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**WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RECRUIT AND
RETAIN POLICE OFFICERS?**

Gwen Moity Nolan and Dee Wood Harper, Jr.

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a U.S. national survey of educational requirements for the hiring and promotion of law enforcement officers in 185 of the nation's largest urban law enforcement agencies. Data sources include departmental web-sites and interviews with recruitment and human resources personnel. The principle focus is on the relationship between educational pay incentives, higher salaries and recruitment and retention. Also examined is the relationship between accreditation status and provisions for educational requirements for promotion, and educational pay incentives. The paper concludes with a discussion of policy implications.

Dee Wood Harper, Jr., Ph.D
Professor of Sociology and
Graduate Program Coordinator
Department of Criminal Justice
Loyola University New Orleans
6363 Saint Charles Avenue
Stallings Hall, Box 14
New Orleans, LA 70118
Email: harper@loyno.edu

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Introduction

Police departments nationwide spend money on continuing education, tuition reimbursement and educational salary incentives. The funding for these incentives usually comes from agency budgets, police foundation grants, or scholarships. The central issue is return on investment. The cost of recruiting, hiring, and training is becoming more expensive and with the growth in federal law enforcement agencies since September 11, 2001, retaining qualified police personnel is even more difficult.

Local law enforcement agencies across the country have reported soaring attrition rates and erosion of police personnel at a most critical time. In this paper we identify and discuss several attrition factors and how it affects the stability of a police department. The challenge for law enforcement agencies is to invest in a long-term plan to identify, and recruit personnel that in all likelihood will be effective and will persist in the job. This paper examines policies and salary incentives as they effect the recruitment and retention of officers.

Recruitment and retention issues vary from department to department and city to city. Many departments report a lack of minorities and qualified candidates, for example (Koper, 2004). Why are police departments having problems recruiting good quality officers and retaining them? While it is beyond the scope of this paper to enumerate all the reasons police officers leave the force, our experience as researchers and experience and observations on the job as both a street and ranking officer lead to the following reasons officers leave the department for other local departments, the federal government, and/or the private sector:

- low – noncompetitive salaries;
- family circumstances;
- poor quality of life;
- lack of advancement opportunities and/or not meeting the requirements for advancement;

- extremely high work load, stress, burnout, and poor job satisfaction;
- lack of support from city, public, department, and/or rank;
- residency requirements;
- “reality shock” leading to early attrition—“policing is not what I thought it would be”;
- the “frustration factor” includes the criminal justice system as a whole - lack of tools needed to do the job efficiently and effectively, as well as the district attorney’s failure to prosecute cases and/or the slap on the hand punishments given by the judges.

Eventually, these factors add up and take a toll on an officer’s perspective. The officer begins to think, “Is it worth it?” and “Why am I doing this?” This is where departments need to act. This is the tipping point in an officer’s decision to stay or leave.

Incentives can be a valuable recruiting tool and for this reason the type of incentives offered is important. If departments offer the correct incentives, officers will think more seriously about what they are giving up and weigh their options before leaving the agency. The incentives offered make a difference in who will stay or who will go. The incentives can attract the type of candidates the department seeks. It is our contention that departments offering educational incentive pay and a higher salary will experience less in the way of recruitment and retention issues.

Literature review

As early as the 1900’s, the push for “professionalization” in law enforcement was well underway. August Vollmer, Berkeley California police chief from 1905 to 1932, is credited with beginning the professionalization movement. He advocated for higher education for police officers and sought to raise personnel standards and define policing as a profession (Baker, 1995).

The President’s 1967 Task Force Report: Police emphasized the need for higher education. “The importance of advanced education was perceived to be a function of the complexity of performing police tasks. The ultimate goal was to have all enforcement personnel possess a baccalaureate degree” (Baker, 1995, p. 41).

While the movement has progressed slowly over the past forty years, it is firmly established that professionalization is the goal of modern policing and higher education is one of the main pathways to achieving a truly professional police force.

In spite of the positive arguments there has also been strong resistance to educational requirements beyond high school graduation or equivalent for hire and promotions, as well as questioning the value of college-educated officers within police agencies particularly among the “old timers” and those without a college education. They argue that there is no direct evidence linking higher education to better police officers. Others argue the recruitment issue. Some administrators feel many “good cops” will be eliminated from the candidate pool because they do not possess higher education.

