

CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

2025 ANNUAL RECRUITMENT REPORT



Contents

I.	Introduction.....	3
II.	Summary.....	3
III.	Staffing Numbers.....	4
IV.	Incentives	5
V.	Expedited Hiring Events	5
VI.	Application Process	7
VII.	Diversity.....	9
VIII.	Residency	13
IX.	Hiring Process and Background Process.....	14
X.	Screening Committee Review and Selection Process.....	18
XI.	Conclusion	19



I. Introduction

The Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) is proud to present an overview of the strategies implemented and the outcomes achieved through its continued efforts to recruit and hire highly qualified candidates who are dedicated to protecting and serving the residents, visitors, and business community of the City of Cleveland. The information contained in this report reflects the Division's recruitment and hiring initiatives during calendar year 2025.

The progress outlined in this report is the result of the collaborative efforts of personnel directly involved in recruitment and hiring, as well as the ongoing support and leadership provided by City policymakers and CDP leadership. Through continued innovation, community engagement, and process improvements, the Division remains committed to strengthening its workforce with candidates who reflect the professionalism, integrity, and dedication required to serve the Cleveland community.

II. Summary

The Division remains committed to maintaining high standards throughout the recruitment and hiring process while continuously implementing innovative strategies to attract and select highly qualified candidates. This report outlines the Division's recruitment and hiring efforts and the processes involved in selecting applicants for appointment to Patrol Officer.

The hiring process for police officers involves multiple stages designed to ensure candidates meet the professional standards and qualifications required for the position. Becoming a police officer requires commitment, dedication, and perseverance from each applicant. Likewise, the process relies on the professionalism and dedication of Divisional personnel who work diligently to guide and evaluate applicants throughout each phase of the hiring process.

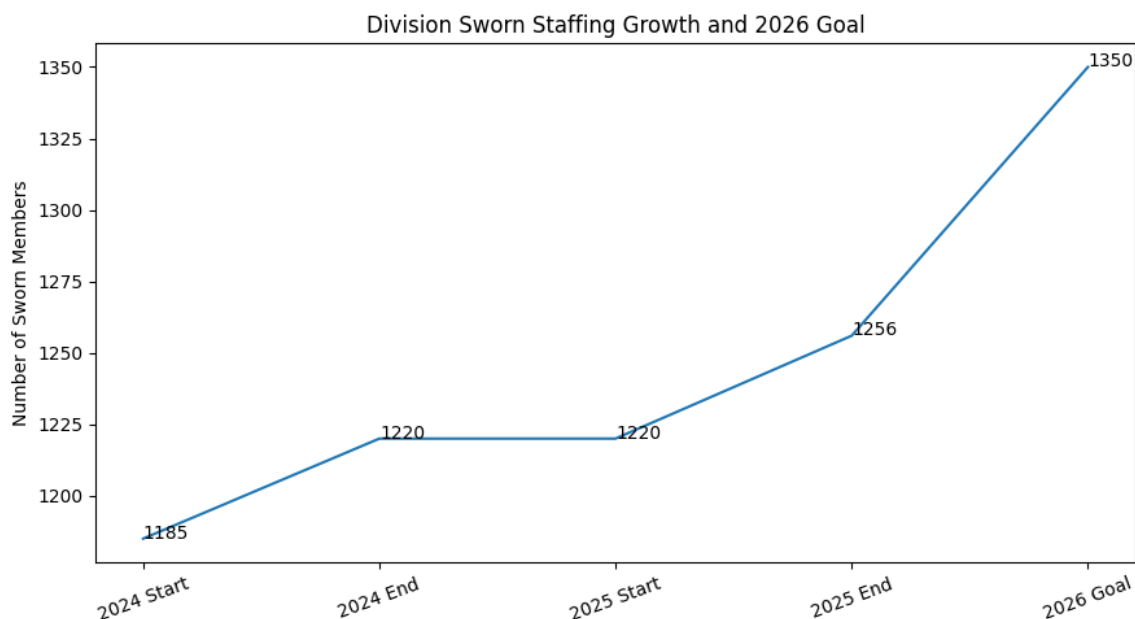
The Recruitment Unit was restructured to provide more direct support throughout the onboarding process, with the goal of attracting highly qualified

candidates as guardians of the City of Cleveland and its residents and visitors. The Division implemented significant changes to the way the Recruitment Team engages with prospective applicants by establishing the unit as the primary point of contact throughout the hiring process. This includes maintaining consistent communication, addressing applicant questions and concerns, and providing guidance and assistance at every stage of the process.

