

PERSONNEL

AN APPROACH TO MINORITY RECRUITMENT



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Police agencies throughout the Nation are confronted with the seemingly monstrous responsibilities that lie within the scope of either "affirmative action" or "minority recruiting." In meeting these responsibilities most agencies react by creating an elaborate program design. This type of approach is almost doomed to failure.

In order for a police agency to design an effective plan which is basically workable and actually outlines the true purpose, scope, and direction of these programs, it must first understand the intent behind the guidelines; i.e., the laws, rules, and regulations. This understanding of affirmative action and minority recruiting will insure that the agency meets not only its own needs, but the needs of the population it serves.

Affirmative action is a guideline-oriented approach to correct employment conditions within an organization which may have discriminatory effects upon minorities and women. This approach consists of statistical evidence, outlining where the organization stands regarding the proper utilization of minorities and women, and the statements of goals, actions, and timetables to correct any deficiencies that may exist.

Recruiting is the enlistment of new personnel into an organization. When utilized within the scope of an agency's affirmative action responsibilities, it means the enlistment of minorities and women to compensate for the underutilization that exists. Compensation is directed toward making the agency's population more repre-

sentative of the population it serves, commonly referred to as minority recruiting.

Planning Objectives

The Indiana State Police found that the planning phase should be considered crucial. Management that anticipates all areas of the program will insure the program's success. The program should be written in a systematic, direct manner so that it can be followed and understood. This will also provide a recorded breakdown of the ultimate goal the department sets in measurable units for later evaluation. This program should contain the following considerations, basic precepts to any successful minority recruitment undertaking.

Research

In order that decisions regarding the individual organization's employment program be fully understood, demographic and geographic data must be analyzed. This insures the program will be designed and implemented properly throughout the general area the particular organization covers. This data forms the foundations of a recruitment program.

Also involved in the research phase of program development is the critical analysis of recruiting programs that have been implemented by similar organizations. When this data has been thoroughly analyzed, appropriate insertions or deletions should be made to your individual program.

The commitment exerted by key organizational personnel toward the

program to be implemented should be analyzed. This commitment is essential in making an organizational policy. There must be a sincere commitment reflected throughout the entire personnel process to give the program credibility.

Staffing

Before choosing certain individuals to represent the agency as recruiters, it is important to insure that all of the units in the department have full knowledge of the program. Each unit must be encouraged and expected to participate in the drive for qualified applicants. This allows every member of the agency, whether or not he/she is a recruiting agent, the opportunity to represent the department to every potential recruit.

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However, the success or failure of the program will coincide directly with the selection of the personnel chosen to act as minority recruiters. These "representatives" will have to project the image of the ideal officer and personify those qualities which the agency will be striving to find in every applicant. Emphasis in recruiting should not be on quantity, with the hope that out of many applicants a few good ones will be found. This is wasteful in terms of time and money, and perhaps even more harmful in

that it sours the agency's image in the minority communities where it is trying to establish a long-term positive relationship. Disgruntled applicants, first enthused and then rejected, can do the program great harm for future recruiting efforts. Emphasis, instead, should be on the qualifications of each individual applicant and the high possibility that he/she will be found acceptable.

To select recruiters who will best project a strong positive image, and be able to sense these qualities in others, specific selection criteria should be utilized. The basis used for selection should include not only the interests, ability, and willingness to participate in that unit, but should include as an absolute necessity that the recruiter be at ease with, and able to relate to, persons of ethnic minority background. Also, since the organization is recruiting candidates from a relatively young age group, the members should, whenever possible, also be young. If the agency is recruiting for uniformed personnel, the recruiter should look well in the uniform apparel and project demeanor in keeping with the image of the organization. In addition, the recruiter must be honest, able to work with little direct supervision, thoroughly familiar with the workings and inner-workings of the organization, and innovative in finding specific techniques to be used. It is also necessary to select at least one individual to work at the staff level to coordinate the entire program and insure maximum use of all resources available.

Once chosen, those specifically assigned to participate in the program should attend a specialized training program. This training should encompass not only the intricacies of the program implementation, but the sensitivity training that is necessary to successfully meet the ethnic community. During this training session it is very important that all questions

are answered. After the training session is held, initial responsibilities should be allotted to each member of the staff and the field personnel.