Still others in the community fear the requirement will reduce the number minorities in the candidate pool and eventually skew the racial composition of the police force to the point of not reflecting community demographics. Finally, and realistically, are the financial costs. Agencies are concerned that tight budgets will not support the higher salaries college-educated officers will expect.

To add to the dilemma, many officers feel the college education requirement for promotion is unfair. The department’s education policy has changed from what it was when they were hired. Departments that now require officers to possess college hours or a degree, in a sense, have changed the rules in the middle of the game. This creates a situation where an otherwise excellent veteran police officer becomes ineligible for promotion because she/he does not meet the education requirements. In this context, departments are, in a sense, telling veteran officers that their tenure and job experience is not worthy of consideration for promotion.

The Rise and Fall of College Education Programs

The Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP), a federal program of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administrations (LEAA), was created by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. In the 1970’s, the LEAA paid for officers to attend college. The LEEP program was extremely beneficial for law enforcement. According to Flick (1994), prior to LEEP only 20% of law enforcement possessed a college education and when the program ended, 65%

had attended college and 25% finished with a four-year degree. An important aspect of the LEEP program was that officers who accepted the grant agreed to remain employed in the department for which they worked for a period of at least two years following completion of the study period. While the program was successful, it lacked political support and was discontinued. Some of the officers who were products of the LEEP program are the officers who run today's departments.

No other organization has pushed for police professionalization like the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). In order for a law enforcement agency to become CALEA certified, it must comply with 436 standards (Baker, 1995). The CALEA standards include departments encouraging all officers to obtain a college education.

More recently, communities and enforcement agencies have felt the need to fund tuition reimbursements as a recruitment incentive. Also, the Police Corps program, which is funded by the federal government, is an attempt to produce a new breed of college-educated officers. This is an excellent program for individuals who are truly interested in a career in law enforcement. However, law enforcement loses when individuals use the program to obtain a free degree and then leave law enforcement for other careers.

The Police Association for College Education (PACE) is an organization of college educated police officers working to upgrade personnel, improve performance and enhance the status of police. "The mission of the Police Association for College Education (PACE) is to advance the quality of police agencies and services through police officers, by encouraging and facilitating a minimum education level of a four-year college degree for officers" (PACE website, 2004).

The Pros and Cons of College Educated Officers

There has been much debate on the effects of higher education and law enforcement officers' job performance. The results are inconsistent and conflicting (Truxillo, Bennett, and Collins, 1998). Nevertheless, officers possessing higher education are sought after. The modern police officer has enormous responsibilities managing the different circumstances they encounter

everyday. Police officers have become counselors, referees, teachers, problem-solvers; they need to know the ever-changing laws and must possess the foresight to see the consequences of their decisions.

According to CALEA standards, officers who receive a broad general education have a thorough understanding of society and have learned to communicate more effectively. A college education provides a competitive edge in police promotional examinations because, generally, study skills learned in college carry over to the occupational context (Whetstone, 2000).

Polk and Armstrong (2001) conducted a study of the relationship of education with career paths and promotions. Their findings revealed, "Education is one of the top two factors in attaining higher rank and in shortening the length of time to promotion or favorable transfer. The level of current education best predicted the level of rank in the large agencies." Furthermore, the study found that as education increased, the amount of time spent in an assignment decreased. The results also support those who believe the attainment of such education should be rewarded when possible.

Educational Requirements and Department Incentives Trends

Incentives range from take-home vehicles to Police Officer Placement Solution (P.O.P.S.), a Phoenix, Arizona police department program that places officers in homes. Additional incentives offered to officers include flexible hours, day care programs for their children, uniform allowance, hazard pay, shift pay, longevity pay, college education pay and college tuition assistance programs.

In 1988, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) conducted a study focusing on the progress of the education movement. Approximately 250,000 officers were surveyed. The study found, "the state of police education is good" (Carter, 1992, p. 3). The study also revealed from 1968 to 1988, there was steady growth of educational levels and several departments had increased the educational level requirements for employment and/or promotion.

Carter (1992) pointed out, "In 1967, the average educational level of officers was 12.3 years, barely more than a high school diploma" (p. 4). In the 1988 study, the

average college level was 13.6 years. Carter (1992) states, “this increase in educational levels is notably fast” (p. 4).

The PERF study also found that:

- 14 percent of departments had a formal college requirement for employment.
- The number of college credits required for employment ranged from only 15 semester hours to a baccalaureate degree, with most departments requiring an average of 60 semester hours.
- A notable number of police chiefs indicated that they believed a graduate degree should be required for officers in command ranks.
- To be eligible for promotion, 8 percent of the departments required some college beyond their entry-level requirements, while 5 percent wanted a college degree.

