

CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

2024 ANNUAL RECRUITMENT REPORT



Contents

1. Foreword	2
2. Summary	2
3. Incentives	3
4. Expedited Hiring Events	4
5. Application Submissions	6
6. Applicant Diversity	7
7. Interviewed and Hired Applicant Diversity	9
8. Residency	12
9. Hiring Process.....	12
10. Conclusion	14



1. Foreword

The primary intent of this report is to provide our community with transparent information regarding our recruitment and hiring efforts. The report also includes footnotes to the applicable paragraphs of the Consent Decree (CD) the narrative is responsive to. However, the report is structured for readability and does not address the governing paragraphs of the CD in sequential order. Lastly, the summary of the CD paragraphs provided in the footnotes are taken from the Monitor Team's September 2024 report.

2. Summary

The Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) is pleased to share the strategies used and an analysis of the results achieved by our efforts to recruit and hire high-quality men and women to protect and serve the Cleveland community. The information contained in this report reflects the Division's work during the calendar year 2024. In addition to the work by members directly involved in the recruitment and hiring process, the results were enhanced by the combined efforts of Cleveland policy makers and CDP leadership.¹

We are proud to begin this report to our community by sharing that the Division experienced a historical increase in applications, job offers, recruits entering the academy and graduates joining the ranks of the CDP. Moreover, unlike many other law enforcement agencies, we were able to hire more officers than left the department due to retirement, resignations, or other reasons. We began 2024 with 1185 sworn members of the Division and ended the year with 1220. This increase resulted in 35 more sworn officers by the year's end. Serving the Cleveland community.

These results were achieved by a significant change in strategy that occurred early in the year when recruitment responsibilities were shifted from the Department of Public Safety to the CDP.^{2,3} This restructuring streamlined and improved processes and proved to be key drivers of the year's large academy class sizes. The most visible impact of the change was recruitment efforts were transitioned to a full-time team and the sole dedicated mission for five sworn members of the Division. The unit consists of a sergeant and four officers, and they work together to ensure regular contact, via telephone, text and email, with every candidate during each step of the process. Weekly check-ins and follow-up calls assist the team in tracking candidate progress and provide each candidate with a consistent point of contact. These intentional interactions ensure personalized support and are opportunities for candidates to obtain immediate feedback as our team answers any questions they have. Our intention is to provide clear communication to ensure candidates do not become lost or discouraged during the hiring process and we view this as foundational to trust building with the applicant.

¹ ¶307 – "CDP will report annually to the public its recruiting activities and outcomes," which will include information on various, expressly-listed areas.

² ¶302 – "CDP will develop a recruitment policy and a strategic recruitment plan that includes clear goals, objectives, and action steps for attracting qualified applicants from a broad cross-section of the community" and meets certain specific, expressly-listed requirements.

³ ¶303 – "The City will implement the recruitment plan within 60 days of it being approved by the Monitor."

It is not a coincidence that our success correlates with the first full year of Mayor Bibb's Raising Investment in Safety for Everyone (RISE) Initiative⁴ – a comprehensive violence reduction and law enforcement enhancement plan. The initiative includes a range of investments, strategic partnerships and enhanced enforcement efforts, technological advancements, and other Administration-led efforts to combat high levels of crime and improve recruitment and retention within the Division.

Since launching RISE, the Bibb Administration implemented a \$5,000 hiring bonus, increased the maximum age for police recruits from 40 to 55, and offered other incentives to improve recruiting. In addition, the program supported the Division in hosting multiple expedited hiring events to simplify the hiring process. Those events contributed to the year's successful recruitment outcomes. RISE also increased the pay for current officers up to 25%, making the Division's top patrol officers among the highest paid in the state.

The following sections of this report provide insights into and analysis of this year's results. We are grateful for the broad support the Division receives from the community and recognize the results would not be as notable without that involvement. Of the 1,600 applications for police officers received in 2024, more than a third were residents of Cleveland. We are encouraged by the number of Clevelanders that share our passion to serve and protect this community.

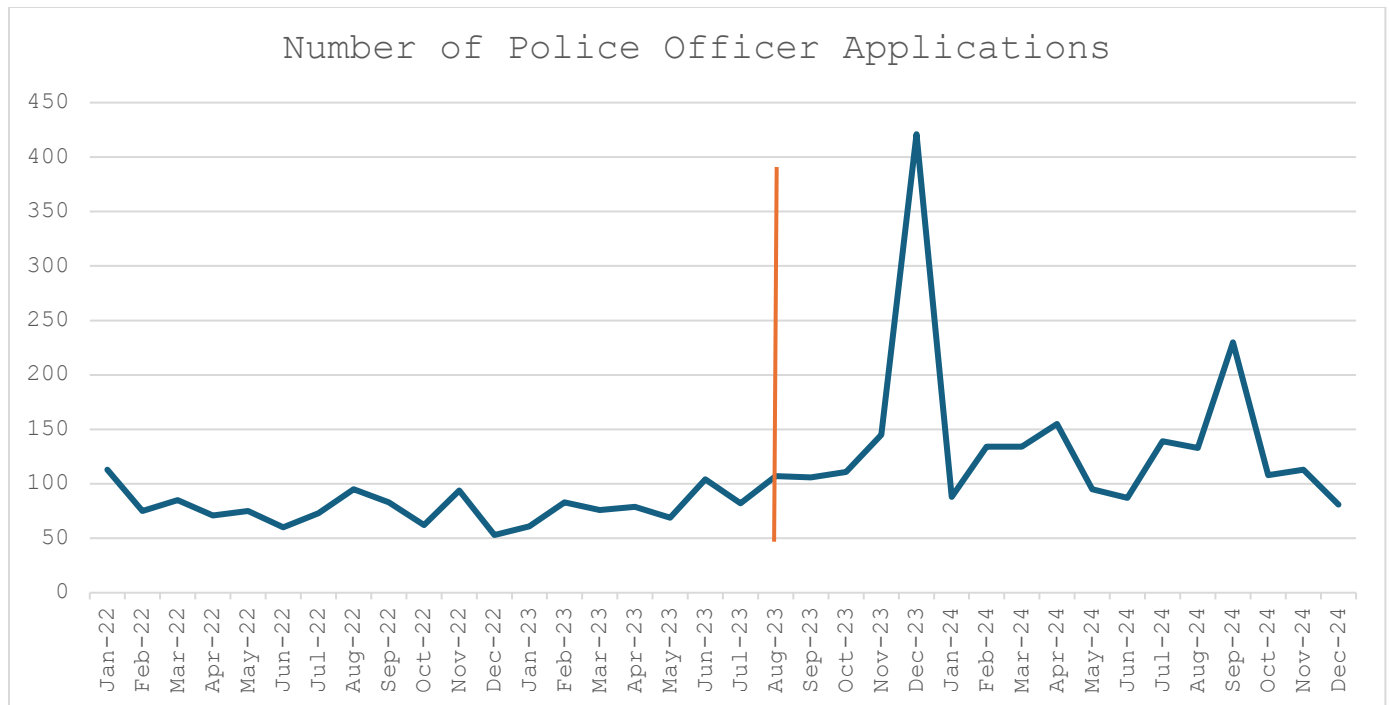
While we celebrate this year's accomplishments in attracting qualified individuals to join the CDP, we recognize there is more work to be done in terms of obtaining compliance with all recruitment and hiring aspects of the CD identified in paragraphs 300 through 311. As identified in the monitor team's (MT) September 2024 report, CDP was in "Operational Compliance" or "General Compliance" with seven of the twelve paragraphs (§'s 300, 301, 302, 303, 307, 308 and 310). The five others (§'s 304, 305, 306, 309 and 311) were assessed to be in "Partial Compliance."

