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Difficulties in Police Hiring and Retention Post George Floyd

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Difficulties in Police Hiring and Retention Post George Floyd (2020)

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Research Methods and Strategies MPA3999-02-S24

May 2024

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Introduction

In the summer of 2020, George Floyd died during an interaction with several members of the Minneapolis Police Department. The incident was filmed by several bystanders and the video recordings of the incident were quickly seen by people around the world. The video showed several police officers restraining Floyd as he told officers that he could not breathe. After several minutes, Floyd stopped moving and eventually died. The reaction by the public was one of outrage. The incident with Floyd ignited a feeling across this nation of anti-police sentiments and resulted in mass protests and in some cases mass rioting in major U.S. cities. The feelings towards the police seemed to change, and there were movements to completely change policing in American and there were even movements to abolish the police all together. Due to these new anti-police attitudes, police departments across the nation have had difficulties finding qualified individuals willing to join the ranks of the police departments. This capstone will explore the history behind the negative sentiment towards police and explore how hiring and retention has changed since the incident with Floyd and propose new practices and methods that can help to reverse this trend and help police departments hire and retain qualified individuals who are willing to take on a career in law enforcement.

Today, there is an issue with hiring qualified police officers in the United States. In addition, police departments across the nation have experienced a significant increase in the numbers of officers who have retired or left the profession. Overall, the number of sworn officers has decreased in recent years throughout the nation. There appears to have been a notable change in the feelings and attitudes towards the police that became apparent in 2020.

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I argue that there was a notable change in attitude towards the police because of the incident involving George Floyd, which occurred on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Floyd died while being arrested by members of the Minneapolis Police Department. The incident was recorded by bystanders and the video of the incident quickly travelled around the world. Many people throughout the United States were outraged that Floyd, who was African American, died while being restrained by four officers. One of the Officers, Derek Chauvin, appeared to be kneeling on Floyd who was heard saying that he couldn't breathe. In this incident's aftermath, peaceful protests and rioting erupted throughout the nation. The Black Lives Matter movement, which was started in 2013, pushed the narrative to "Defund the Police" and in some cases, called to abolish the police all together. The attitudes towards the police significantly changed and became much more negative throughout the nation.

Since the incident, police departments have had to face difficulties related to hiring and retaining police officers. The once highly praised and sought after profession is now looked at negatively and the result is that there are fewer people interested in a career in law enforcement. I chose this topic because I have been in law enforcement for over 25 years. I come from a long line of police officers in the family. My grandfather, father and brother, were all police officers. I began my career as a police officer in 1998 and worked in that capacity for over 6 years before embarking on a 20-year career in federal law enforcement. I have always been proud of my profession and in the aftermath of the Floyd incident, I saw and felt the negative attitudes that were now being directed towards the police. In my career, I have worked closely with police departments throughout the nation, and I have been fortunate to see firsthand that most officers are dedicated, compassionate, and truly motivated to help their community members.

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I have also witnessed the steady decline in the number of officers, especially in major cities throughout the nation. I have seen how departments have been negatively affected by the loss of veteran officers and the inability to properly staff the department with new qualified candidates. The fact is, fewer people are interested in a career in law enforcement and this change in attitude became more evident after the incident with George Floyd in 2020. As a result of these issues, major U.S. cities have seen a significant increase in some major crimes due in large part to fewer officer now on the force.

New Approach

I believe that a new approach is needed to address these issues. The proposed approach builds on some ideas already being used in different departments throughout the country. An approach is needed to not just attract new candidates, but to attract new, qualified, candidates. I contend that it's important to pursue educated and trained officers. I propose starting a program aimed at educating and training an officer simultaneously, with education incentives and loan forgiveness in return for several years of service to a participating department. I propose a joint program between a community college and the Massachusetts Municipal Police Training Committee. This proposal is based off an already developed program at Fitchburg State College in Fitchburg, MA, which has a five-year program that offers students the opportunity to earn a master's degree in criminal justice while also earning police academy certification. In my proposal, prospective candidates accepted into the program can obtain an associate degree from a participating community college in two years, while receiving police academy training simultaneously. Upon graduation, candidates will be trained by an accredited police academy and will have also obtained their associate degree in criminal justice. Local departments can hire directly from the program upon graduation. Departments will provide funding to the program to

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pay for training. In this proposal, different from the program at Fitchburg State, any candidate hired from this program will be eligible for tuition reimbursement if they remain with their hiring department for at least 5 years. The end results should benefit both the department and the officers. The department will get an educated and trained officer quickly who will agree to remain with the department for at least 5 years, in return, the officer gets immediate employment in their desired career field and can have their entire college education paid for by the department. Because this is an associate program, not the Fitchburg State Program master's degree program, officers will be educated and trained more quickly and can also receive a free education. The emphasis is to quickly get newly trained officers working on the streets as soon as possible.

Literature Review

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On May 20, 2020, George Floyd died during an interaction with several Minneapolis Police Officers after having just passed counterfeit currency at a local business. Officer Derek Chauvin was seen kneeling on Floyd's neck area for nearly 9 minutes while restraining him on the ground. Video of the incident was seen by the entire world and the reaction in the United States, resulted in mass protests regarding police brutality and the police in general. In addition to the many peaceful protests, there were many incidents of rioting and looting that resulted in millions of dollars' worth of damage to buildings and businesses throughout the entire country. According to “*Changes in public- police cooperation following the murder of George Floyd*” by Brantingham, Mohler, and MacDonald (2022), between 15-26 million Americans engaged in street protests in the subsequent weeks following the death of Floyd. The protests were shown daily on news media outlets throughout the nation.

Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin was seen by the world, kneeling on the back and shoulder area of Floyd, who at times stated that he could not breathe. Officers Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane assisted Chauvin by restraining Floyd while he was on the ground. Officer Tou Thao was also on scene and was responsible for securing the large crowd of people who had gathered on the sidewalk from intervening in the incident. The four officers were all

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fired the day after the incident as the video footage and protests spread throughout the nation. All four officers were subsequently arrested and convicted on several charges related to the Floyd's death and received prison sentences. Chauvin was convicted of many charges including second-degree murder and was sentenced to over 22 years in prison for his actions. The city of Minneapolis settled a wrongful death suit with the family of George Floyd for \$27 million.

Increase in Officers Leaving the Job

In the years after the Floyd incident, there has been a significant increase in the number of officers that have decided to leave the profession. In the documentary by *Liz Collins*, "*The Fall of Minneapolis*" (2023), after the events related to the death of Floyd in 2020, the Minneapolis Police Department experience a major loss in the number of officers in addition to an increase in violent crimes throughout the city. In May of 2020, the Minneapolis Police Department had approximately 892 officers. In October of 2023, they were reduced to just 512 officers. Crime statistics show that in the year prior to the Floyd incident (2019), there were 101 car jackings. In 2021, the year after the incident, that number rose to 655 car jackings. In 2019, there were 266 gunshot victims in Minneapolis as compared to 2021, when there was 658. According to a study in the *PNAS Nexus* "*Changes in Public Police Cooperation following the murder of George Floyd*", (2022), following the murder of George Floyd, in New York City, violent crime, property crime, and basic quality of life calls for service all increased significantly, mostly in minority communities. These statistics demonstrate an extreme decrease in officers and extreme increases in serious crime.

According to *CBS News* "*Minnesota Supreme Court Orders Minneapolis Police to hire more cops as city down more than 200 officers from 2 years ago*" (2022), Minneapolis must have a minimum of 731 officers. The city has not had the minimum number of officers since

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March of 2021. The Supreme court sided with the residents that sued the city for not having enough officers, and the city was ordered to increase hiring to reach the minimum number of officers. The department is still having difficulties reaching these goals. According to *Fox News*, "Minneapolis Police staffing levels plummets to historic 4 decades low 3 years after Geroge Floyds Death" (2023), Minneapolis has 1.4 officers per 1000 residents which is one of the lowest ratios in the nation.

Retirements and resignations have dramatically increased throughout the nation as well. According to *the New York Post*, "NYPD Cops Leave Force in Alarming Rate-over 2,500 turned in badges so far in 2023", written by Tina Moore and Dean Balsamini, the number of officers quitting the NYPD prior to the 20 years required to receive their full pensions, skyrocketed from 509 in 2020, to 1040 in 2023, an alarming 104% increase. According to an article in the *Associated Press*, "Law Enforcement Struggles to Recruit since the Killing of Floyd", written by Dazio, Bleiberg, and Brumback (2021), the rate of retirement at some departments rose as much as 45%, from 2020, according to research on nearly 200 law enforcement agencies. According to a survey conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum *PERF* (2022), the total number of resignations increased 1.7% from 2019 to 2020 in agencies that participated in the survey. Then the following year (2021), the number of resignations shot up by 40.4%.