In 1995, Stephen A. Baker conducted a CALEA study focusing on the effects of law enforcement accreditation on officer selection, promotions and education. The study surveyed 150 departments, both accredited and non-accredited, selected from lists arranged by size. Baker (1996, p. 104) asked, “Do accredited and unaccredited agencies differ in the incentives offered to support higher education?” Baker found that tuition reimbursement was the most commonly used incentive (76 % accredited and 67% non-accredited agencies). The second most commonly used incentive was incentive pay (57% accredited and 50% non accredited agencies). Promotional qualifications ranked third, with 36 percent of accredited agencies and 28 percent non-accredited agencies. Overall, the study found accredited agencies offer officers more incentives than non-accredited agencies (Baker, 1996). However, the study also found 75.7 percent of departments already had educational incentives in place prior to CALEA certification. Furthermore, Baker found 90 percent of accredited agencies recruited college graduates versus 70 percent of non-accredited agencies. Pay incentives were the second most used method by accredited and non-accredited agencies. Very few agencies required two or four-year degrees as an educational requirement for employment (Baker, 1996).

To see the impact of higher education on promotion, Baker also asked accredited and non-accredited agencies if education was beneficial for promotion. The survey asked departments if education was a requirement used in promotions. It was revealed that most agencies indicated education was important (70 percent of accredited and 78 percent non-accredited) and require higher education for promotions (Baker, 1996).

A survey, by Reeves (2000), under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Justice included information from individual state and local agencies with 100 or more officers and collected data from 501 municipal police departments, 222 sheriffs' offices, 32 county police departments, and the 49 primary State police departments. According to the data, "nearly all police departments (98%) local police departments had an education requirement for new officer recruits. Fifteen percent of departments had some type of higher education requirement for new officers. Six percent of departments required some college, eight percent required a two-year college degree, and only one percent required a four-year degree. The results revealed, "nationwide, 38 percent of local police departments, employing 58 percent of all officers, offered tuition reimbursement to officers. An estimated 30 percent of departments offered education incentives pay to qualifying officers" (Reeves, 2000, p.8).

In 2002, Reeves and Hickman compiled data for the Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. The data were gathered from 62 local police departments serving cities with a population of 250,000 or more during the years 1990 through 2000. The findings revealed, "Departments requiring new officers to have at least some college rose from 19 percent to 37 percent, and the percent requiring a 2-year or 4-year degree grew from 6 percent to 14 percent" (Reeves and Hickman, 2002, p.1). In addition, the percentage of departments requiring a 4-year degree for new officers rose from 1.6 percent in 1990 to 4.8 percent in 2000. Furthermore, the percentage of departments requiring a 2-year degree for employment increased from 4.8 percent in 1990 to 9.7 percent in 2000. The percent of non-degree college requirements increased from 12.9 percent in 1990 to 22.6 percent. "Overall, about twice as many departments had some type of college education requirement for new officers in 2000 (37.1%) as did in 1990 (19.3%)" (Reeves and Hickman, 2002, p. 3).

The Present Study

In an effort to determine how far the professionalization movement has progressed, we attempted to link minimum educational requirements and promotional requirements with higher education. Additional variables, such as the department's accreditation status and tuition and salary incentives, were also examined. We wanted to understand the effects educational policies have on law enforcement agencies' ability to recruit and retain higher educated officers.

Our study examines the educational requirements that affect recruitment and attrition rates. The following factors influence recruitment and retention rates, as well as police turnover and help predict the length of time an officer stays with the agency:

- Agency educational requirements for hiring.
- Agency educational level requirements for promotion to the rank of Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain.
- Starting base salary.
- Educational incentives (extra salary/bonuses).
- College education assistance plan (tuition reimbursement/free college).
- Agency accreditation status.
- Department size (Number of sworn officers in the department).

Data Collection Instrument

In June 2004, the senior author conducted a survey using the 200 largest police departments nationwide. The list of departments was retrieved from the website, www.policipay.net. The website gathers information from departments nationwide, compares the total compensation, and ranks agencies using a scientific method. Departments are ranked using two charts - chart one ranked the departments using the adjusted cost of living and the second chart is not adjusted for the cost of living. For this study, the 200 departments were chosen from the cost of living list.