3. Incentives

Our analysis indicates that monetary incentives have had a positive impact on the increased number of police officer applications the Division received during the year. Hiring bonuses of \$5000 and other pay incentives suggest we can entice qualified candidates to apply when they might not have considered a career in law enforcement.

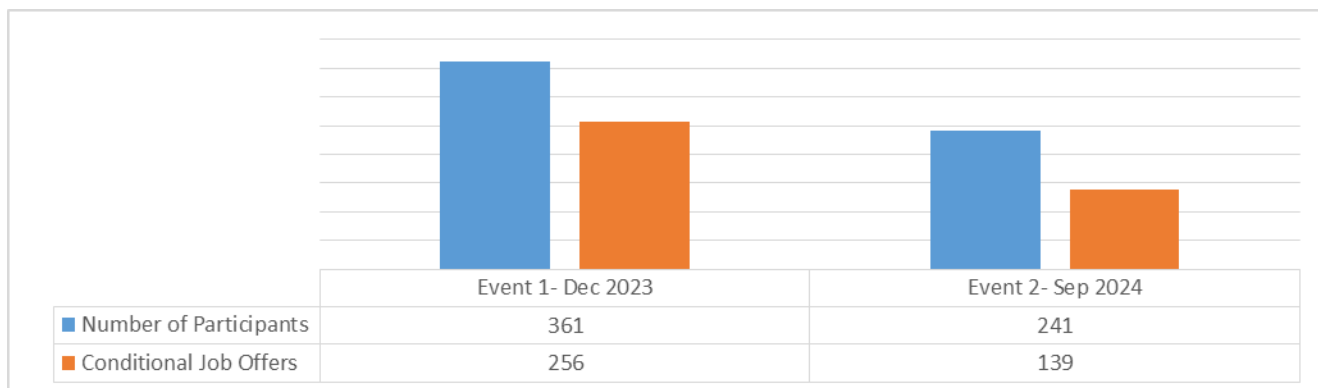
The following chart reflects the number of police officer applications received by the city of Cleveland during the years 2022 through 2024. There was a total of 3,983 police officer applications submitted during the three-year period, 62% (2,490) of which were submitted after the hiring incentives were announced in August 2023. Put another way, there were nearly 1,500 more applications submitted in the 17 months after the incentives were announced than were received during the previous 19 months.

⁴ §301 - "The Mayor will work with the City Council to develop an ordinance to place a Charter Amendment on the ballot that would give the appointing authority greater flexibility in the selection of candidates from the certified eligibility list for the CDP."



