

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Faculty Research Fund

Award Date: Fall 2023

Proposal Title: Female Police Officers' Perspectives on Recruitment and Retention

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ABSTRACT

Police departments across the nation are struggling to recruit and retain officers with 65% of departments not having a sufficient applicant pool to meet demand. Similarly, approximately 6% of agencies have unfilled positions across the country. Further, recruiting and retaining female police officers continues to be difficult. The number of female police officers has slowly increased over the past few decades, yet policing remains a male dominated profession with women making up less than 14% of sworn police officers with even fewer in leadership positions (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022). To promote the advancement of women in policing, several police leaders, researchers, and organizations launched a 30x30 Initiative on March 25, 2021 with a goal to increase the representation of women in policing to 30% by 2030 (30x30, 2021).

This study consists of interviews with female police officers across two police departments. The first department serves an average of over 80,000 citizens and employs 175 sworn officers. This department currently has approximately 16 sworn female officers which constitutes 9% of the sworn positions. Serving an average of over 150,000 citizens, the second police department employs 260 sworn officers. This department employs 32 sworn female officers which constitutes 12.2% of the sworn positions. Using two research sites will facilitate cross-site comparisons and produce findings reflective of context.

I plan to analyze the collected data and submit two papers to a national scholarly conference and respected peer-reviewed journals. The long-term goal for the project is to gain ongoing funding for continued measurement on these issues over time.