These strategies were first introduced at the end of 2024, and results have been positive. The changes have helped create a more streamlined and supportive hiring experience, reducing stress for applicants as they transition into a life-changing career in law enforcement.

III. Staffing Numbers

The Division continues to experience steady growth in sworn staffing levels. In 2024, the number of sworn members increased from 1,185 at the start of the year to 1,220 by year's end. In 2025, the Division experienced a relatively low number of retirements and resignations, contributing to additional growth in personnel. The year began with 1,220 sworn members and concluded with 1,256 sworn members. The Division will continue its recruitment and hiring efforts in 2026 with the goal of reaching 1,350 sworn members.



IV. Incentives

The Division has implemented a range of recruitment and retention incentives designed to attract and support qualified candidates. These include an increase in recruit hourly pay, which provides greater financial stability during academy training and helps alleviate economic strain for new hires. Additionally, a \$5,000 signing bonus is offered, distributed in designated phases of the initial hiring process. Educational support is also available through tuition reimbursement of up to \$6,000, along with incentive opportunities for individuals who possess an Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) certification or have attained college degrees.

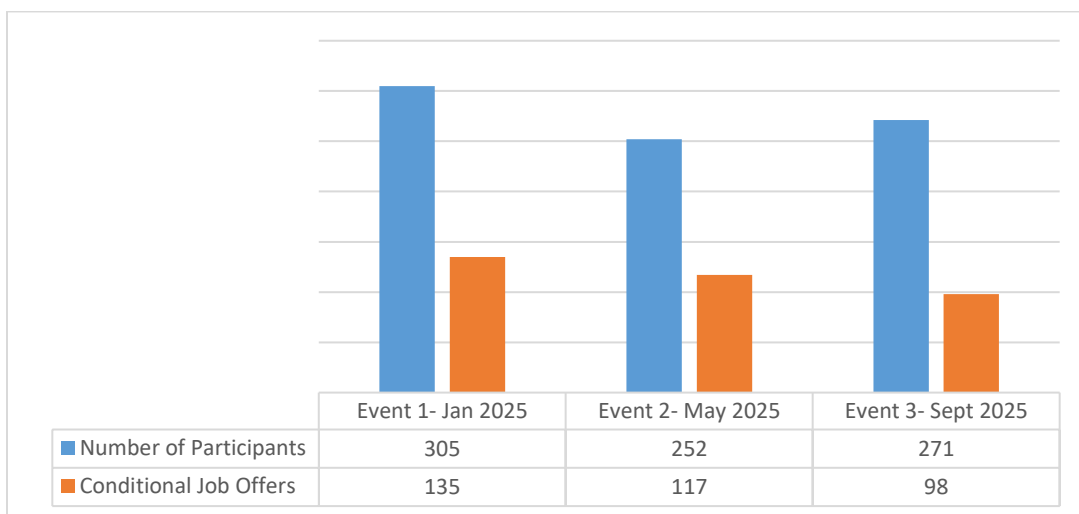
The Division further promotes career advancement through a structured promotional testing process, allowing officers opportunities to progress in rank. Eligibility criteria have also been expanded, increasing the maximum application age from 40 to 54, thereby broadening the pool of qualified candidates. Career development opportunities within the Division are extensive, with more than 40 specialized units available for assignment and professional growth. Collectively, these initiatives reflect the Division's ongoing commitment to strengthening its workforce, enhancing career pathways, and adapting to meet the evolving needs of the organization and the community it serves.

V. Expedited Hiring Events

The hiring events have proven to be highly successful and have become an established component of the hiring process. The Division of Police continues to work closely with Civil Service during these events to ensure efficient coordination and applicant processing. Members of the Recruitment and Personnel Unit assist with applicant registration and help ensure applicants are directed appropriately throughout each phase of the event.

Consistent with prior events, applicants are typically able to complete the written examination, physical fitness assessment, and preliminary background interview within approximately four to six hours. More recently, Recruitment Unit members have encouraged applicants to complete the written examination or National Testing Network (NTN) requirement prior to attending the hiring event. Applicants who complete the NTN process in advance are only required to register at the event before proceeding directly to the physical fitness assessment.

