



GOAL 4.0 INCREASE DIVERSITY

Improve significantly the diversity of the uniformed fire service by developing a comprehensive written plan to further enhance recruitment for test administration and review the feasibility of establishing a permanent recruitment unit.

Overview

The Department continues to strive to diversify its uniformed work force through the successful recruitment, retention and promotion of minorities and women. FDNY recognizes that community support, including inspiring and recruiting young men and women of all cultural backgrounds, ensures the vitality of the Fire Department and security of New York City.

In furthering this objective, in May 2002, the FDNY assigned a Battalion Chief as Chief of Recruitment and hired a full-time Director of Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives to lead a dedicated Recruitment Unit. The main focus of the Recruitment Unit is to develop new strategies to reach out and educate minority communities about career opportunities in fire and pre-hospital emergency medical services.

The Recruitment Unit worked closely with the FDNY's Community Affairs Unit to develop new strategies and together launched a \$2.7 million formal media campaign. The "Heroes Wanted" advertising messages were posted on firehouses, billboards, bus shelters and transportation stations and broadcast on the radio. FDNY partnered with private companies to develop a recruitment website, which provided information on the Firefighter position, benefits, salary and application process. In addition to the media campaign, FDNY established a \$1.6 million recruitment effort, staffed by 12 Firefighters and members of several fraternal organizations, including the Vulcan Society and the Hispanic Society, to provide an intensive, person-to-person grassroots campaign at job and school fairs and involving churches and non-profit organizations.

The Department also made special efforts to recruit women. A recruitment team that included three female Firefighters worked with the United Women Firefighters Association to target female candidates. A section of the FDNY website, titled "Women in Firefighting," provides more specific information regarding preparation for the written and physical exam and encourages women to become Firefighters. To assist these candidates in preparing for the physical exam, the Unit partnered with a corporate fitness center to provide free-of-charge access to all candidates who passed the written examination to prepare for the physical exam. These facilities donated memberships, services and special training valued at \$4 million. In addition, a special physical preparation program was developed to meet the strength training needs of female candidates.

The Department continues to work with consultants from the private sector, non-profit organizations and academic institutions to assess potential opportunities for engaging minority youth and women for future employment. The main focus of the recruitment initiatives is to inform, educate, mentor and train interested candidates to join the Fire Department or consider the Fire Department as a viable career opportunity.



Objective 4.1 *Develop a comprehensive written plan that incorporates the Department's ongoing and new recruitment initiatives to diversify the uniform work force of the FDNY.*

Background

Since the 1970s, the Department has devoted considerable administrative and other resources to improving diversity in the uniformed work force. The Department recognizes the need to systematically assess the success of its ongoing diversity outreach and recruitment efforts on diversity in both the short and long term. In 2002, the Department enlisted Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs to assist in the analysis of FDNY's recruitment campaign. This effort entailed examining the complex underlying issues that affect diversity in the uniformed work force. Columbia's graduate students researched the recruitment campaign, the candidacy process and the organizational culture of FDNY.

Accomplishments

The Columbia University research study included a literature review of diversity in the fire service and incorporated both a qualitative and quantitative approach. The study developed and disseminated survey instruments and used the recruitment tracking system database to analyze and quantify both process and outcomes of the Department's recruitment campaign. Students contacted organizations such as the Vulcan Society, Hispanic Society and the United Women Firefighters Association, reviewed the integration experience of other urban fire departments and interviewed key FDNY Officers and Staff Chiefs. Preliminary findings and recommendations were issued for the Department's review in May 2003.

During the Fall 2003, the Recruitment Unit and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs continued to analyze the recent recruitment campaign to obtain a better understanding of the most successful ways to recruit minorities and women. This research project reviews the messages and techniques of the campaign, the demographics of those who passed the written exam and the perceptions that minorities and women have of firefighting as a career. In addition, Columbia University graduate students developed and administered new surveys to better identify and address the underlying issues related to diversifying the Department.

To further its diversity goals, in the Spring 2002, the Department enlisted its Technology and Development staff to provide the Recruitment Unit with a customized computer system with tracking capabilities. The newly developed recruitment tracking system was completed in Summer 2002.