The individual assigned at the staff level should have the following responsibilities: (1) Assure that the program is implemented on a statewide, countywide, or citywide basis, whichever the need may be; (2) provide program research, staff work, and coordination as required; (3) assure that all organizational members and employees are aware of the existence, purpose, and necessity for the program, and solicit their active assistance in the department's efforts; (4) coordinate the development, preparation, and distribution of recruitment materials; (5) assist field personnel in identifying the minority community contacts who may be of assistance in the program implementation; and (6) develop a records and reporting system for use of field as well as staff personnel. This will enable the department to make an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the program, and appropriate recommendations for the future direction and needs of the program.

Responsibilities at the field level should include, among others: (1) Implementation and coordination of the program in respective areas of responsibility; (2) evaluation, selection, and implementation of specific recruiting techniques to be used; (3) maintenance of a roster of personnel who participate in the program; (4) determination of appropriate minority community contacts; (5) coordination of the distribution and use of recruiting materials; (6) coordination of the use of news media recruitment advertising with the organization's public information office, and active solicitation of news media cooperation in the department's effort; (7) evaluation of the program's effectiveness within their area of assignment; (8) assistance in facilitating

the selection process; and (9) maintenance of the required records of contacts.

Since the responsibilities of recruiters include duties that are outside the realm of normal field supervisory personnel, it may be difficult for them to understand and fairly evaluate recruiters' proficiency within their job assignments. It is therefore necessary that strict attention be paid to the selection criteria used, and utilize personnel who will give the department a "day's work for a day's pay." The caliber of applicant who comes as a result of the recruiting campaign will directly relate to the caliber of person who is doing the recruiting. The number of recruiters utilized will depend in large part on the size of the organization, vacancies that exist within the organization, and the ability to reassign police personnel when there may already be a critical manpower shortage within the organization.

The field personnel who comprise the complement of recruiters are individuals, and thus their program should be an individual-type program. What works best for one may not work for another, and their programs should be flexible enough to come within the concept of management by results. However, they should remain within the realm of the program in its entirety or vary from it only with the approval of the program coordinator.

Recruiters must be able to sell their product (the organization) to those persons who in all probability will be able to compete and be accepted as a member of that organization.

Funding

Adequate funding is a necessary prerequisite to a successful recruitment campaign. But a common misconception is that the success of an affirmative action recruiting campaign is directly correlated to the amount of

money spent. Too many believe that the amount of funding is directly related to the organization's, and indeed, the community's commitment to affirmative action. However, beware of getting hooked into this type of thinking. Sound management techniques should be used in expending monies. Beware of excessive spending or having an allocated fund in excess of what can realistically be used. A department's program may be judged fiscally irresponsible if either funds have been available but not utilized, or if funds have been utilized with little return in the form of a realistic number of applicants. And, a realistic number of applicants is not necessarily measured in terms of quantity of

applicants put into the selection system initially, but in the quantity and quality of those who successfully come out of the selection system.

Initial program funding should be broken down into five areas that should be considered in every recruiting program: (1) Initial funding as the only funding an organization will receive for this program (as such, an attempt should be made to purchase the necessary materials and equipment that would enable carrying this program into the future with the least amount of financial assistance); (2) what extent paid media will play in the program and allocate those funds necessary for the achievement of this aspect of the program (it is necessary

to consider at this point, the aspect of quantity versus quality and whether or not the organization can accommodate the number of people it will receive when expending money in this area); (3) the use of outside consultants who can provide invaluable information as to services and materials available for a proper advertising campaign; (4) funding for training conferences and seminars that will enhance the success of the recruiting program, for both staff and field personnel; and (5) operational costs, such as correspondence and postage, clerical, office supplies and equipment, additional telephone lines, etc.

Approach

Many minority group members feel that their chances of obtaining employment with law enforcement agencies are predestined to failure. For this reason, the attraction of qualified ethnic minority candidates presents the most serious obstacle to be overcome by the department in the area of recruiting. If the department is un-

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attractive as an employer, qualified minority group members will not apply. Before the department appeals to the minorities, several barriers must be eliminated. This predestined failure belief is not due to a lack of qualifying ability, but rather the result of a combination of several long-term negative social factors that alienate the minority community from law enforcement agencies. To overcome the feeling of alienation, the department must stress community service, prestige, security, and pay. Since the enforcement aspect of police work has



State trooper receives badge from Dr. Otis R. Bowen, Governor of Indiana.

become a negative stereotype in the minds of many minorities, it should not be emphasized in the recruiting campaign. However, every effort should be made to present a true and accurate picture of the conditions of employment. In recruiting minority candidates, as well as those from majority groups, stress must be placed on the qualifications necessary for the position. Failure to emphasize this

issue may result in many unqualified persons applying and later failing to gain employment, resulting in a backlash of ill will that dooms future recruiting efforts to almost certain failure.