The Division continues to evaluate outcomes following each hiring event to strengthen engagement with applicants and further streamline the overall hiring process. Throughout 2025, a total of 828 applicants attended the Division's Hiring Events. 305 applicants attended in January, 252 attended at a later May event, and 271 candidates attended in August, reflecting consistent participation across the year. This ongoing analysis of event performance supports continuous improvements in both candidate experience and recruitment efficiency. At the same time, the Division demonstrated strong applicant progression, issuing 135 conditional offers in January, 117 conditional offers in May, and 98 conditional offers in September. These results reflect the successful advancement of qualified applicants to the conditional offer stage across multiple hiring events.



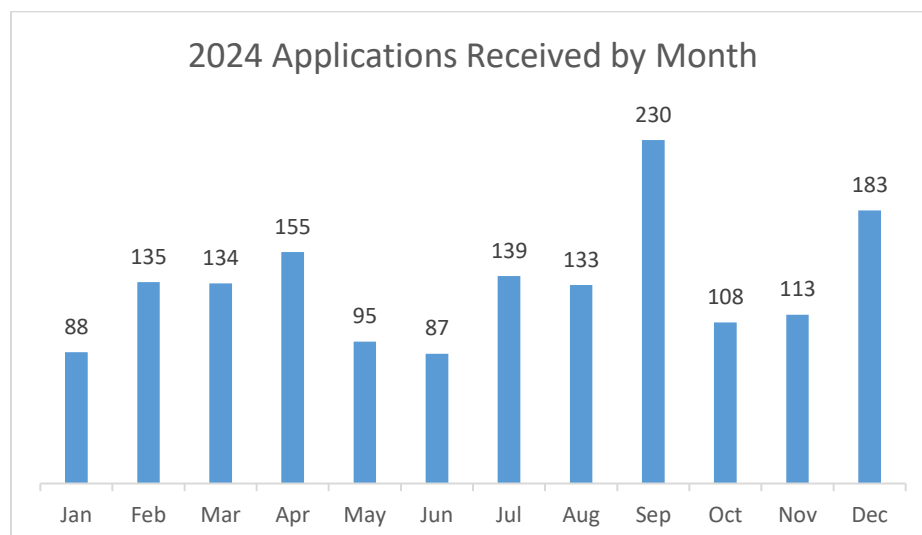
VI. Application Process

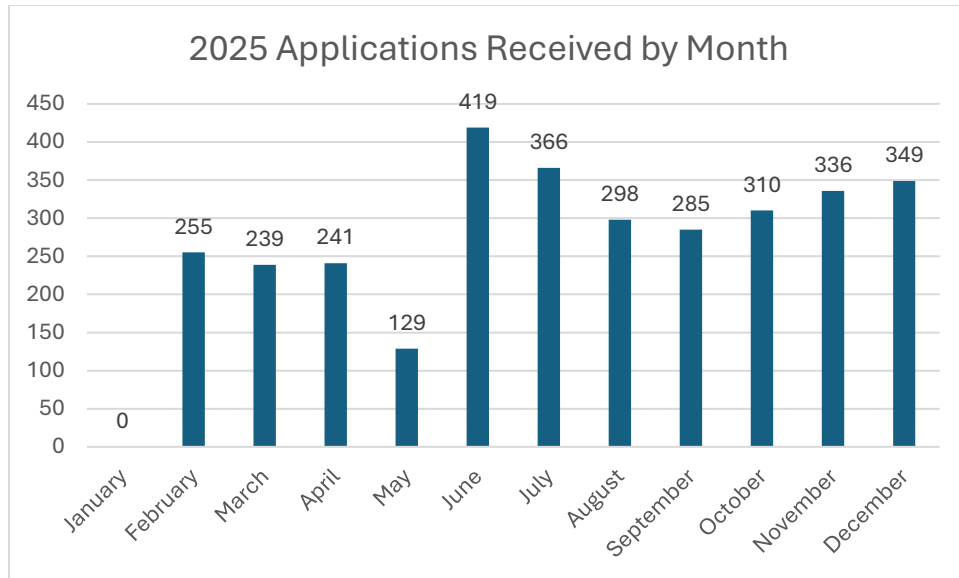
Applicants begin the process by applying for the Patrol Officer position through the City of Cleveland website. After the application is received, Civil Service personnel contact applicants using the email address provided in the application materials.

The 2024 report described the changes made in The Recruitment Unit by assigning Police Officers to the Unit full time and keeping constant lines of communication with applicants from the beginning of the process until they start the academy. Those strategies have not changed.

The Recruitment Unit is tasked with informing citizens of the posting through various types of communications, social media, email, phone, reaching out to social groups we have partnered with, and the distribution of flyers throughout the city and neighboring suburbs. During the application process our goal is to attract as many viable applicants as possible.