OFFICER RESIGNATIONS

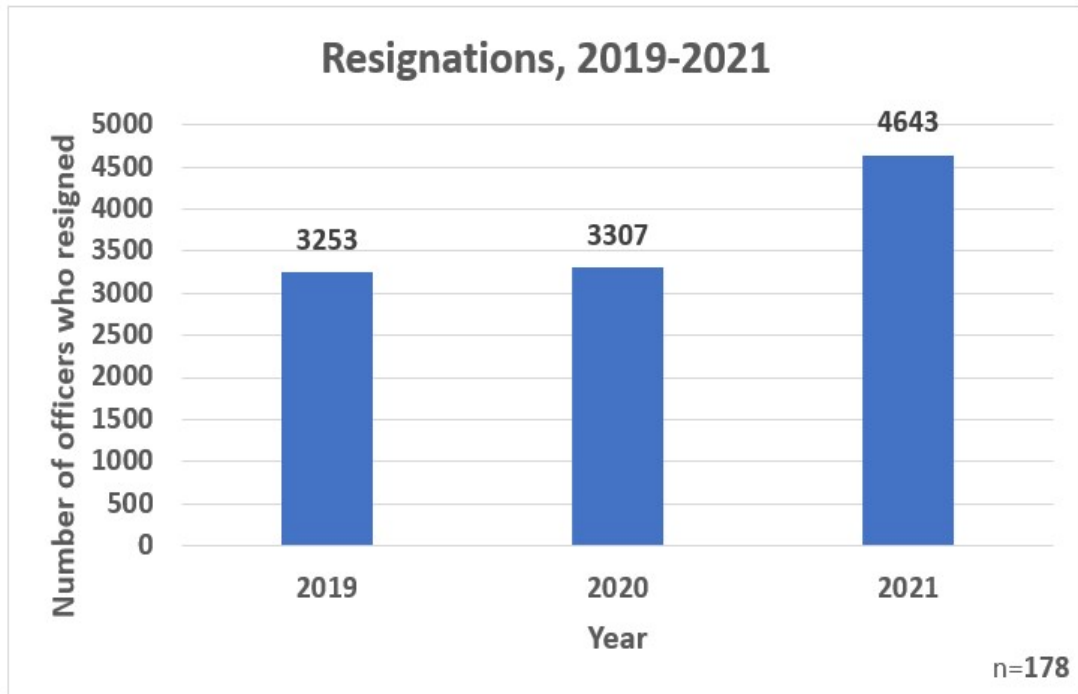


Figure 1.0 *Police Recognition 2019-2021*

Figure 1 data illustrates that police departments nationwide are suffering from the same issue of losing trained officers at a higher rate than expected. To make matters worse, departments are finding it difficult to back fill those vacancies by hiring new officers. According to data from *Police Executive Research Forum, (2021)*, in the period from 2020-2021, there was a huge increase in the number of retirements and resignations, in conjunction with an overall decrease in hiring of 5%. This is a recipe for disaster. The data clearly indicates that departments throughout the country, especially larger departments, are losing experienced officers and are not able to keep up with the attrition rate. With a decrease in the number of officers patrolling the streets, this can lead to an increase in crimes for almost every community. Additionally, with fewer officers, the job can become more dangerous with fewer officers and morale can be negatively affected due to the possibility of officers being forced to work

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additional hours to make up for the dwindling number of officers. For many reasons, the current trend of losing officers and an inability to replace them at a consistent rate is troubling.

Although there can be many reasons for this, it seems the events that occurred in 2020 and the aftereffects of the protests and rioting, had a significant effect on law enforcement, especially with hiring and retention.

A secondary effect of having difficulties attracting enough new officers to fill the positions of the many leaving the job has resulted in a lowering of standards for new officers. This can lead to many issues such as an increase in ethical issues such as police brutality, false arrests, and excessive force. People who in years past would not have been hired for many reasons are now being hired due to a lack of acceptable candidates. For all these reasons, police departments across the nation are facing a difficult and complicated problem of adequately staffing their departments. According to surveys conducted by the *International Association of Chiefs of Police*, “*The State of Recruitment: A Crisis for Law Enforcement*”, 78% of police departments have reported that they are having difficulties finding and hiring qualified candidates and 50% have reported that they needed to change their policies, or reduce their standards, in order to find new officers.

Attempts to Attract New Qualified Officers

Due to the post 2020 trends of fewer prospective qualified police candidates, police departments throughout the country have tried many ways to attract officers to their departments. The data shows that the larger departments (over 250 officers) are having the hardest time attracting officers. As a result, departments are forced to try newer ways of recruiting officers. For example, Seattle, a city that was severely impacted by protesting and rioting in 2020, has tried to lure new officers by offering signing bonuses, much like in the private sector. A tactic

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that had never been needed in law enforcement in the past. According to *the New York Times*, “*As Applications Fall, Police departments lure recruits with bonuses and attention*” (2022) by Mitch Smith, Seattle now offers a \$30,000 bonus for officers serving elsewhere who transfer to the city, and a \$7,500 signing bonus for new recruits. In Louisville, Kentucky, they have taken the drastic step of offering to fly in perspective candidates to take the entrance exams, and then put them up in hotels, and take them on a ride along with a full-time officer. These “out of the box” ideas are needed to try and ensure that departments are being adequately staffed. According to *Fox News*, “*California City Offers Highest in the Nation Signing Bonus to Combat Staff Shortages*” Alameda, California, is currently offering the highest in the nation signing bonuses for new officers. \$75,000 plus a salary of over \$100,000 to attract new officers. In contrast, Brandon Buskey, the director of the Criminal Law Reform Project at the American Civil Liberties Union, looks at the difficulties in hiring as an opportunity to rethink policing overall. He believes cities should re-think how they spend their public monies and perhaps allocate the money to other social programs such as housing programs or mental health programs. I don’t believe in this idea, and I feel it can be a recipe for disaster. More public funding should be allocated to building more affordable housing and more to social services. But taking the funding away from the police to do it is not the solution. Unarmed social workers should not respond to domestic violence issues. These issues are much too dangerous and require trained police intervention. Social programs certainly need to play a role, but not in the first responder situations. Officers are trained in these matters, and they should handle the initial stages of similar calls for service.

According to an article in *Police One* “*Effective ways to Recruit the Next Generation of First Responders*” (2023), it is recommended that in order to attract Gen-Z's, departments need

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to offer hiring bonuses and also direct them to other available benefits for law enforcement. This seems to be one of the most universally used approaches today by police departments looking for new officers.

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Background

In recent years throughout the United States, police departments have had difficulties hiring and retaining qualified candidates. There are many factors in this complex issue of police recruitment and retention. The job of a police officer is extremely challenging and difficult and is both mentally and physically demanding. Police Officers today must be able to respond to calls for service related to a number of challenging issues related to mental health issues, domestic violence issues, violent crimes, and medical emergencies. These calls for service can be complex, emotionally draining, and at times extremely violent. Officers must be trained to be mental health counsellors, family violence counsellors, first responders, and public service advocates. In addition to all these responsibilities, officers must be able to determine whether to use various levels of force, including deadly force. The decisions that an officer must make, at times, must be made in a split second. Making the wrong decision in that split second can have dire consequences if the decision is wrong. The demands and responsibilities placed on officers are truly awesome. In addition to the difficult demands of the job, attitudes towards police took a major turn in 2020 which exacerbated the problems of police hiring and retention.

May 20, 2020, Minneapolis, Minnesota

On May 20, 2020, the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) responded to a convenience store in downtown Minneapolis, where a store clerk alleged that 46-year-old Geroge Floyd tried to make a purchase using counterfeit currency. MPD Officer Thomas Lane responded along with Officer Alex Keung. The officers had contact with Floyd for several minutes and attempted to get him out of his vehicle and into a police cruiser. Floyd did not comply with the officers' requests. Eventually, after allowing Floyd to sit on the ground, the officers placed Floyd in the backseat of a police cruiser. At this point, Floyd claimed he was

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having difficulty breathing due to anxiety issues. During this time, MPD Officers Derek Chauvin and Tou Thao arrived on scene. Floyd was being uncooperative and claimed several times that he couldn't breathe. The officers then removed Floyd from the cruiser and placed him on the ground. At this point, there were several bystanders who were not only witnessing the incident firsthand, but several also began to record the police interaction with Floyd. These videos would ultimately be played around the world and spark a huge outcry and public outrage against police brutality.