The department's salary information was retrieved from www.theblueline.com/salary1.html. The website was updated in May 2004. The CALEA accreditation listed was gathered from www.calea.org/agcysearch/searchagcy2.cfm.

We attempted to gather the following information from the 200 largest departments:

- Educational requirements for entry level positions and promotion;
- Whether or not the departments offered salary and tuition incentives;
- And were they experiencing recruitment and retention issues.

Visiting the departments' websites was the first method of gathering information. This method was limited due to the fact that many departments did not list all information and some departments did not have websites. The author then attempted to contact the remaining departments via telephone or email. This analysis is based on responses from 195 police agencies that responded. We want to build on previous research by addressing the following research questions:

1. What are the minimum educational requirements to be hired?
2. What, if any, are the educational requirements for promotion to the ranks of Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain?
3. Does the department offer tuition reimbursement or provide tuition assistance?
4. Does the department offer salary incentives for higher education?
5. Is the department experiencing recruitment problems?
6. Is the department experiencing retention problems?

In addition to these specific questions we interviewed recruiters and/or department human resources personnel. The information gathered from these interviews included why the department was/was not experiencing personnel issues and what actions the departments could take or had taken to resolve these issues. The survey results are based on the departments' written hiring and promotional requirement policies.

Data Gathered and Analysis

Salary. Base salary for new sworn officer. Offering a competitive salary is an important variable not only in retention, but in recruitment as well. The

department's salary information was retrieved from www.theblueline.com/salary1.html, when information on the department websites was unavailable.

Agency CALEA Accreditation Status.

Minimum Educational requirements for hire. Many agencies only require applicants to possess a high school diploma (HSD) or G.E.D. Some less than 60 hours, Associates Degree or 60 hours, Bachelors Degree or 120 hours. A few departments do not require college education for hire, but a certain amount of college education is required before a specified amount of time in service has passed.

Educational Requirements for promotion. Some agencies are raising the educational requirements for promotion to a ranking officer, from sergeant to chief of police. For the purposes of this study we track only the requirements for the sergeant, lieutenant, and captain positions. The same coding as above was used. An additional coding category was added to account for departments requiring some college education plus time on the job or time in a certain position.

Educational Salary Incentives. Departments are offering officers educational salary incentives that include yearly bonuses and/or additional monthly bonuses.

Tuition Assistance Plans. Departments are offering officers tuition reimbursement or reduced tuition rates at participating institutions of higher learning.

We asked the departments' recruiters and/or personnel staff if the departments were experiencing recruitment and/or retention problems:

Recruitment issues. Departments were asked if they were having problems recruiting officers.

Retention Issues. Departments were also asked if they were having problems retaining new officers (less than five years with the department) and if any of those officers were leaving their departments to defect to other agencies with better pay and/or better benefits.

The findings revealed that 100 percent of the 195 departments surveyed required a new officer to possess a minimum of a high school diploma or GED for employment.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
High School Diploma or GED	135	69.2
GED + College Hours	5	2.6
Less than 60 College Hours	11	5.6
AA or 60 Hours	16	8.2
B.A. or 120 Hours	6	3.1
HSD/GED +/-SC and/or Military or Lateral	18	9.2
None - Some College Required After Hired	4	2.1
Total	195	100.0
System	5	
Total	200	

Table 1. Hiring Requirements

Table 1 presents department educational hiring requirements. In all, 195 departments were available for the hiring requirement analysis; 69.2 percent of the departments require only a high school diploma or a GED.

	Accredited	Non-Accredited	Total
High School Diploma or GED	43	92	135
GED + Some College (SC)	1	4	5
Less than 60 College Hours	2	9	11
AA or 60 Hours	5	11	16
B.A. or 120 Hours	3	3	6
HSD/GED +/- SC and/or Military or Lateral	4	14	18
None - Some College Required After Hired	1	3	4
Total	200	136	195

**Table 2. Number of Accredited versus Non-Accredited Departments
CALEA Accreditation**

Table 2 presents the hiring requirements and the departments' accreditation status. Of the 59 accredited departments, 43 require only a H.S.D. or G.E.D. for hire.

The analysis of the above data suggests that an agency’s accreditation status does not play a role in educational polices. CALEA encourages departments to require higher education for employment. These findings propose that accredited agencies are not following through with CALEA recommendations. This could be for several reasons. First, the process of accreditation is extremely time consuming and expensive. Non-accredited agencies may encourage higher education by following through with educational incentives and minimum hiring requirements, but cannot afford to become accredited. Second, some agencies have suggested that officers possessing higher education become “bored” with the job, leading to frustration and eventually resignation. Third, a department’s higher education employment policy may cause a shrinking candidate pool. This negative effect is the most common explanation for lowing education requirements for employment.