During the course of 2025, the Division also contracted with Safeguard Recruiting, an online recruiting software firm. Safeguard advertises through several social media platforms targeting residents throughout the state of Ohio and surrounding neighboring states. The software application was made available to the Recruitment members, making contact and tracking of an applicant's phases in the hiring process much easier to track.



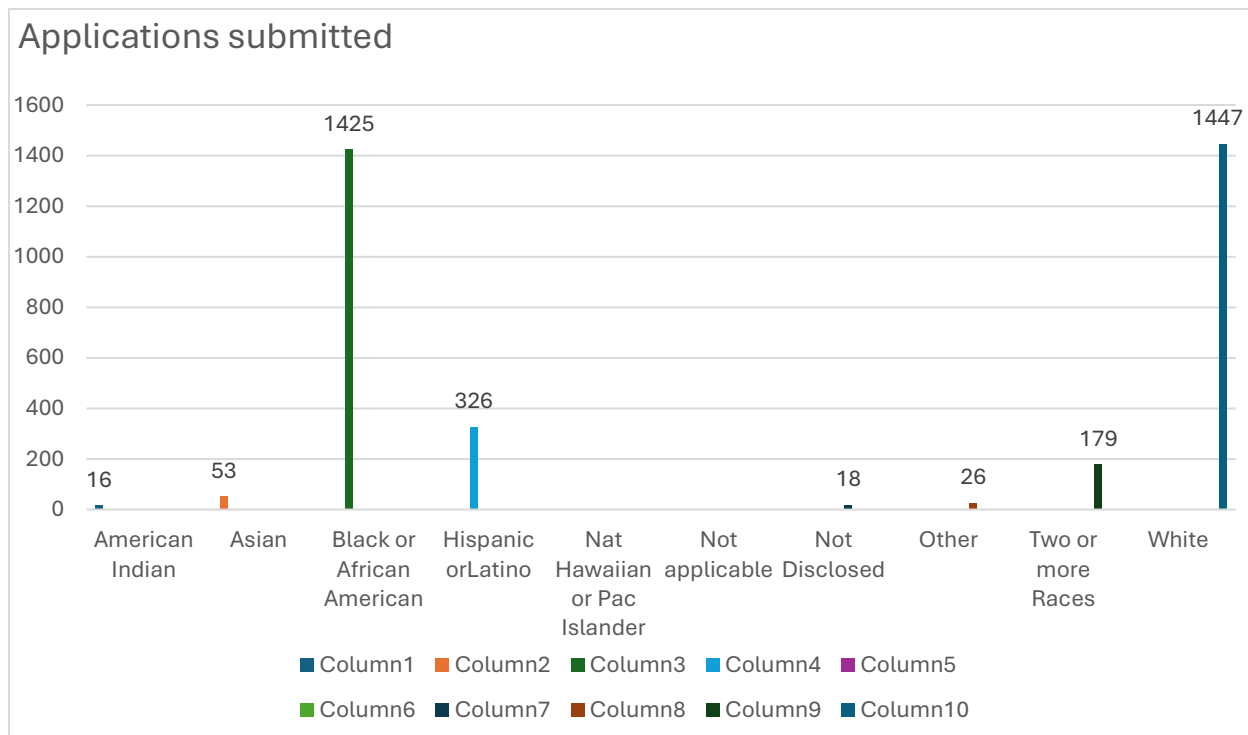


The 2025 application data shows a dramatic increase compared to 2024, with almost every month exceeding the previous year. In 2024, monthly applications ranged from 87 to 230, with the highest volume occurring in September (230) and relatively moderate activity throughout the year. By contrast, 2025 experienced much stronger demand, especially from midyear onward, with applications frequently exceeding 300. June 2025 recorded the peak at 419 applications, nearly double the highest month in 2024. While January 2025 started unusually low at 0 applications due to the Hiring Event taking place that month, the following months quickly surged, surpassing corresponding 2024 figures in every comparable period. The second half of 2025 remained consistently strong, with October, November, and December all above 300 applications, compared to 108, 113, and 183 respectively in 2024. Overall, the data indicates substantial growth in application volume in 2025, suggesting increased outreach success compared to 2024.