After Floyd was removed from the cruiser, officers called for an ambulance and began to restrain Mr. Floyd on the ground. Mr. Floyd was restrained on the ground for over 9 minutes, during which time it appears Officer Chauvin was kneeling on the area around Floyd's upper back and neck. During this time, Floyd can be heard continuously stating that he could not breathe. Eventually, Floyd stopped moving and died.

Fall Out

After the video of the incident was shown all around the world, the public was outraged. People felt that police brutality and police racism were an out-of-control problem within police departments throughout the country. Mass protests began shortly after Floyd's death and continued in cities and towns throughout the country during the summer of 2020. There were calls for police departments to be "defunded" or even abolished all together. Massive public protests occurred throughout the country, especially in large cities. Some of the protests devolved into riots. There was extensive damage to property and countless people and police were injured. There are estimates that the damage resulted from \$500 million to \$2 billion.

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Police officer Derek Chauvin became the main focus of the media and public outcry because he was the officer seen kneeling on Floyd for several minutes as Floyd claimed he could not breathe. Chauvin, Tao, Lane, and Keung were all terminated from the MPD shortly after the incident and eventually they were all arrested for their actions during the Floyd incident on May 20, 2020. Chauvin had the most serious charges, including second degree murder. Chauvin was eventually found guilty on all charges against him and was sentenced to over 22 years in prison. The other officers were also charged, and all received lesser sentences in prison.

This incident was a major tipping point in the world of law enforcement. The public was clear in their wish for changes to policing. The Floyd incident certainly wasn't the first case of perceived police brutality, but it seemed to be the final straw in a tired and fed-up public. Change was overwhelmingly demanded by the public. The public perception of the police seems to have changed after this incident. The image of police officers had been suffering prior to the Floyd incident, but the incident seemed to mark a seismic shift in public opinions of police work. This change in perception had many consequences, such as a spike in crime in large cities, but it also changed the landscape of policing as a profession. Officers became tired of the negative attitudes towards police officers and began to retire at much higher rates than in previous years. Departments also began to find it difficult to maintain their manpower due to a lack of interest in people wanting to join the police force.

Higher Crime Rates

After the Floyd incident in 2020, major U.S. cities saw a dramatic increase in crime, especially violent crime and property crime. For example, one city that saw a significant increase in crime was Portland, Oregon. After the Floyd incident in 2020, mass protests occurred in the city on a nightly basis and were seen worldwide. There were at least 100 nights in a row of

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protesting in Portland after Floyd's death. There was an area that became famous and was known as the Autonomous Zone. In this zone, organizers refused to allow the police into the designated area. This area was covered in great detail by the news media and was seen throughout the world as a first step in eliminating the police presence altogether. It seemed to some to be an area of lawlessness within Portland.

According to researchers for the California Partnership for Safe Communities, there was a dramatic increase in the number of shootings in Portland from 2019-2021. There was a massive 144% increase in homicides. Beginning in 2020, the year of the Floyd incident, Portland saw a significant increase in the number of murders skyrocket to a record 96 in 2022.

PORTLAND, OREGON MURDERS 2000-2022



Figure 2.0 *Portland Murder Rates 2000-2022*

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From 2000-2019 – Portland Oregon averaged 23 Murders per year- it jumped to 96 in 2022.

(There were 74 murders in 2023, which was a 23% drop compared to 2022, but still well above the 19-year average of 23 (2000-2019).

There was an even more dramatic increase in the number of non-fatal shootings in Portland, which increased by a whopping 241%. Non-fatal shootings tripled in Portland, going from 98 non-fatal shootings in 2019, to 218 in 2020, and then jumped again to a staggering 334 in 2021. (See Figure 2.0).

This data shows the effect that the Floyd incident had on one major U.S. city. The outrage felt by millions of people throughout the United States was evident in the mass protests and the calls for defunding the police, or at least the calls for major police reform. As a result of this sentiment, there seems to have been a significant increase in crime and violent crime. There can be many factors responsible for this increase, but one factor that surely contributed to the drastic increase was the anti-police sentiment and the effect that had on police officers and prospective police officer candidates.

Difficulties in Hiring

Police departments are tasked with keeping all members of the community safe. There are many challenges facing police departments, especially in larger cities. Crime rates have spiked in recent years in many large cities in the United States. There are many factors that have played a role in the increase in the crime rate. Covid, economic hardships and decreased public support for the police have all played a role in the increases seen in many large cities. To make matters worse, in addition to the rise in crime, there has been a significant decrease in the

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number of officers. According to *the New York Post (2023)*, In November of 2023, Mayor Adams cancelled 5 police academies that were scheduled to begin in 2024. By the end of fiscal year 2025, the NYPD will be down to 29,000 officers, which will be the lowest level since the mid 1990's. Budgetary issues have certainly factored into the situation in addition to having difficulties finding and recruiting qualified candidates. The difficulty of the job, the negative perception of the police since 2020, budgetary issues, have all resulted in less interested candidates willing to join the police profession.

