic minorities?

8. What types of assistance does your department provide to applicants with regard to written or physical entrance exams? Check all that apply.

- Written study guide
- Practice sessions for physical ability tests
- Pre-cadet preparation program
- None
- Other, please specify

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9. What methods has your organization used to aid in recruiting female and ethnic minority applicants? Check all that apply.

- No specific efforts
- Print materials (brochures/posters) featuring minority personnel
- Videos featuring minority personnel
- Radio advertisements
- Television advertisements
- Newspaper advertisements
- Internet
- Outreach to ethnic minority churches and community organizations
- Recruitment initiatives at ethnic minority events
- Recruitment initiatives at high schools with a diverse student population
- Recruitment initiatives at colleges and universities with a diverse student population
- Use of minority recruiters
- Explorer/cadet programs
- Other, please specify

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10. Please list the three recruitment methods, utilized by your department, that have been the most successful in recruiting female and ethnic minority applicants.

Most successful method

Second most successful method

Third most successful method

Appendix E

North Carolina Fire Departments Receiving Questionnaires

1. Apex Fire Department
2. Asheville Fire Department
3. Burlington Fire Department
4. Butner Public Safety
5. Cary Fire Department
6. Chapel Hill Fire Department
7. Charlotte Fire Department
8. Durham Fire Department
9. East Side Fire Department
10. Elizabeth City Fire Department
11. Fayetteville Fire Department
12. Goldsboro Fire Department
13. Greensboro Fire Department
14. Henderson Fire and Rescue
15. High Point Fire Department
16. Jacksonville Fire Department
17. Kannapolis Fire Department
18. Lenoir Fire Department
19. Lumberton Fire Department
20. Monroe Fire Department
21. Mooresville Fire and Rescue

22. Morrisville Fire and Rescue Department
23. Nashville Fire Department
24. New Hanover County Fire Rescue
25. Pinehurst Fire Department
26. Raleigh Fire Department
27. Reidsville Fire Department
28. Roanoke Rapids Fire Department
29. Rocky Mount Fire Department
30. Salisbury Fire Department
31. Shelby Fire Department
32. Southern Pines Fire Department
33. Statesville Fire Department
34. Tarboro Fire Department
35. Washington Department of Fire-Rescue-EMS
36. Wilmington Fire Department
37. Winston Salem Fire Department