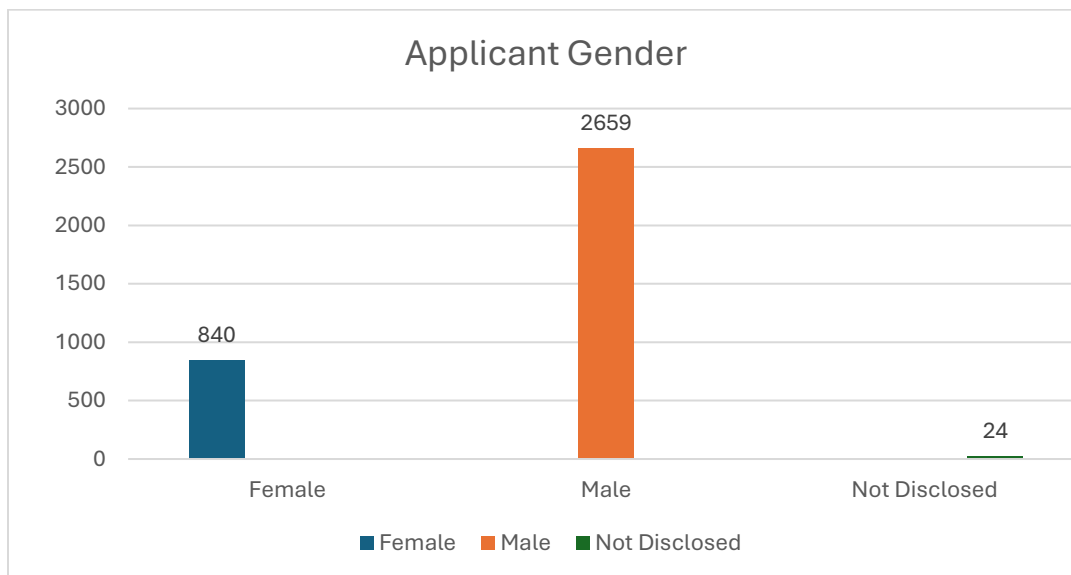
VII. Diversity

The Division is committed to recruiting and hiring a diverse group of qualified candidates who reflect the demographics and communities of the City of Cleveland. Recruitment efforts are conducted in a fair and inclusive manner, ensuring all applicants are treated equally and with respect throughout the hiring process. The Division recognizes the value that diversity brings to policing, including broader perspectives, stronger community relationships, and improved understanding among the populations served. Through continued outreach and engagement, the Division works diligently to build and maintain a workforce that is representative, professional, and inclusive.

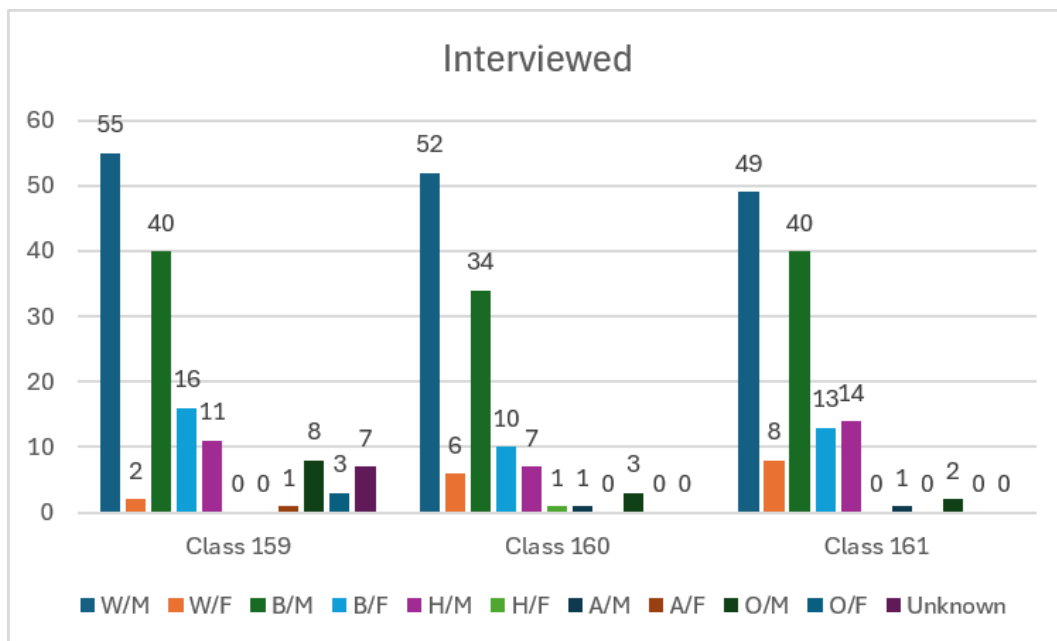
The applicant pool reflected a broad range of demographic backgrounds. A total of 3,490 applications were submitted, including 1,447 White applicants, 1,425 Black or African American applicants, 326 Hispanic or Latino applicants, 179 applicants identifying as two or more races, 53 Asian applicants, 16 American Indian applicants, 26 applicants identifying as other, and 18 applicants who chose not to disclose their race. No applications were received from Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander applicants.