As previously discussed, another major city directly affected by the events of 2020 is Minneapolis Minnesota. After the George Floyd's death, Minneapolis was the center for the anti-police movement. Huge protests and riots destroyed parts of the city and caused an estimated \$1-\$2 billion in insured losses to property throughout the city. In May of 2020, the Minneapolis Police Department had just under 900 sworn police officers. According to the city's charter, which is decades old, the department must maintain a minimum number of officers based on the population. The city must have at least 771 officers. As of late 2023, the number of sworn officers was down to just over 500. In June of 2022, due to the staffing shortage at the police department, several residents sued the city for not having the minimum number of officers as dictated by the charter. The Minnesota Supreme Court sided with the residents in their lawsuit against the city and ordered them to allocate enough funding for the minimum number of officers. The city budgeted funding for 770 officers, but the department still cannot hire the almost 200 officers needed to comply with the order due to an inability to hire and recruit new officers willing to work for the department. The public took the drastic step to sue the city to hire more police officers because they were fed up with the increase in crime. The department has the funding, but still can't hire enough officers.

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Departments have been forced to make drastic changes to how they operate, including how they attract and hire new officers. The difficulties the police departments have been facing trying to attract new and qualified officers is a direct result of the negative views the public has on police officers and the profession of being a police officer. The direct relationship between a lack of trained officers and an increase in crime in cities across the nation is evidence that a new approach and a new way of attracting officers is desperately needed to try and stem those latest trends of less officers and higher crime.

Attorney General Merrick Garland made police recruitment and retention a priority for the Department of Justice (DOJ). At the DOJ's request, a work group comprised of representatives from across the country provided recommendations to try and help combat this issue. One of the recommendations of the workgroup was to re-evaluate benefits and look at offering benefits aside from just retirement benefits. This is consistent with the idea that there needs to be a new approach to hiring and retaining officers. There needs to be more of an incentive to join the police department and the police management needs to explore new and innovative ways to find and retain qualified officers.

A New Approach to Attract New Officers

Departments have been forced to “think outside of the box” when it comes to trying to attract and hire new police officers so that they can maintain adequate levels of manpower. As mentioned earlier in the DOJ study, there needs to be new incentives or better benefits available so that departments can be competitive with the private sector in luring new talented police candidates. A common approach being utilized today is the hiring bonus. This is a simple idea of offering a signing bonus to individuals who are considering a career in law enforcement. The city of Seattle is offering a signing bonus of \$7,500 to individuals willing to join the department

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and become a police officer. Another interesting idea being used by the Seattle Police Department is to offer a signing bonus to officers who are already trained and have real life experience, and who are also willing to transfer to the Seattle Police Department. The signing bonus for experienced officers is \$30,000. By offering a lucrative signing bonus, the hope is that the department can get experienced officers who can transfer and start working immediately because the officer has already received the necessary training. In contrast, after hiring new officers with no experience, the department must wait at least 6 months before they are ready to hit the streets because they must first receive training in a police academy. Training new officers also takes money. By hiring officers away from other departments, there would be no need to train them, and they can hit the streets immediately. In order to attract experienced officers, the signing bonus needs to be much higher and more appealing so that it is beneficial for the officer to switch departments.

Other cities have also embraced the approach of offering signing bonuses. As mentioned earlier, Almeida California is offering a staggering signing bonus of \$75,000, which is the highest in the nation. This can be somewhat deceptive, in addition to the current negative perception of policing, cities like Almeida California also have problems attracting new officers because they have an extremely high cost of living and there is a shortage of affordable housing in the area. There can be many factors that in conjunction, have resulted in fewer officers on the streets, but there is no disputing the fact that departments are struggling to attract new officers, especially in larger cities.

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A Proposal for a New Approach to Attract New Officers

This paper has discussed in detail the issues that police departments are facing in their attempts to attract new officers to a career in law enforcement. In order to address these issues, departments have tried to find new and innovative ways to attract new officers. Although many departments are now using signing bonuses to try and attract new officers, I believe there needs to be a more comprehensive approach to not only attract new officers, but to attract individuals who are qualified, educated, and more likely to remain in the career field of law enforcement for many years to come. I propose starting a program aimed at educating and training an officer simultaneously, with education incentives and loan forgiveness in return for several years of service to a participating department. This approach needs to be a comprehensive collaboration between police departments, community colleges, and local governments.

Specifically, I propose a partnership between a community college and the Massachusetts Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC). The main idea of this proposal is to create a new program that will incentivize interested individuals with the possibility of attaining an associate degree that will qualify for loan forgiveness, while simultaneously receiving the required training to become a certified police officer in the state of Massachusetts. In collaboration with interested police departments, graduates will be given priority in any job openings at participating departments. A graduate hired by a department will be eligible for tuition reimbursement if they remain with the department for at least 7 years. This program will allow participants to receive a free education and get a well-paying job upon graduation. The departments will be able to hire individuals who have invested their time and effort into becoming a police officer and will be invested and incentivized to remain with the hiring department for many years. This will ensure

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that departments are not just attracting more individuals, but rather, they are attracting educated and qualified individuals who will hopefully remain with their department for years to come.

This proposal is based off an already developed program which is currently in place at Fitchburg State College in Fitchburg, MA. The Fitchburg State program is a five-year criminal justice program that offers students the opportunity to earn a master's degree in criminal justice while also earning police academy certification. Both proposals are an attempt to address the need for new officers. The Fitchburg State program is a 5-year program. In this proposal, new officers can be patrolling the streets in just 2.5 years, which is half the time. Additionally, this program proposal introduces a tuition reimbursement incentive. In some community colleges that offer a degree in criminal justice, a student who has already completed a police academy prior to enrolling in school, can be awarded college credits towards their degree.