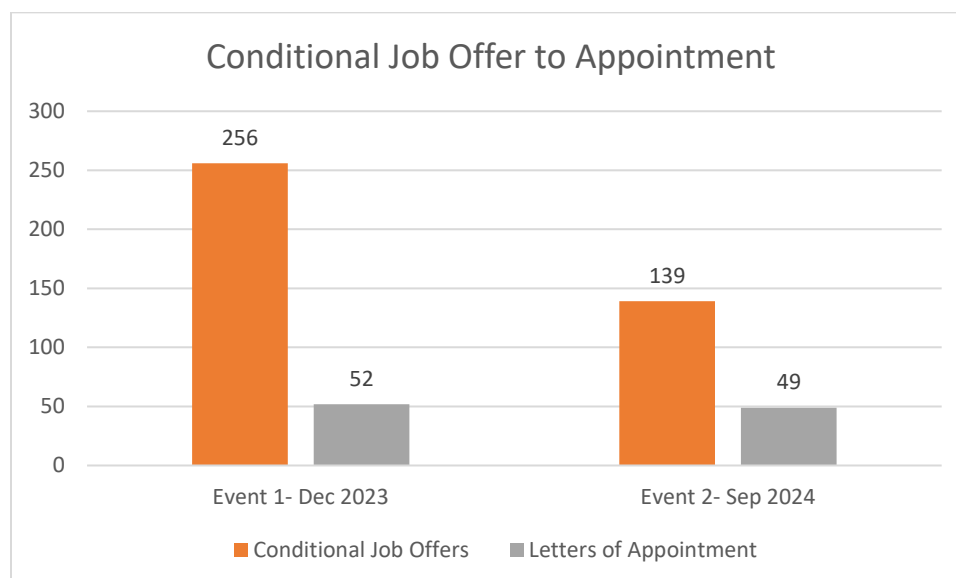
4. Expedited Hiring Events

The recruitment team, in collaboration with the City's Civil Service Commission, realized significant results from our expedited hiring events. Applicants were able to select one of three consecutive day (Friday-Sunday) options to participate in the event. The hiring events were held in December 2023 and September 2024. Candidates are able to complete the written exam, physical fitness assessment, and preliminary background interview in four to six hours. Over 600 individuals participated in the events and 339 received conditional job offers, pending successful completion of background investigations and medical and psychological evaluations. Unlike past practices where the hiring process took just over nine months from start to finish, the current process has been streamlined to approximately four months, demonstrating a significant improvement in efficiency and candidate experience.



The recruitment team engages in debriefs after each event to identify opportunities to improve. An example of integrating changes into the process can be seen in the number of conditional job offers tendered as a result of the first event compared to the subsequent two. More than 70 percent of the participants were given conditional job offers after the first event. An average of nearly 20 percent fewer conditional offers were given as a result of the next two. During the first event, conditional job offers were given to participants that had passed the written test and preliminary background interview but had failed their initial attempt at the physical fitness assessment (PFA). The rationale was that since applicants are eligible to retake the PFA within the same hiring event (allowed two attempts), providing them with a conditional job offer could encourage the applicant to perform better on the second attempt. However, none of the candidates who failed the first attempt were successful on the second. As a result, conditional job offers are only offered after candidates successfully complete all three phases of the process.

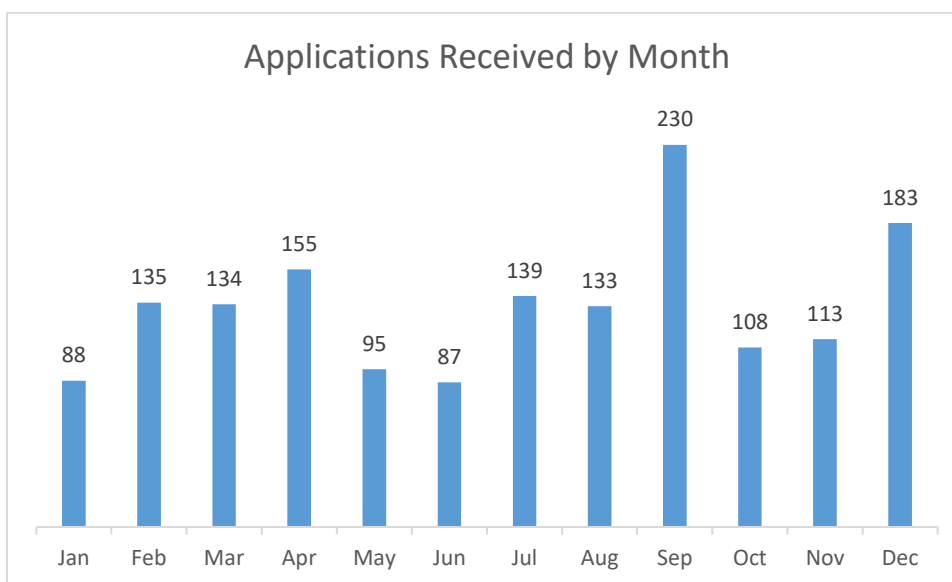
The following chart indicates the number of applicants that received conditional job offers, successfully completed the background process, and ultimately hired.



Upon initial review of the data above it suggests that significantly more candidates from the first hiring event were unsuccessful in the background process compared to those given conditional job offers during the second event (204 unsuccessful from the first event compared to 90 from the second). However, when the number of applicants that failed both PFA attempts during the first event is subtracted (154), the comparison is much more balanced. As previously described, the practice of issuing conditional letters of employment prior to successfully completing the PFA during the initial hiring event inflated the numbers.

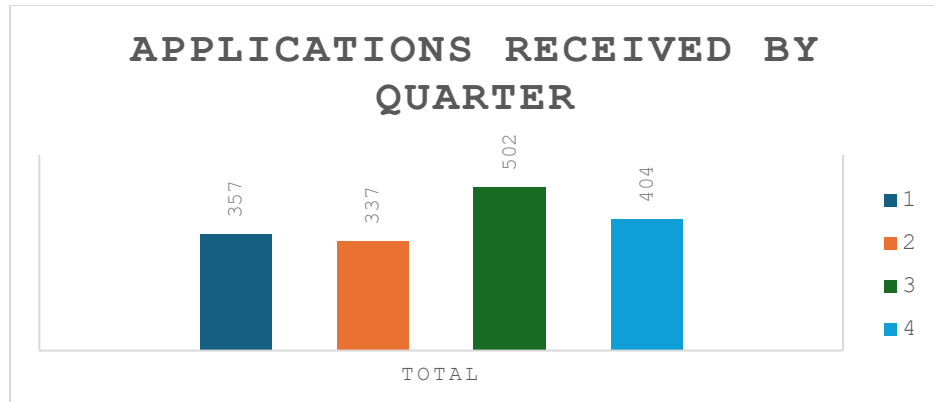
5. Application Submissions

We looked at the number of applications submitted each month to assess the impact recruiting events have on rate increases and decreases. The below chart reflects the applications received each month of 2024.



The second fewest number of applications received during any month in 2024 was 88 in January 2024, immediately following our first hiring event (December 2023). Although we anticipated the number of applications to decrease immediately following the event, we were pleased to see less of a decrease in October 2024, the month following our second event. Another takeaway from our data review was the spike in applications submitted in December, the month preceding our third hiring event. We were able to glean from looking at the data that 28 percent more applicants preregistered for the January 2025 hiring event than did for September 2024. We interpret this as an indication that a greater number of applicants are strategically entering the process as opposed to what could be a more spontaneous or day of event decision.