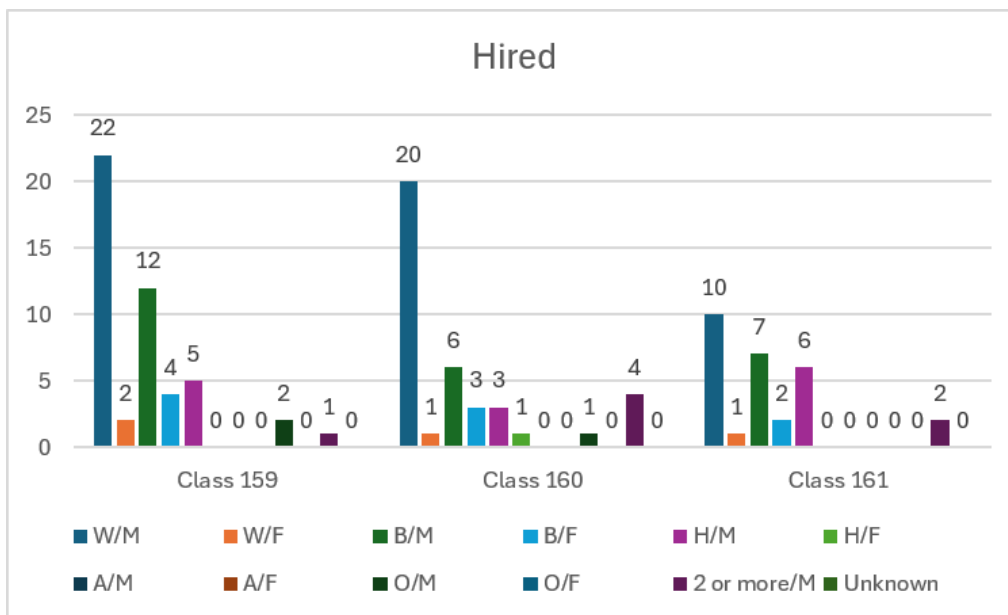
The applicant pool also reflected gender distribution across submissions. Of the 3,523 total applicants, 2,659 identified as male, 840 identified as female, and 24 did not disclose their gender. This distribution provides additional context for understanding the composition of the applicant pool and supports ongoing efforts to monitor recruitment outcomes across demographic groups. The Division remains committed to increasing representation among female applicants and continues to actively encourage and support outreach efforts aimed at attracting more women to apply, with the goal of strengthening diversity within the applicant pool and the workforce.



Across the three classes, the interview pool reflected a broad range of demographic groups. Although White men (W/M) represented the largest share of candidates interviewed for each class (55 in Class 159, 52 in Class 160, and 49 in Class 161), Black men (B/M) were the second-largest group interviewed (40, 34, and 40, respectively), while Black women (B/F) and Hispanic men (H/M) also had notable representation. Smaller numbers of White women (W/F), Hispanic women (H/F), American Indian/Alaska Native men and women (A/M and A/F), and candidates with other or unknown demographics were also interviewed across the three classes.



Compared with the interview pool, the hiring outcomes generally reflected a similar pattern, with White men remaining the largest group hired (22 in Class 159, 20 in Class 160, and 10 in Class 161), followed by Black men (12, 6, and 7, respectively). Black women and Hispanic men also continued to be represented among those hired, although at lower numbers than in the interview pool. In the updated hiring data, an additional category, “two or more races/male”, appears. This category was not available during the initial interview stage because demographic information collected at the application stage is more limited. Following the background investigation and onboarding process, applicants have an opportunity to provide more detailed self-identification information, resulting in the inclusion of the two or more races/male category in the final hiring data. Overall, while the number of hires was substantially smaller than the number interviewed across all demographic groups, the hiring results continued to reflect diversity across multiple racial and ethnic groups.