To receive an associate degree in criminal justice from Quinsigamond Community College for an in-state student for FY 2023 costs approximately \$11,600. (see figure 3.0) Additionally, it cost approximately \$3,200 to attend a full-time police academy in Massachusetts in 2023. On average, this program proposal would cost approximately \$15,000 per student to be properly trained and educated in this program.

<u>COST PER STUDENT</u>
<i>Tuition - \$5,800 per year X 2 years = \$11,600</i>
<i>Full-time Police Academy - \$3,200 = \$ 3,200</i>

<i>\$14,800 Total per student</i>

Figure 3.0 Tuition Cost

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In 2023 in Massachusetts, Governor Maura Healy created a new program called MassReconnect. This new program allows Massachusetts residents who are over 25 years old and do not already have a college degree the ability to go to community colleges for free in Massachusetts. For those individuals interested in getting their college degree and pursuing a career in law enforcement who also meet the criteria for participation in the MassReconnect program, they can participate in this program without having to pay for their college degree and will qualify for a hiring bonus. Because the tuition will be paid for by the MassReconnect program, participants will instead qualify for a hiring bonus of \$10,000 after successfully meeting the criteria set forth in this proposal for tuition reimbursement.

Associate Degree

For this proposal, interested students would apply to a participating community college for admission to both the college and the police program. For those interested in this program, they will begin their academic careers taking classes that mirror the typical criminal justice associate degree programs. A typical associate degree program includes classes on criminal justice, psychology, sociology, introduction to government and juvenile justice systems classes.

Each student will also be required to take classes on constitutional law and introduction to policing. At Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) for example, any student that has successfully completed a certified police academy by the Massachusetts Police Training Council or other accredited academy prior to attending QCC, can be awarded up to six college credits towards their associate degrees. In this case, the student would not be required to take the intro to policing or constitutional law but would be awarded 6 college credits.

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This new proposal will work in a similar fashion. Several classes taken during the school year at the community college will also be credited towards their police academy training. Police recruits in a typical police academy are also required to take constitutional law classes and basic policing principles. Because those classes are required for an associate degree, and the student will have already taken those classes, there is no need to take them again in the academy. This provides an opportunity for newer, more diverse and dynamic classes that can be taught during the police academy in lieu of constitutional law and basic policing principles.

In addition to the regular criminal justice curriculum, participating students in this program will also be required to receive training on CPR and Automated Defibrillator (AED) and an introduction to emergency medicine class. These (3) classes will be in addition to their required classes and will occur over the course of their 4 semesters. Successful completion of these courses will give the student an additional 3 college credits. These credits will be considered an elective towards their degree and will also be credited towards their police academy training. This is another opportunity to modernize the police academy training. CPR and AED training are required in the academy, and once again, because this training will be completed prior to starting the police academy, this will provide another opportunity to add additional new trainings in lieu of CPR and AED that can better train and educate new officers and prepare them for a new age of policing.

By completing some of the previously required police academy training in advance, this academy will introduce new classes that will help prepare officers for modern policing. In this proposal, it is recommended that the academies introduce additional and extensive training on ethics and community relations. It is important to ensure that new officers receive the best and most advanced training on these topics for obvious reasons. As stated throughout this paper,

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there is a negative feeling today across this nation towards police officers. There have been many issues involving poor ethical decisions made by officers that have been seen and have contributed to the negative perception of police officers. More training is needed to try and change the behaviors of new officers entering police work. By combining education and training, there is an opportunity to change how new officers are prepared for a career in law enforcement by streamlining and eliminating the redundant training and classes.

Police Academy

After having successfully completed their associate degree, participants in this program will change from students to recruits. After graduation in May, a full-time police academy will begin in June of the same year. The police academy will be staffed by trained officers from participating departments who will have chosen to participate in this program. Each department will be responsible for paying their participating trainers. The community college will provide classrooms for training and space for physical training such as a gymnasium or work out facilities so that the recruits can receive training in defensive tactics and arrest techniques. This partnership between the community college and police academies will benefit everyone. It's another way of becoming more efficient by eliminating the need for departments to train their own officers within their department using their own resources, like the Worcester Police Department currently does, and will allow for some of the officers currently assigned to the training division to be redeployed within the department to other units as needed.

The academy will be a standard 26-week (about 6 months) long academy which will be certified by the MPTC and will involve training that covers all aspects of police work. The academy will include training such as use of force, self-defense, Massachusetts General Laws, domestic violence, ethics, de-escalation, emergency driving, and firearms safety. During the

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academy, recruits will also take part in extensive physical training to help prepare them for the hands-on situations involved in police work. The police academies operate like a military boot camp. Recruits will be required to wear uniforms and maintain their physical appearance and conduct themselves in a militaristic manner, saluting superior officers, maintaining a chain of command and following all orders. The academy is not an overnight academy so housing will not be necessary. The training will take place during a regular work schedule, Monday through Friday, and will be approximately 40 hours a week for 6 months.

For those recruits that successfully complete the training, they will graduate and become certified police officers in the state of Massachusetts. For those who fail to successfully complete the training, they will not be allowed to graduate from the academy. Any recruit who fails to complete the training will be given the opportunity to participate in the next available academy. This may take several months, but time spent waiting for the next academy will allow the recruit to work on any issues that they had which prevented them from successfully completing the academy on the first try. If the recruit accepts the chance to join the next academy and fails on the second try, that student will be disqualified from the program and not given another chance to participate in the program. In this case, the recruit could still become a police officer in Massachusetts if they are able to pass an academy on their own in the future, but they will not be afforded the opportunity to be a part of this program and be hired by any participating departments and will not be eligible for any tuition reimbursement.