We also made a quarterly comparison of application rates, as indicated in the following chart.



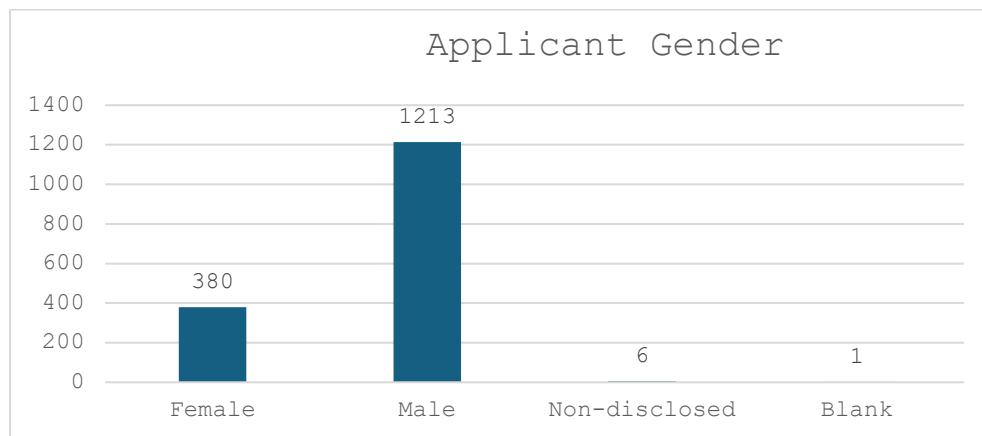
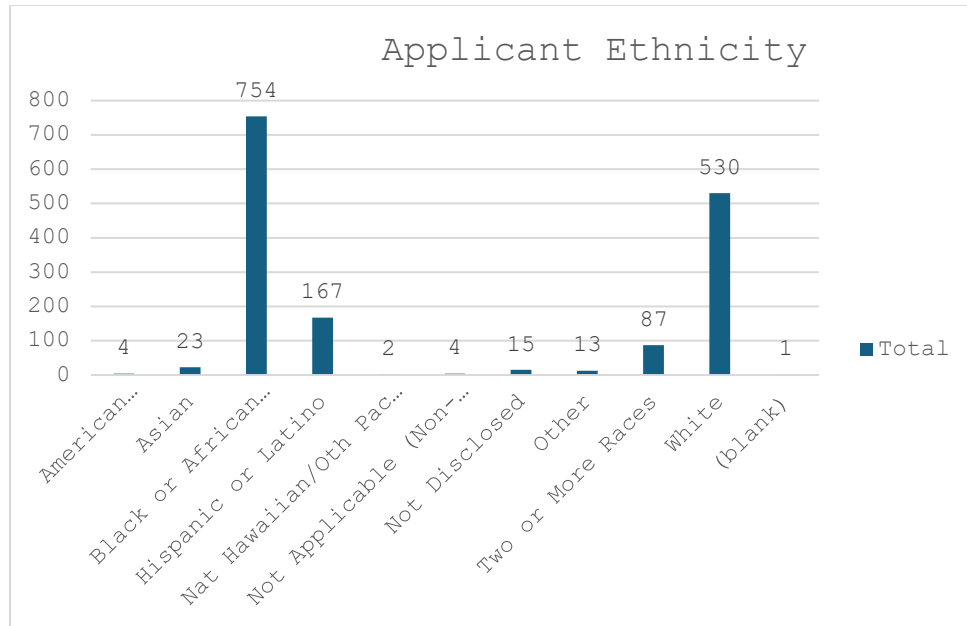
The data confirmed our assumption that the quarter where we held our hiring event (Q3) would result in the greatest number of applications submitted. Applications received in the fourth quarter are associated with the Hiring Event held in January 2025.

6. Applicant Diversity

While the number of applications received and subsequent academy class sizes have grown over the past year, our recruitment efforts continue to focus on attracting applicants who want to be part of a dynamic and constantly evolving 21st Century policing organization. CDP believes our diversity is one of our greatest strengths and promoting a workplace culture of belonging significantly influences morale and job satisfaction.⁵

More than two-thirds of the total applications received during 2024 came from individuals who self-identified as multi-racial or belonged to racial minority groups. Additionally, females represented nearly 25 percent of the total applicants. The following charts reflect the ethnicity/race and gender of applicants, based on the information they provided at the time of their application.