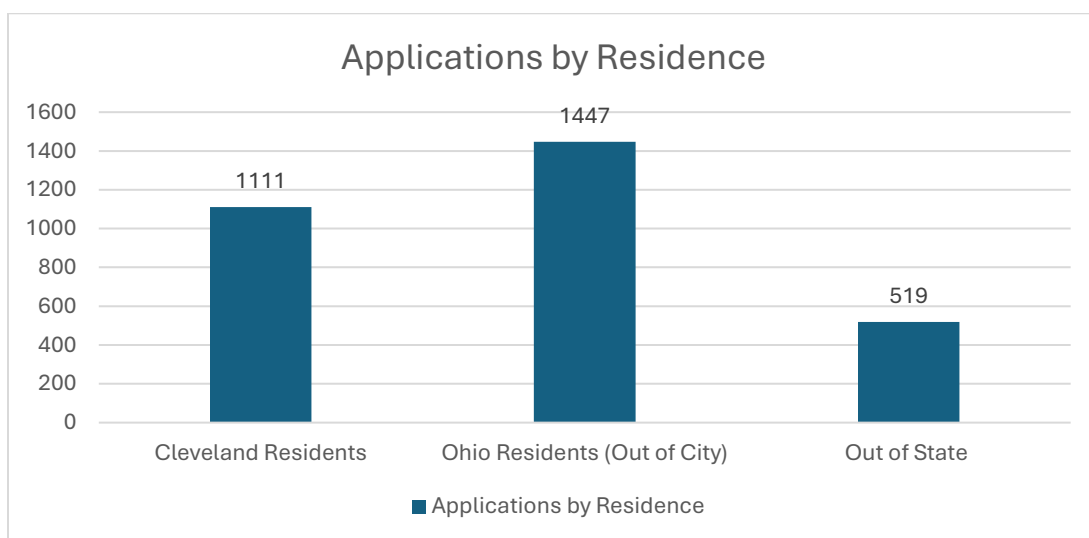


VIII. Residency

The Division strives to increase the number of applicants from the City of Cleveland while maintaining a broad and inclusive recruitment approach. While in-city residency is strongly encouraged and valued for its direct connection to the community served, recruitment efforts are not limited geographically, and applicants from across Ohio and other states are actively considered. This approach recognizes that a diverse range of geographic perspectives can strengthen law enforcement practices and improve overall public safety efforts.

Recruitment is conducted broadly and is not limited to any one geographic area, with outreach efforts including social media platforms, college career fairs, local community events, meet-and-greets, and other public engagement opportunities throughout the city, neighboring communities, and surrounding suburbs. Social media outreach also helps extend recruitment efforts to qualified applicants both in and out-of-state.

Applications by residence further illustrate the geographic distribution of the applicant pool. A total of 1,111 applicants were Cleveland residents, 1,447 were Ohio residents outside the City of Cleveland, and 519 were out-of-state residents.



IX. Hiring Process and Background Process

The hiring process for the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) follows a structured, multi-phase system designed to evaluate applicants' qualifications, physical readiness, integrity, medical fitness, and overall suitability for law enforcement service. The process outlined below reflects the procedures described in the 2024 report and incorporates updated information regarding recruitment and applicant processing.

Applicants begin the process by submitting an application for the Patrol Officer position through the City of Cleveland website. After the application is received, Civil Service personnel contact applicants using the email address provided in the application materials. Applicants are then required to complete the written examination administered through the National Testing Network (NTN).

Applicants who do not pass the NTN examination remain in communication with Recruitment staff, who continue to provide guidance and encouragement in preparation for future hiring events.

Following completion of the application and written examination, applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in fitness preparation camps designed to prepare them for the physical fitness assessment and hiring event requirements.

Hiring events are conducted over a three-day period. Upon arrival, applicants are checked in by Civil Service staff and provided with an overview of the physical fitness standards, including instruction regarding proper testing procedures and required form. Applicants then complete the physical fitness assessment.

Applicants who do not successfully complete the initial physical fitness assessment are provided with an additional opportunity to retest. Those who successfully pass continue to the next stage of the hiring process, while those who do not pass remain connected with Recruitment personnel for future opportunities.

Applicants who successfully complete the written examination, physical fitness assessment, and preliminary background interview may receive a conditional job offer letter and formally enter the hiring process. At this stage, applicants meet with members of the Personnel Unit to complete a preliminary background review and discuss the next steps in the process. Additional testing and evaluations are then scheduled as required.