Education Salary Incentive	Yes	No	Total
High School Diploma or GED	82	44	126
GED + SC	5	0	5
Less than 60 College Hours	7	3	10
AA or 60 Hours	8	7	15
B.A. or 120 Hours	3	3	6
HSD/GED +/- SC and/or Military or Lateral	15	3	18
None - Some College Required after Hired	3	1	4
Total	123	61	184

Table 3. *Education Requirements for Hire and Educational Salary Incentives*

Table 3 presents the education requirements for hire and the department’s educational salary incentive. In all, data from 184 departments was analyzed.

It is a welcoming sign to see that 66.8 percent of departments offer a salary incentive for college-educated officers. In the case of departments requiring a bachelor degree or 120 hours for hire, three do not provide additional salary. It is promising to see 65.1% of departments only requiring a H.S.D. or G.E.D. and 100% of departments requiring a G.E.D. plus S.C. are promoting higher education and backing up their commitment to the officers by offering this incentive.

Tuition Assistance	Yes	No	Total
High School Diploma or GED	104	23	127
GED + SC	3	2	5
Less than 60 College Hours	8	2	10
AA or 60 Hours	13	3	16
B.A. or 120 Hours	6	0	6
HSD/GED +/- SC and/or Military or Lateral	11	7	18
None - Some College Required after Hired	4	0	4
Total	149	37	186

Table 4. *Education Requirements for Hire and College Assistance Plan Incentive*

Table 4 represents the educational requirements for hire and their college assistance plan. In all, data was collected from 186 departments. Eighty-one percent of the departments requiring only a high school diploma or G.E.D. offered a college assistance plan. This indicates that these departments are assisting and encouraging their officers to pursue a college education. Furthermore, as expected, 100% of the departments requiring college education after hire also offer the college education plan.

As an officer rises through the ranks, educational requirements are raised. Table 5 illustrates how departments' higher education expectations as a prerequisite for promotion change by increased rank. While some departments do not have a written policy in place, many department recruiters stated that their departments believed in the value of higher education and gave officers extra points on promotional exams or extra consideration over those without higher education.

Table 5 (see below) represents the educational requirements for hire and the educational requirements for promotion in rank. Data from 158 departments were gathered. Seventy-seven out of 107 departments that require only a high school diploma or G.E.D. for hire do not require any college for promotion to sergeant. Only 11 departments require a B.A. or 120 college hours. Furthermore, a total of 30 out of the 107 departments require some college education or a degree.

Requirements	Sergeant	Lieutenant	Captain	Total
High School Diploma or GED	77	62	55	194
GED + College Hours	4	4	3	44
Less than 60 College Hours	6	6	5	17
More than 60 College Hours	0	0	0	0
AA or 60 Hours	4	3	3	10
B.A. or 120 Hours	2	2	1	5
MA	0	0	8	8
HSD/GED +/- SC and/or Military or Lateral	7	7	7	21
None - Some College Required after Hired	1	1	0	2
Total	101	85	82	268

Table 5. *Educational Promotional Requirements by Rank*

For promotion to the rank of lieutenant, we have data from 150 departments. Sixty-two departments require no college education for promotion to lieutenant. However, 35 departments require a four-year degree or 120 hours for promotion to lieutenant; this is up from 11 for the rank of Sergeant.

For promotion to captain, eight departments require a Master's Degree and 53 require a B.A. or 120 hours. Of the 105 departments that require no college education for hire, 50 of those require some college education for captain's positions. This is an indication that departments expect officers to return to school after they have been hired.

Of the 185 departments surveyed sixty-six percent offered educational pay incentives and seventy-five percent offered tuition assistance plans. This indicates that departments are backing up their demands for officers to possess higher education. Only 18 percent of the departments did not offer the tuition assistance plan. One reason for this may be that these departments require college education in order to be hired. Table 6 regresses salary and education incentives on retention. For this model salary is starting salary operationalized as salaries above the mean for all departments contacted. Education incentive is whether or not a department provides salary incentives for achieving certain levels of additional education. The dependent variable in the model is whether or not a department reported that they had experienced retention problems.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.303	.255		5.110	.000
	education	.182	.086	.212	2.112	.038
	salary	1.947E-05	.000	.341	3.399	.001
1	R= .397	R ² = .158				

a Dependent Variable: retention

Table 6. *Starting Salary, Education Incentives and Retention*

Table 6 represents the correlation between departments offering educational incentive pay along with higher salary and its relationship with retention issues. As seen in Table 6, the correlation between education incentive pay and the lack of retention issues is significant. Starting salary is of course highly correlated with the lack of retention issues. This model provides some support for explaining variation in retention problems. Departments with high starting salaries and education incentive pay have fewer retention issues. Moreover, these findings suggest educational salary incentives may be more effective in retaining officers than tuition assistance plans.