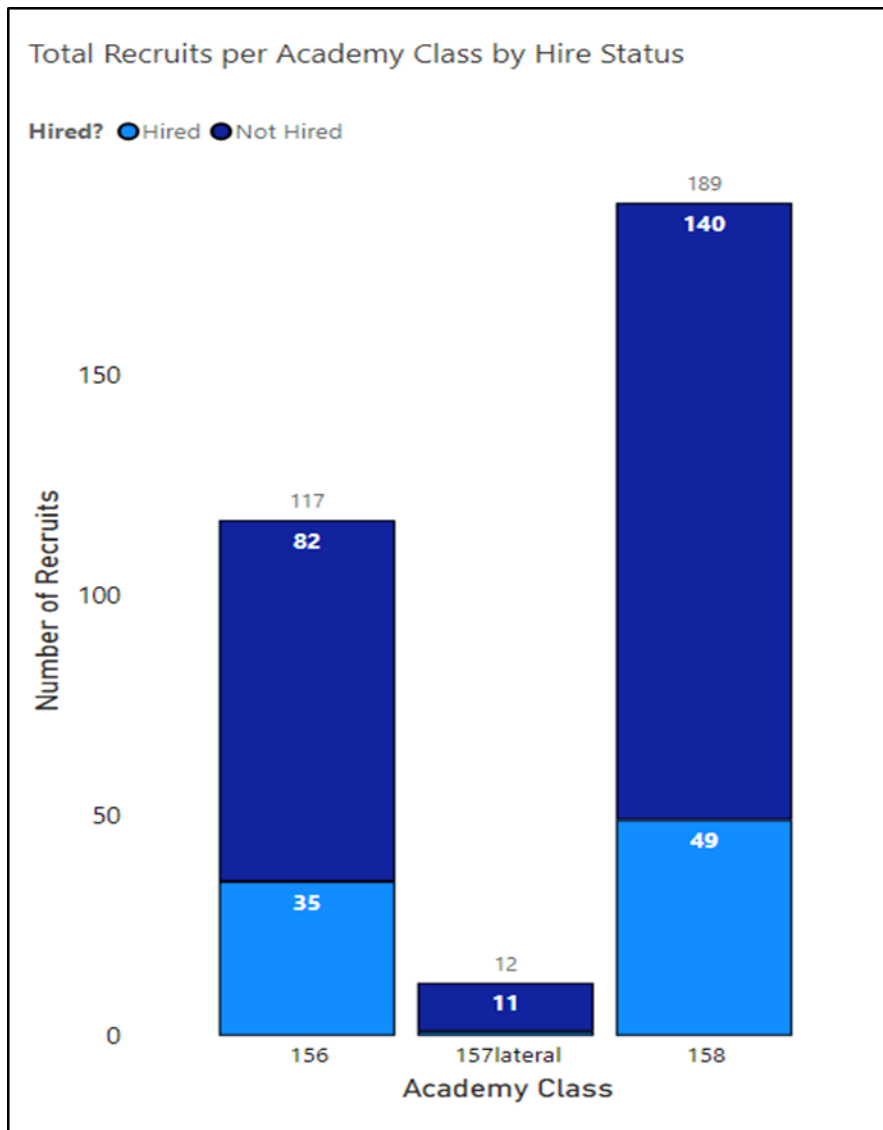
⁵ ¶300 - "The City will review and revise . . . its recruitment and hiring program to ensure that CDP successfully attracts and hires a diverse group of qualified individuals."



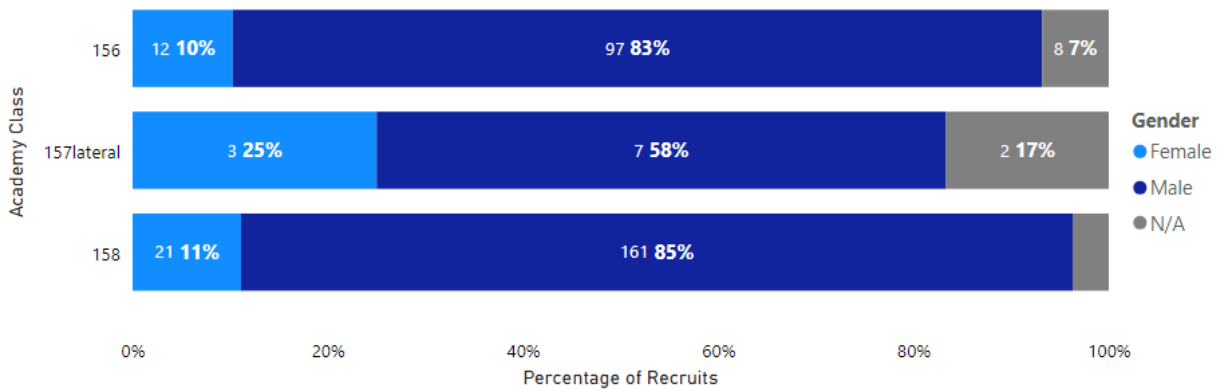
7. Interviewed and Hired Applicant Diversity

The data from the recent academy classes reflects the Division's ongoing efforts to build a diverse and inclusive workforce. Applicants represented a range of racial backgrounds, with Black or African American and White individuals comprising the largest portions of the total. While male applicants made up the majority, there was also representation from female applicants. The hiring outcomes indicate progress in some areas, while also highlighting opportunities to improve.

The charts below include the total number of candidates who advanced to the interview process and indicate whether they were hired. The information is also broken down by race, gender, and academy class.

