KEARNY POLICE DEPARTMENT RECRUITMENT PLAN

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:17B-4.10, all law enforcement agencies must establish a recruitment and selection program, with the objective of creating a workforce that reflects the diversity of the population the agency serves. In furtherance of this goal, on December 7, 2021, Acting Attorney General Andrew Bruck issued a Guideline for Promoting Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruitment and Hiring, that outlined the process by which each agency shall (1) identify underrepresented groups, and (2) take action to address any underrepresentation. In accordance with these stated goals, the Kearny Police Department established the following Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruitment and Hiring Plan.

I. Program Goals

To effectively serve the residents of Kearny, NJ, the Kearny Police Department will strive to create a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community we serve and protect. To achieve this, the Kearny Police Department has identified several goals for the recruitment and hiring of law enforcement officers from underrepresented demographic groups, including:

1. **Annual Demographic Measurements:** Establish protocols for annual demographic measurements of the department's workforce to identify areas of underrepresentation.
2. **Encouraging Diversity in Recruitment:** Develop methods and protocols to actively encourage the recruitment and hiring of candidates from underrepresented demographic groups.
3. **Fair and Impartial Hiring Processes:** Solidify protocols to ensure that hiring and onboarding practices are conducted in a fair and impartial manner.
4. **Targeted Recruitment and Mentorship Programs:** Establish and implement recruitment and mentorship programs specifically aimed at attracting and supporting candidates from underrepresented demographic groups.
5. **Program Evaluation and Adjustment:** Create protocols for regularly evaluating the success of the recruitment and hiring program, and make adjustments as needed to ensure continuous improvement towards achieving diversity goals.

II. Demographic Review & Evaluation

The Kearny Police Department is responsible for serving the diverse community of Kearny, NJ. To ensure our law enforcement staff reflects the demographics of the community we serve, we must first survey and review our demographic data to identify any deficiencies. This evaluation is ongoing and includes an evaluation of overall department demographics, including an assessment of the current staff's self-identified gender, racial, and ethnic demographics.

Thus far, the Kearny Police Department can report the following demographic composition among our 112 sworn officers, based on a self-identification survey:

- **Gender:** 91 males (85.85%) and 15 females (14.15%).
- **Race/Ethnicity:** 53.85% White, 4.81% Black or African American, 41.35% Hispanic or Latino, 0% Asian, 0% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0% Other. Consistent with the Census methodology used for the community comparison below, officers who identify as Hispanic or Latino are counted once, in that category, regardless of race; the race categories reflect non-Hispanic officers only.

When compared to the demographic composition of Kearny's population:

- **Gender:** Women constitute 50.7% of the population.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** 41.9% White, 3.5% Black or African American, 48.6% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Asian, 0.1% Native American, and 0.9% Other.

We observe that women, Hispanic or Latino individuals, and Asian individuals remain underrepresented in our police department compared to the community's demographics. White officers (53.85%) are now overrepresented relative to the community's non-Hispanic White population (41.9%), and Black or African American officers (4.81%) continue to slightly exceed the community's share of the population (3.5%).

TOWN OF KEARNY DEMOGRAPHICS CHART				
Data is based on the 2020 Census Count and the Department's self-ID survey	**POPULATION**		**CURRENT SWORN OFFICERS**	
RACE/ETHNICITY	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
WHITE (Non-Hispanic)	17,622	41.89%	56	53.85%
BLACK or AFRICAN AMERICAN (Non-Hispanic)	1,488	3.54%	5	4.81%
HISPANIC OR LATINO (any race)	20,465	48.65%	43	41.35%
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE (Non-Hispanic)	356	0.85%	0	0.00%
ASIAN (Non-Hispanic)	2,107	5.01%	0	0.00%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER (Non-Hispanic)	27	0.06%	0	0.00%
OTHER (Non-Hispanic)	—	0.00%	0	0.00%
TOTAL	**42,065**	**100.00%**	**104**	**100.00%**

Currently, 14.15% of Kearny Police Officers identify as female, an increase from 8.18% as previously reported, and well over the previously cited state average of 10.8%. The Kearny Police Department will continue to recruit and hire qualified female candidates for the position of police officer.

To address these disparities and to create a workforce that more accurately reflects our community, the Kearny Police Department has developed the following plan:

III. Addressing Underrepresentation

a. **Recruitment Efforts**

i. **Community Engagement and Outreach**

1. Established and continue to maintain contacts with police academies, community organizations, and educational institutions. Provide recruitment materials for display and distribution at these locations.
2. We have also appointed Sergeant Nicole Cain as the Kearny Police Department LGBTQ+ Liaison. She regularly participates in community outreach events and has made her contact information available on our website and other platforms. This ensures that members of the LGBTQ+ community have a direct and accessible point of contact for support and inquiries.
3. Additionally, our Community Oriented Policing Unit has intensified its efforts to inspire local youth, beginning with the Junior Police Academy program in junior high school and extending through high school, where COP officers interact regularly with students.

ii. **Utilization of Online and Social Media Platforms**

1. Post police officer entrance exam announcements on the Town of Kearny's official website, the department's website, and social media accounts.
2. Create and distribute a recruitment brochure showcasing the department's commitment to diversity and inclusion. These materials will be available on the department's website and social media accounts.
3. Utilize social media to maximize the efforts of our recruitment drives.
4. Through targeted social media outreach and local online forums, we are actively engaging the residents of Kearny to consider law enforcement careers in their hometown. To that end, we have revamped our recruiting website, and we regularly post reminders to sign up for entry exams on social media during each testing cycle.

iii. **Positive Police-Citizen Encounters**

1. Maintain positive interactions between police officers and community members to build trust and encourage community members to consider careers in law enforcement.

iv. **Competitive Work Schedules and Salaries**

1. Maintain competitive work schedules and salaries to attract and retain qualified candidates.

v. **Local Hiring Policy**

1. The Kearny Police Department is currently under consent decree requiring that the hiring pool consists of residents of Kearny, and Newark NJ.

vi. **Recruitment Materials and Branding**

1. Ensure that recruitment materials reflect the department's commitment to diversity and are distributed widely across various platforms and community events.
2. Post recruitment flyers and information in various storefronts within the shopping district in the Town of Kearny.
3. Post recruitment flyers and meet with community leaders at the Kearny Hindu Community Center.

vii. **Fair and Inclusive Selection Process**

1. Implement a candidate selection process that includes a diverse selection panel.
2. Place strong consideration on non-traditional work/life experience.

viii. **Annual Review and Adjustment**

1. Conduct an annual review of the recruitment plan to assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. This includes evaluating the demographic data of applicants and the success of outreach efforts.

IV. Monitoring Process

With the implementation of this plan, our application process will now include optional demographic questions that captures information to assess diversity among applicants. The questions will capture the following data to be self-identified by the applicant:

1. Race:
    a. American Indian or Alaska Native
    b. Asian
    c. Black or African American
    d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    e. White
    f. Two or more races
    g. Other
2. Ethnicity:
    a. Hispanic or Latino
    b. Non-Hispanic or Latino
3. Gender:
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Non-binary
    d. Prefer not to disclose

With this data collection, the Kearny Police Department can assess whether our applicant pool is reflective of the diverse workforce we seek to achieve. The Kearny Police Department will also evaluate the success of our hiring plan annually, after the submission and publication of our law enforcement demographic data. This evaluation will identify if disparities are reduced, and if the Department does not see the desired results, we will re-evaluate, modify, and revise our strategies.