Post Graduation

After successfully graduating with an associate degree and successfully completing the police academy, the recruits will now become new officers and will be eligible to be hired by any department that has chosen to participate in this program. Any participating department can

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submit a request to the program coordinators to post any openings within their department before the start of each academy. By submitting the request for officers before the academy starts, the program coordinators can determine how many job requests there are for that academy.

Hopefully, for example, if there is an academy class comprised of 25 recruits, there will be a request for at least 25 positions made by participating departments. Recruits will be notified which departments are looking to hire new officers and will be given the opportunity to select which department they would most like to work for. Class rank will determine the order in which the recruits can make their selection. Each academy has a class ranking system which ranks each recruit based on test scores for all aspects of their training. The recruits with the best test scores will be able to make their first choice. This is an added incentive for recruits to work hard so that they can have the best chance of working for the department they would most like to work for.

In the event that there are not enough job openings to ensure that each recruit can be hired upon graduation. The recruits that fail to initially secure a job will be placed on a list and will be offered the first available jobs at any participating department once they become available. If a recruit not hired initially finds a job with a department that is *NOT* part of this program, they will *NOT* be eligible for tuition reimbursement.

After being hired by a department, the new officer will report to their new department and begin their new career in law enforcement. After working for the department for 5 years, the officer will be eligible for tuition reimbursement. This process requires that the hiring department be responsible for the tuition reimbursement and will be handled by the current department head of the police department. If an officer fails to remain with the department for 5 years, then they will not be eligible for tuition reimbursement. If an officer transfers prior to the

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5-year mark to a department that also participates in this program, it will be up to the department head to determine if they will honor the tuition reimbursement stipend. For those officers who participated in the MassReconnect program which provided qualified individuals with free tuition, they will be given a \$10,000 bonus in lieu of tuition reimbursement upon successfully completing 5 years at their department. This will also be paid for by the department.

Conclusion

Being a police officer in the United States has been long viewed as a noble and admirable profession. Those who volunteer to pursue a career in law enforcement have historically been viewed as well-intentioned and hardworking individuals who put their lives and safety on the line so that they can protect and serve the community. In recent times, the perception has changed, and the once admirable profession has become somewhat tarnished due to numerous incidents of police misconduct. The public's perception of police officers has changed over time due to the incidents of police misconduct that in some cases has resulted in mass protests by the public and in the arrest and prosecution of officers that have broken the law and the trust of the public. The public demands that the police departments in their community are held to a higher standard and that they protect and serve the communities in an appropriate, honest, and fair manner for all individuals in the community regardless of race, sexual orientation or religious affiliation. There is no denying that there have been several extreme cases of police misconduct throughout this country that have rightfully caused a lack of trust within the communities. When an officer betrays the badge or violates their oath the public should demand accountability.

With each instance of police misconduct, after justice has been served, there must be a reflection by both the departments and the public, to learn from the mistakes made by the police so improvements and changes can be made if necessary to try and prevent a repeat of the police

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misconduct. Of course, some actions of police misconduct are strictly the result of poor decisions of the officer that violated police doctrine, and the fault is on the officer alone. But, in some cases, there is a need for a change within the police training or tactics of the department. In these cases, the departments must make the necessary changes and adapt to a new and better way of enforcing the laws. Departments across the country must continue to adapt and evolve to ensure that they are operating in the most appropriate and effective manner so that they can continue to protect and serve their communities so they can earn and maintain their respect and admiration.

A lack of respect and admiration has led to the issues that departments have been facing since the incident involving Geroge Floyd in 2020. They have had to deal with a lack of qualified candidates who are interested in becoming police officers. This topic is extremely complicated and has many different causations and reasons for a decline in qualified police candidates. The George Floyd incident will long be remembered as the tipping point for the public regarding police misconduct. The world witnessed mass protests and rioting by people who were demanding that changes be made to overall policing in America. As mentioned earlier, departments needed to look at their policies and practices and determine if changes needed to be made. I feel that almost all departments have made significant changes to how they operate because of the Floyd incident. Most departments began to mandate that all officers are equipped with body worn cameras that will record their actions. This one change is good for everyone. Because the police interactions are recorded, officers must ensure that they are performing their job in accordance with all policies and procedures because at any point, their actions can be reviewed and critiqued to ensure compliance with policy. It's also beneficial to

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the officer because there can be evidence that can help defend their actions and show all the factors that were present when they made their decision to take any action.

Departments also had to look at the current issues of lack of qualified candidates and make changes to how they have operated in the past. Previously, there was never a shortage of candidates eager to become police officers. That changed in 2020, and departments began to struggle to not only retain officers, but it had become particularly challenging to attract new candidates. Departments have tried to adapt and come up with new ways to attract officers. Some departments have lowered their hiring standards to increase the pool of potential applicants. This can be an extremely dangerous approach. By lowering the standards, departments are possibly hiring individuals that historically would never have been hired. If the quality of officers is decreased, it can lead to more serious issues in the future that could negatively impact the officer, the department or the community.

Another more widely accepted practice to attract new officers is to offer signing bonuses to qualified candidates. This is a good start and is consistent with how the private sector operates by attempting to lure the best candidates to their department by providing them with a competitive signing bonus. More money is an effective way to attract new officers, but it can also be difficult for some communities that may be experiencing financial problems. The proposed program in this paper tries to address the issue of lack of qualified candidates by introducing a new program that can provide departments with qualified, educated, and prepared candidates, in a timely manner so new officers can hit the streets as soon as possible. It will provide the departments with a way to find, train, and hire qualified officers so that they can stabilize or even increase their ranks in a timely manner.