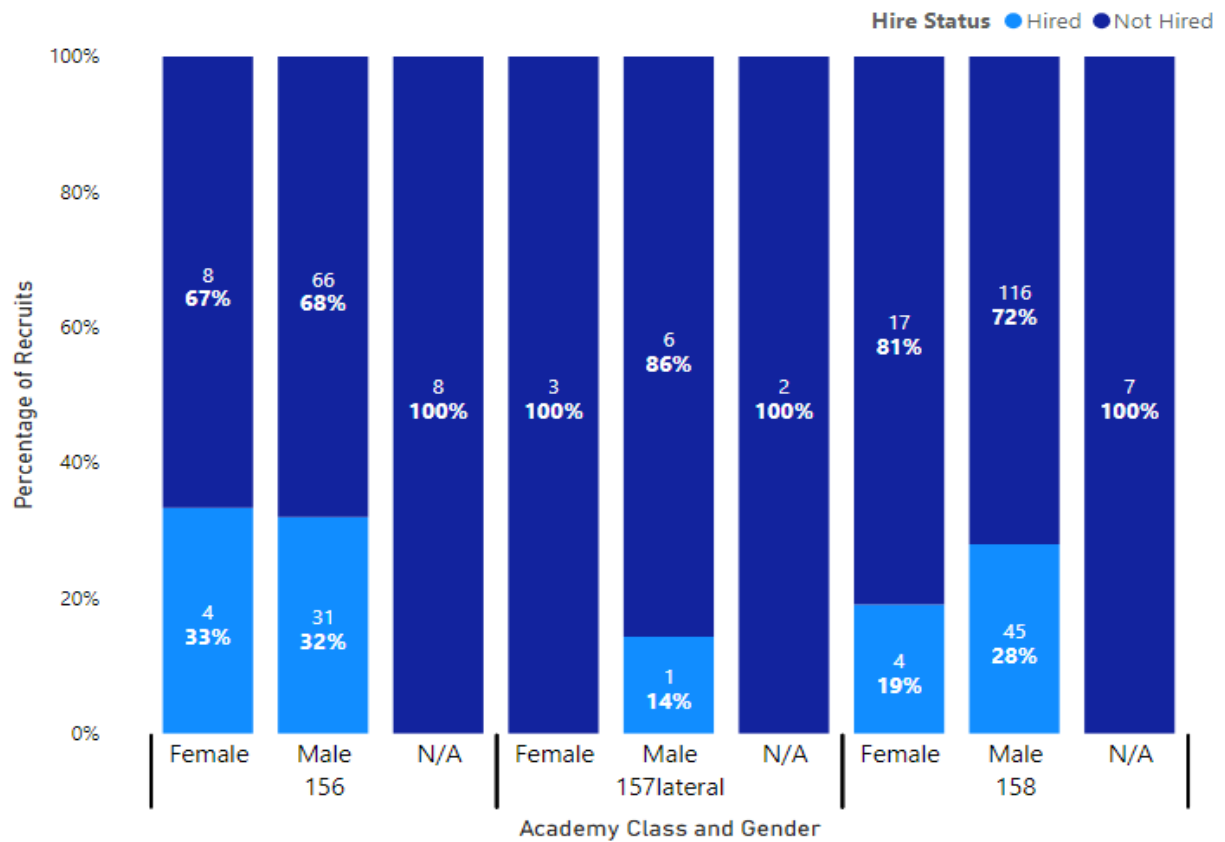


2024-Percentage of Recruits per Academy Class by Gender



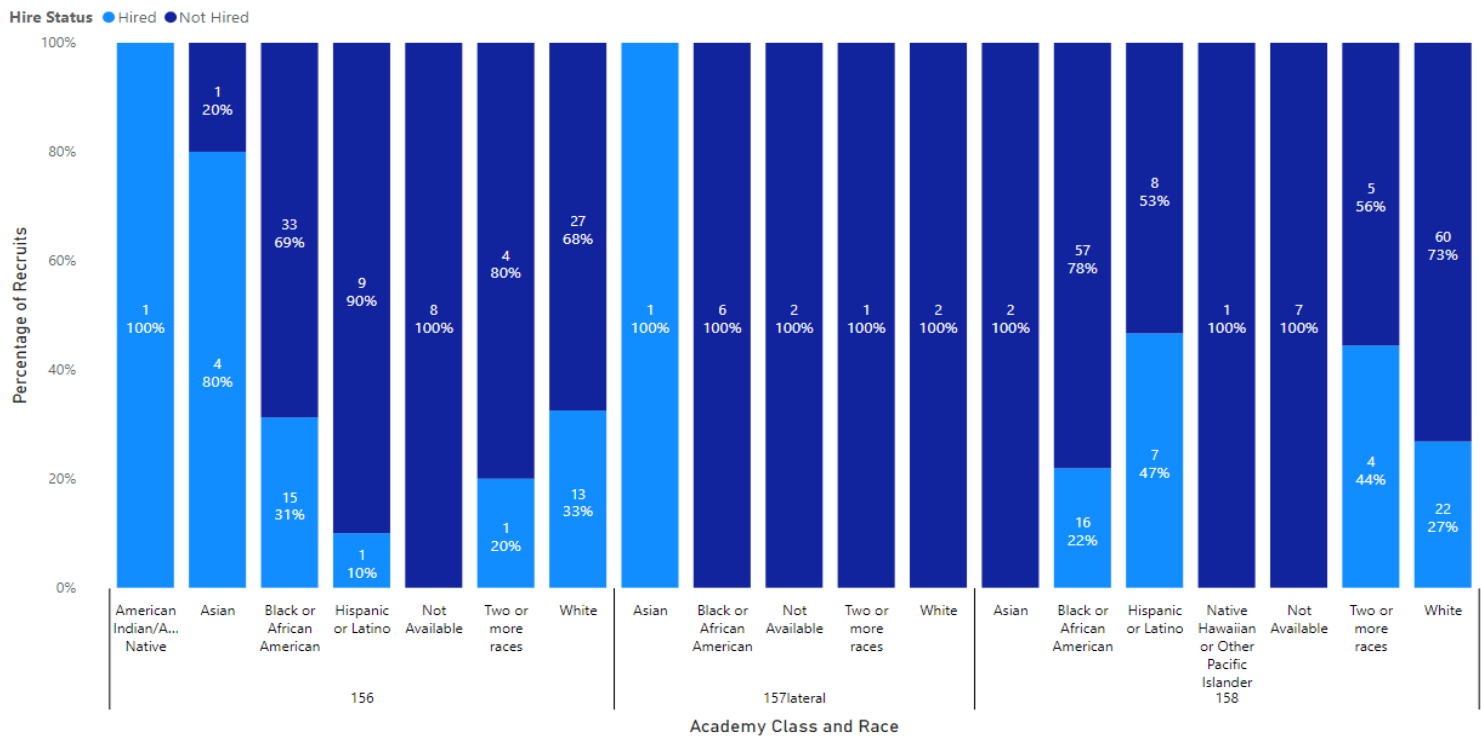
Note. The figure includes the count and percentage of recruits within each category by hire status.