Next Steps and Time Frames

- The academic research projects will be completed and submitted to the Department for review by January 31, 2004. The Diversity Report--Phase I will be finalized by March 15, 2004.



- Based on this information, by July 1, 2004, the Recruitment and Diversity Unit will create a comprehensive written plan and continue to develop short- and long-term targeted initiatives to enhance the diversity of the FDNY and make it more representative of the population and communities it serves.

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Objective 4.2 *Develop and expand outreach and mentorship programs to engage minority young adults and women to become interested in firefighting and emergency medical career opportunities.*

Background

After it was established, the FDNY Fire Cadet Pilot Program demonstrated that outreach and mentoring can enhance minority and female representation within the Department. The Cadet Program was designed specifically for college students and required a minimum one-year commitment from each Cadet. The purpose of the pilot program was to: 1) prepare each Cadet for a challenging career as an FDNY Firefighter or EMT; 2) encourage Cadets to take a promotional exam to Firefighter; and 3) provide mentoring and support to a diverse group of students as they pursued careers in the fire and emergency services. Upon graduation from the Cadet Program and after receiving state certification, participants were offered full-time employment as EMTs in the Bureau of EMS, while continuing to attend college and train for the open-competitive/promotional Firefighter test.

One of the most important components of the Cadet Program was the focus on mentoring. The Cadet Program provided role models to educate, motivate, support, assist and inspire students. Cadets interacted with Firefighters and EMTs and were encouraged, counseled and supported to pursue a fire or emergency medical service career. Given the current fiscal realities and changes in promotional procedures, the FDNY in Spring 2002 decided that it no longer could provide the necessary financial and administrative support to continue the Cadet Program. However, the success of the outreach and mentoring approach will be replicated as the Department initiates new and expanded outreach and recruitment programs.

Accomplishments

Since 2000, 208 youths who participated in the Cadet Program became Fire Department EMTs. Of these 208 individuals, 70 have been promoted to Firefighters. Lessons learned from the success of the Fire Cadet Pilot Program will be incorporated into new and expanded outreach programs, including the Fire and Emergency Services Exploring Program. The Exploring Program is part of the Greater New York Council's Exploring Program, which is part of the Boy Scouts of America.

In Fall 2003, the recruitment tracking database was modified to assist the Department to continue to track and monitor new recruitment projects such as the Exploring Program, measure outcomes, provide statistical reports to FDNY management and support the ongoing Columbia University diversity research study.

*Next Steps and Time Frames*

- FDNY is expanding its commitment to mentorship programs through the Exploring Program, which is a career education program for young men and women, 14 to 20 years of age. The Exploring Program will introduce high-school-age youngsters to, and begin to prepare them for, Fire Department careers by teaching them skills and responsibility and providing information on fire safety and educational requirements to become EMTs, Paramedics and Firefighters. The FDNY's Director of Recruitment and the Executive Post Advisor for the FDNY Exploring Program are revamping and expanding the program. Currently, one Firefighter serves as Executive Fire and Emergency Services Post Advisor for the FDNY Exploring Program. Several additional Firefighters and EMTs will be identified to volunteer as Post Advisors and posts will be created in Brooklyn and the Bronx. The Exploring Program will be expanded by March 31, 2004.
- By June 30, 2004, the Recruitment Unit also will incorporate methods used during the last recruitment campaign to further develop mentoring programs to enlist and retain interested female candidates. To encourage women to consider firefighting as a career option, the Recruitment Unit will continue its collaboration with the United Women Firefighters Association and private sector and non-profit organizations to engage female candidates and increase awareness of professional opportunities for them in the Department.
- During the next two years, the Department will employ the recruitment tracking system database to follow up on candidates who had applied for, taken and passed the written and physical Firefighter examinations. The system tracks applicants so that the Unit can offer ongoing information and support to them while they await civil service appointment to mitigate potential attrition.
- In addition, to help build awareness of potential career opportunities within the Department, the Unit will continue to work with non-profit and religious organizations to: 1) educate, recruit and train interested candidates; 2) provide outreach efforts at junior high and high schools, colleges and job fairs; and 3) collaborate with other FDNY Units that provide outreach to diverse communities on various public safety issues.

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