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This program will allow a person who is interested in a career in law enforcement the opportunity to attain an associate degree at no cost. In addition, it will also provide a graduate of the program with the opportunity to be hired immediately upon graduation by a local department. The department will have a system in place in which they can hire motivated, educated, and certified officers that will be incentivized to stay with their departments for at least 5 years. The communities of participating departments will benefit the most from this program. Rather than hire officers that may have only been hired because the department was forced to reduce their hiring standards, this program will provide the community with highly trained, educated and motivated officers that will effectively protect and serve their community for years to come.

It is important that departments do not fall victim to the simple solution of lowering standards that will only lead to problems down the road. It is also important that departments continue to re-evaluate their hiring and training practices to ensure that they are consistently filling their vacancies with quality officers. Hopefully for the departments, with better trained and educated officers, they will reduce the number of police misconduct issues in the future. It's imperative that the departments be proactive in this issue as opposed to having to react to a negative police issue.

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Project Charter

*Challenges of Hiring and Retention of
Police - Post George Floyd*

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1. Project Overview

1.1 Introduction

This project is designed to examine the issues that many police departments are facing today regarding difficulties in hiring new police officers and also retaining their current officers.

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Hiring and retention of police officers throughout this country has become a problem for most departments and it appears that this trend has been exacerbated post the George Floyd incident that took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25, 2020. Floyd died during an interaction with several Minneapolis Police Officers after having just passed counterfeit currency at a local business. Officer Derek Chauvin was seen kneeling on Floyd's neck area for nearly 9 minutes. Bystander videos of the incident went viral and there was outrage amongst the public throughout the nation. In the aftermath of the incident, there were mass protests which in some cases, resulted in rioting and looting.

Since the Floyd incident, there has been a major backlash against police and the negative perception and attitudes towards the police in general seem to have had many negative effects on most police departments nationwide. Today, Police Departments seem to now have difficulty attracting and hiring new officers willing to embark on a now unpopular profession. This has resulted in departments being forced to lower their hiring standards to attract new officers. Now, it seems there are more inexperienced officers who may have never been hired by most departments prior to the Floyd incident. As a result of the lowered standards, there is now potential for more issues of police malfeasance due to hiring individuals who may not meet the historically high standards previously expected of our police officers. The dwindling numbers of new officers could lead to an increase in crime in affected communities due to the manpower issues.

A new approach is needed to address these issues and ensure that our police departments stay fully staffed with high quality officers that help to keep our communities safe. Additionally, the new approach will also provide schooling and an associate degree in criminal justice for new police officers.

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1.2 Major Stakeholders

The major stakeholders for this project are the Heads of Police Departments, Chiefs, or Police Commissioners who are responsible for running police departments throughout the country. These stakeholders are responsible for ensuring that departments are adequately staffed with qualified officers that will stay on the job for the entirety of their careers. These stakeholders need to find, hire, and train qualified individuals who are willing to take on a difficult profession. These stakeholders are evaluated on the performance of their officers and the crime rates in their communities.

Another important stakeholder are the heads of local communities. Mayors, Governors, City Managers, who are responsible for running the municipalities are responsible for ensuring that the departments have the necessary funding to ensure all needs can be met. Having a fully staffed department is necessary to fully deal with rising crime rates. These stakeholders are held accountable by the community.

Community Colleges- They are invested in the schooling for interested recruits and this program should result in increased enrollment.

Recruits (themselves are stakeholders) have a personal stake in the project succeeding.

The community in general. The citizens expect low crime rates in their communities.

2. Project Goal and Scope

2.1 Project Goal

- The main goal of this project is to establish a new and effective way of attracting higher qualified candidates to hire at medium sized police departments in an attempt to increase the number of quality police recruits.

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- A secondary goal is to ensure that new candidates are also continuing their education by also obtaining an associate degree.
- An overall goal of reducing crime in participating communities.

2.2 Project Scope

In Scope:

- The scope will be mid-sized cities with Departments over 100 officers and within 35 miles of a community college.

Out of Scope:

- Large Departments or smaller departments or departments not within 35 miles of a participating Community College.

3. Assumptions

- The hiring of new police officers has decreased post 2020 (George Floyd Incident).
- Police Departments have lowered their hiring standards in order to attract new officers.
- Crime has increased in major cities as a result of a decreased number of police officers.
- Police Departments are willing to take part in program.
- Colleges willing to take part in program.
- Recruits and Departments see the Benefits of the program.
- There are currently fewer recruits with college degrees.

4. Constraints

Cost is a constraint to this project. Significant additional funding will be required to recruit, hire, train, and retain new and existing officers. Offering new incentives and creating new methods of hiring and recruiting will require new funding.

Bureaucratic barriers- Academic calendar year may not match the city's fiscal year.

Difficulties with supply and demand. Worcester may need 50 recruits and the community college may only have 25 slots available in their classes.

Additional funding may be required by the college to hire additional teachers.

5. Risks

- ⊘ A risk that could affect the project is if there is another high-profile police brutality incident that is seen nationwide, which could result in a renewed movement to protest against the police therefore having a greater negative effect which could result in difficulties finding willing police candidates.
- ⊘ If a recruit fails, the schooling portion of the training but excels at the Police Academy what is the mitigation plan?
- ⊘ A potential hire receives training and education and decides to resign after obtaining an associate degree and police academy certifications or leaves for another department (not associated with the program) or leaves the policing profession altogether.
- ⊘ A positive risk is that this program is extremely effective and there is an inability to keep up with demand of PD's requesting new trained officers.

6. Sign Off

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Name	Title	Date

APPENDIX

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<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/certificates/d8dfecb48f660316ba64c00b98557bd1e09fea79061e9bcc8909a6d507f942c2>

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Linkedin Learning, *Problem Solving Techniques*,

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