2024-Percentage of Recruits by Gender and Hire Status per Academy Class

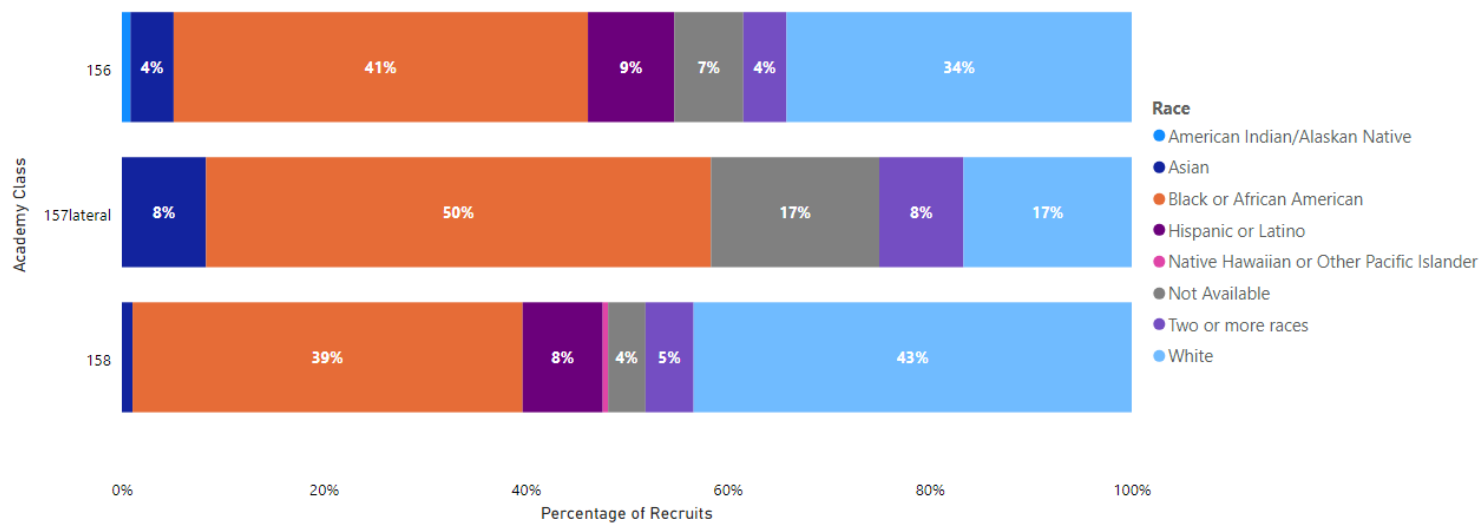


Note. The figure includes the count and percentage of recruits per recruitment class within each category by hire status.

2024-Percentage of Recruits by Race and Hire Status per Academy Class

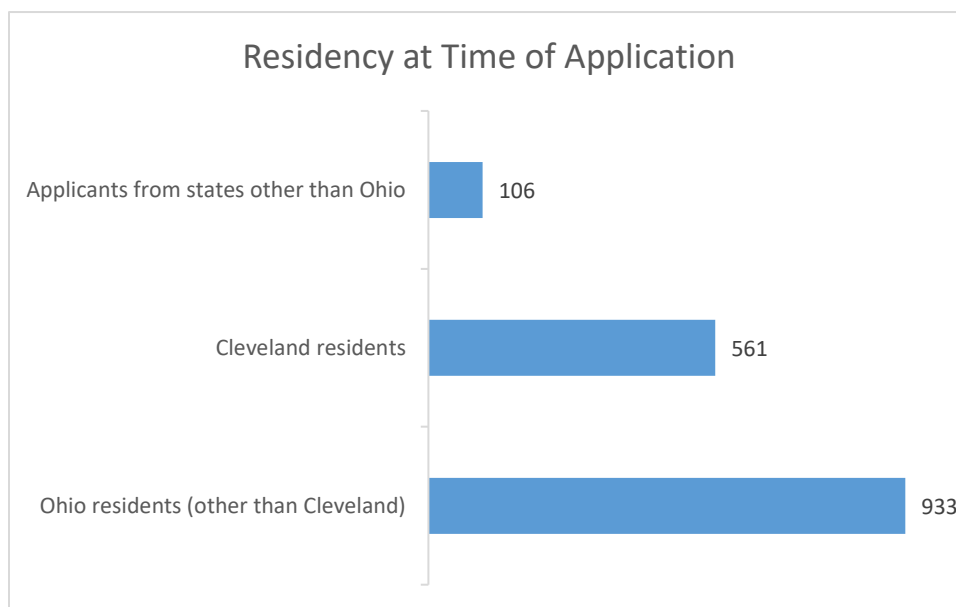


2024-Percentage of Recruits per Academy Class by Race



8. Residency

More than one-third of the applications received in 2024 came from Cleveland residents.⁶ We believe this is a result of the progress made in elevating our department's standing in the community and the broad support our Division receives from the community and city leadership. We are also encouraged by the number of individuals interested in joining our team from throughout the state of Ohio and beyond. The following chart depicts the residency of the applicants.



9. Hiring Process

Applicants who successfully complete the written exam, physical fitness assessment, preliminary background interview and are given a conditional job offer letter enter the hiring process. The process includes a comprehensive background investigation and medical and psychological assessment. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the process which must be completed prior to a candidate being offered an opportunity to attend the CDP Police Academy.

The first step in the process for a candidate is completing a personal history statement (PHS). The PHS is lengthy document which the candidate populates with personal identifying information, places lived, employment history (inclusive of military service, if applicable), criminal acts, driving record, evidence of financial responsibility, and includes an extensive list of open-ended questions regarding past conduct. Documentation that must also be submitted with the PHS include copies of the applicant's birth certificate, social security card, high school diploma or GED, driver's license, military discharge form or proof of registration with the Selective Service, naturalization papers for non-US born individuals, and transcripts related to any post-secondary education.

⁶ ¶304 - "CDP's recruitment plan will include specific strategies for attracting a diverse group of applicants," including officers with various, specific, expressly listed skills and backgrounds.

A CDP background investigator (BI) is assigned to each candidate after submitting the above information and documentation. Once the BI has reviewed the contents, he or she conducts an in-person interview with the candidate. The initial interview consists primarily of a discussion regarding the information contained in the PHS and follow-up questions generated by the candidate's responses and information provided. The BI also confirms with the candidate that all the responses and information provided are true and accurate. The candidate is given an overview of the investigative process and an estimate of the time it will take to complete.