There is also a general feeling among minorities that law enforcement agencies are not interested in employing them. Therefore they do not apply. This barrier may be over-

come only by making an active, personal, honest appeal directly to the minority community, by the use of one of the following techniques:

1. Direct contact with minority group members by recruiting representatives will probably prove to be the most effective recruiting technique available. This direct contact provides a display of personal interest that is not possible in most other recruiting techniques. Direct contact may be achieved by meeting with minority groups and individuals on a discussion basis. Invitations to meet with minority groups and individuals should be solicited by the recruiting officers through college and trade school placement departments, church, community, fraternal organizations, and any other potentially receptive groups as identified by community leaders within each minority community.

2. Soliciting referrals of potential candidates from minority community leaders will prove to be the second most worthwhile effort of the recruiting personnel. Because of their intimate knowledge of the community, minority leaders within the community are in a position to contact potential candidates and refer them to the department. The establishment of good rapport with community leaders is essential to the recruiting program. Minority leaders have become actively involved in recruiting police candidates, and have expressed appreciation for their involvement. By increasing minority leaders' involvement it is believed that they in turn will offer increased support to the department. Referrals of potential candidates that are received in this manner must be closely pursued so that affirmative feedback from the candidate will reach that leader. In this manner com-



The new badge—a proud moment in the life of every police officer and his family.

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community interest and faith in the program should remain high.

3. Contact with potential candidates by on-duty officers has been recognized as a worthwhile recruiting technique. Each organizational area should be supplied with recruiting material and application forms for this purpose. Field personnel will become aware of, and involved in, the minority recruiting effort through such individual contact. This technique serves as an excellent community relations tool, an acceptable method of recruiting candidates, and an indoctrination program for current employees.

The above techniques have proved invaluable in the recruitment of qualified candidates. They all have one thing in common, and that is individual contact with an individual recruiter. One-on-one type recruitment should be viewed in a manner similar to that of recruiting professional and college athletes: To get the best, scouts go out and seek the very best.


In addition to one-on-one type recruiting techniques, the department

may implement an advertising campaign by utilizing extensive media solicitation and the display of recruiting posters and the distribution of literature. These techniques are effective, but care must be used not to jeopardize your program by overrecruitment.

When your organization solicits an extensive media advertising campaign, it should coordinate contact with both general news media agencies and those specifically serving the various minority communities. When utilizing this technique consideration should be given to paid media versus public service media. While public service media is, of course, the least expensive type available, it should be noted that the individual media agency has complete discretion to how many times and what particular time that advertisement is given to the public. Paid media, on the other hand, affords an opportunity to select what times the individual advertisement is heard by the public. This is achieved through

the use of market surveys to which the media agencies have access. These include such information as age, sex, and ethnic composition of the audience at any given hour of a typical broadcast day.

The use of recruiting posters and information literature can be of benefit to the organization when the message has been carefully designed to be effective. It also requires little expenditure of time to put into effect. The recruiters should identify appropriate locations for the displaying of recruiting posters and literature, and arrange for that actual display. Because of semipermanent placement of recruiting posters at selected locations, a great number of persons are exposed to its message, and overrecruitment is again a hazard.

Remember, there are a few basic concepts for an agency to embrace in beginning a minority recruiting campaign. First, minority recruiting is just simply that and no more. It will ultimately fill an agency’s needs in affirmative action, but in and of itself, it is a separate entity. Second, minority recruiting need not be an overwhelming task. It is *not* administratively incomprehensible—in fact, its most challenging facets lie in the face-to-face meeting which the individual recruiters initiate. Third, use good fiscal management so that results will measure up to appropriations and expenditures, looking at the long-term picture as well as the short term. Fourth, avoid the overkill. Study the population and the media which serve the population in the minority community. Finally, it’s the one-on-one evaluation and appraisal which two people will make of one another which is the cornerstone of the program. 

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