Discussion

Having more college-educated officers on the force will require greater monetary commitment to cover the education salary incentives and tuition costs. We spoke to several departments' recruiters via telephone and email. Some advised that their departments did offer tuition reimbursement, but have discontinued the program due to budget constraints. Only a few departments discontinued the policy requiring college credits to be hired. These departments suggested that the policy contributed to the shrinking recruitment pool. One agency discontinued the minimum college education requirements for employees, but noted that most of the community and applicants were veterans or members of the military. This agency believed military experience could be substituted for the higher education requirement.

In this study, 53% of departments offer both salary and tuition incentives. We found that these two incentives compliment one another and there are benefits for departments using this combination to improve recruitment and reduce attrition.

Recruits who are hired by departments offering salary incentives for college education are able to reap the benefits of being recognized for their efforts and can use the extra money to pay off student loans. Furthermore, those officers seeking a higher education can see their efforts rewarded in benefits they receive such as acquiring a free college education or reduced tuition and salary incentives. Moreover, when departments discontinue their tuition incentives, the agencies lose out. They lose the “hiring incentives”, such as the officers’ ability to improve themselves and the department.

Departments that do not offer salary incentives are losing out as well. Many officers who are college educated leave in order to transfer to better paying departments or to the Federal government. Studies show that officers who are neither rewarded for their hard work nor recognized for their efforts often become frustrated and leave for other jobs.

This finding is supported by a 2002 Florida Study conducted by The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA), which focused on recruitment and retention issues. The study identified six factors contributing to high attrition rates: “economy, changing demographics of the workforce, “Gen-Xers”, upgraded educational requirements, uncompetitive salaries and benefits, and negative public perceptions” (FPCA, 2002, p.3). Moreover, recruiting and training a new officer is expensive and time consuming. N.O.P.D. (2004) estimates it costs an average of \$44,665 to recruit and train a new officer.

Vest (2001) lists negative consequences of attrition such as increased overtime pay, which drains the agency’s budget, but stresses that the most problematic consequence is that of young, inexperienced officers leaving the department.

It is also very difficult to replace veteran officers. Whatever their reasons for leaving, whether they are taking advantage of early retirement or leaving for other agencies, their knowledge and experience cannot be replaced. As a result, agencies are left with very few veteran officers to train the new recruits.

There are also problems with offering a tuition reimbursement. This type of education policy can hurt an agency by unintentionally encouraging some of their brighter officers to defect. In a number of agencies, “defectors” take advantage of the educational tuition incentives and after they have a degree in hand, they leave

departments for higher salaries. Therefore offering competitive salaries linked with educational incentives is not only important in retention, but in recruitment as well. The present trend indicates that officers are willing to relocate and defect to better paying agencies. N.O.P.D. (2004) study revealed “75% of officers responded that pay and benefits would be a very likely reason they would consider leaving the N.O.P.D.” (p.32). One final and troubling observation we made had to do with agencies that lowered standards or changed promotional procedures. Our respondents felt that this undermined the integrity of the promotional process and affected negatively, officer and departmental morale. It was felt that when promotional standards and procedures change to accommodate the less educated and less qualified, officers do not see the department as playing by the rules. Therefore, it is extremely important for departments to have set promotional standard and procedure, and not regress.

Conclusion

August Vollmer saw the value of education in law enforcement 100 years ago and the same values still exist. If the law enforcement profession wants to be treated and regarded as a profession, the personnel must be paid as professionals. Departments are faced with the problem of sacrificing quality officers for quantity, and as a result some have lowered their standards. Departments need to set clear goals for promotions and clarify all educational policies. Previous studies indicate educational requirements have increased for promotion and employment. Findings from our study suggest that departments without retention issues have higher salaries and educational salary incentives. Every time an officer leaves or defects, the agency loses money and invaluable police experience. In the end, departments will pay one way or another. Agencies need to do everything possible to become

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