The BI is responsible for conducting a systematic investigation to verify the information provided by the candidate on the PHS and all subsequent interviews with the BI and recruiters. Some of the steps involved in the investigation include interviewing personal references, family members, and neighbors. The candidate's current and former supervisors and co-workers are also interviewed and performance evaluations or employment related records are reviewed by the BI, when available.⁷ A plethora of databases are searched to identify potential evidence of unreported law enforcement contacts, involvement in criminal matters or civil litigation, validation of reported driving record, any prior disqualifications or removal from service as a police officer, evidence of financial irresponsibility, and social media is also reviewed for activity that would indicate bias.⁸

Candidates also undergo a medical examination and psychological assessment as part of the hiring process. The medical examination includes a test that screen for illegal drugs, including steroids.⁹

If a candidate is a current or former police officer from another jurisdiction, he or she would be required to complete the same process described above, with one notable exception. The review of the candidate's documented work performance is not a mandatory requirement for completion of a background investigation. Although CDP BI personnel endeavor to do so whenever possible, we have learned that not all employers maintain performance reviews. However, current or former officers will not be hired by CDP without an in-person inspection of their personnel files to include documented training, citizen complaints, and uses of force.¹⁰

All of the above investigative actions and findings are documented in the background investigation software leveraged by CDP (eSOPH). The BI must articulate how the information was gathered from a wide variety of sources, how it was incorporated to help inform the determination of candidate suitability and ensure it is done without bias.

⁷ ¶310 - "CDP will request to review personnel files from candidates' previous employment and, where possible, will speak with the candidate's supervisor(s) and maintain any "salient information . . . in candidate's file."

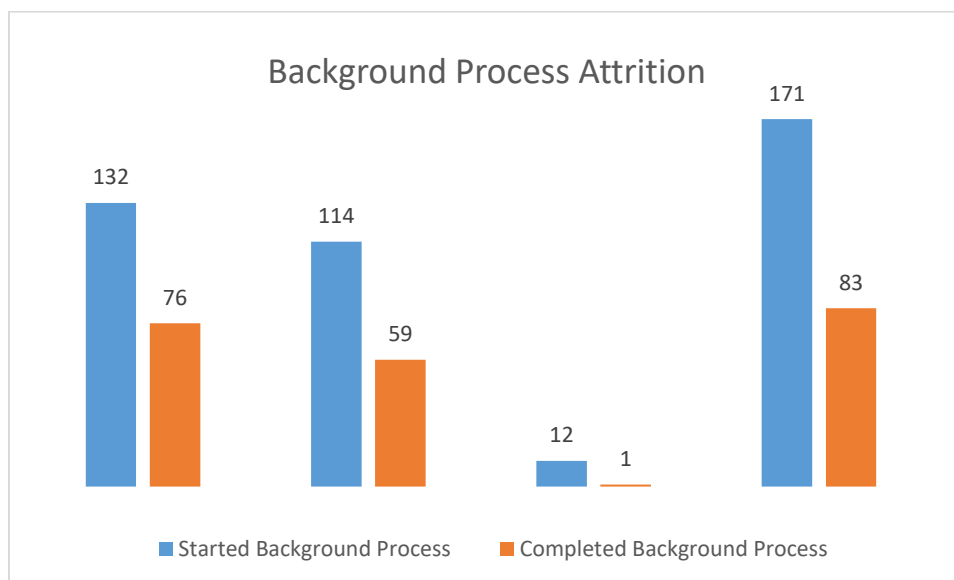
⁸ ¶309 - "CDP will conduct thorough, objective, and timely background investigations of candidates for sworn positions" that cover various, expressly-listed topics.

⁹ ¶308 - "[A]ll candidates for sworn personnel positions" will have "psychological and medical examination" and be subject to "drug testing." Existing officers receive "random drug testing."

¹⁰ ¶311 - "If a candidate has previous law enforcement experience, CDP will complete a thorough, objective, and timely pre-employment investigation" addressing various expressly-identified things.

Background investigations are critical because they are the basis from which hiring decisions are ultimately made.

The following chart compares the number of candidates that entered backgrounds to the number that completed the process for the three most recently completed recruitment cycles.



As indicated above, about half of the total number of applicants who entered the backgrounds completed the process. Of the 199 applicants who failed to complete the process, we were able to determine that 166 self-elected to withdraw. Applicants can withdraw from the process for any reason, but we polled our BI's in an attempt to identify causes and what we could do to reduce the number. The vast majority of candidates withdrew from the process because something was revealed in the background investigation that they had withheld. After the Safety Director has selected the candidates, the medical and psychological exam results are released, which results in additional candidates being removed from the list. This information is not provided prior to the Safety Director selections.

10. Conclusion

CDP is proud of the results produced by our recruitment and hiring team members, grateful for the leadership provided by decision makers, and inspired by the support of our community. Despite receiving positive results, the Division faced several challenges during the hiring process over the course of the year. One significant challenge is the high rate of applicants who voluntarily withdraw from the process, often after initial stages. Additionally, many candidates fail to complete their applicant profiles in full, leading to delays and disqualification from consideration. Another common issue is the frequent no-shows for scheduled appointments such as interviews, medical examinations, or background checks. These obstacles not only slow down the recruitment timeline but also strain Divisional resources. With these difficulties in mind, we are always seeking to

improve the processes and strategies that are in place. We are driven to be a self-evaluating and self-correcting team that recruits, vets, and trains the next generation of public servants committed to the safety of Cleveland.

We are excited about what we will accomplish in 2025. In addition to our goal to conduct more expedited recruitment events than have ever been coordinated in a single year, we also look forward to consulting with the Community Policing Commission and other community stakeholders on suggestions to enhance our process.¹¹

¹¹ ¶305 - “In developing and implementing its recruitment plan, CDP will consult with the [Community Police] Commission and other community stakeholders on strategies to attract a diverse pool of applicants.”