The first major step in the formal background investigation process is the completion of a Personal History Statement (PHS). The PHS is a comprehensive document requiring applicants to provide detailed personal information, including:

- Personal identifying information
- Residential history
- Employment history, including military service if applicable
- Criminal history and law enforcement contacts
- Driving record
- Evidence of financial responsibility
- Responses to extensive open-ended questions regarding prior conduct and behavior
- Applicants must also submit supporting documentation with the PHS, including copies of:
 - Birth certificate
 - Social Security card
 - High school diploma or GED
 - Driver's license
 - Military discharge documentation or Selective Service registration, if applicable
 - Naturalization papers, if applicable
 - Postsecondary education transcripts, if applicable

Once the PHS and supporting documentation are submitted, a Background Investigator (BI) is assigned to the applicant. The BI reviews all submitted materials and conducts an in-person interview with the candidate. During this

interview, the investigator discusses the information provided in the PHS, asks follow-up questions, and confirms the accuracy and completeness of the applicant's responses. Applicants are also provided with an overview of the investigative process and an estimated timeline for completion.

The BI then conducts a comprehensive and systematic investigation to verify all information provided by the applicant throughout the hiring process. Investigative steps include:

- Interviews with personal references, family members, and neighbors
- Interviews with current and former supervisors and coworkers
- Review of employment records and performance evaluations, when available
- Searches of numerous databases to identify:
 - Unreported law enforcement contacts
 - Criminal involvement or civil litigation
 - Driving history
 - Prior police employment disqualifications or removals from service
 - Financial irresponsibility
 - Social media activity indicating potential bias or misconduct

All investigative findings and actions are documented within the electronic background investigation software system. Investigators are required to clearly articulate how information was obtained, evaluated, and incorporated into suitability determinations while ensuring the process remains fair and unbiased.

As part of the hiring process, candidates must complete both medical and psychological evaluations. The medical examination includes screening for illegal drugs, including steroids. These assessments are completed after the conditional offer stage and are used to determine whether candidates meet the standards required for police service.

Following the Chief Director of Public Safety's selection of candidates, the results of the medical and psychological evaluations are released. These results may result in additional candidates being removed from consideration. This information is not provided prior to the Chief Director's selections.

Applicants who are current or former law enforcement officers from other jurisdictions must complete the same hiring and background investigation process as all other applicants. However, an additional requirement applies to these candidates.

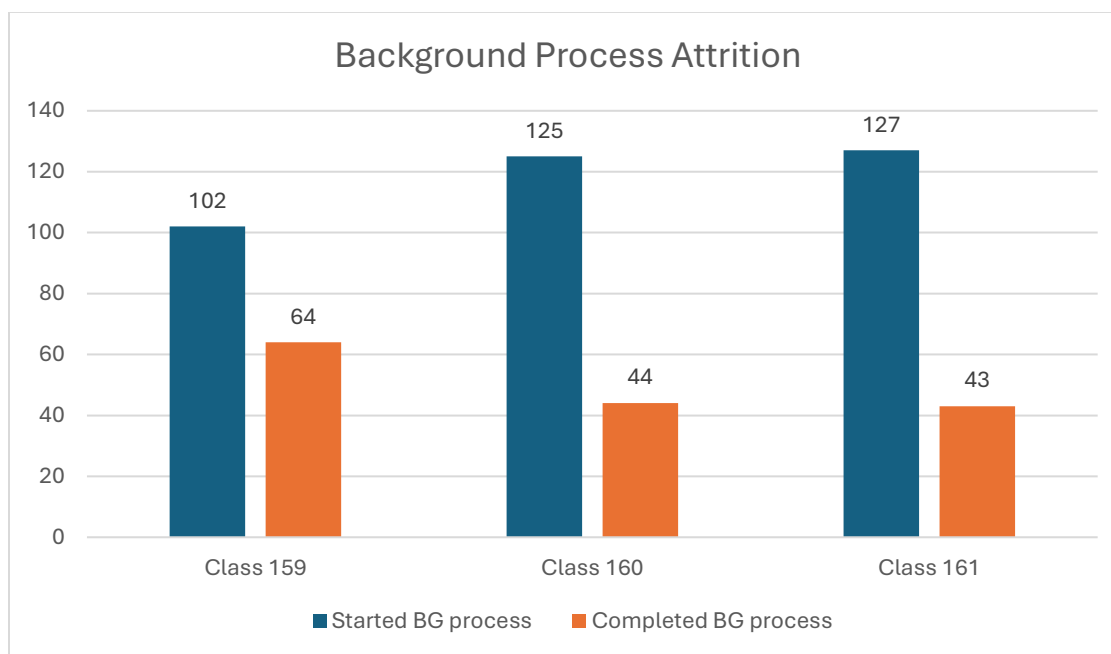
Current or former officers will not be hired without an inspection of their personnel files. This review includes examination of documented training records, citizen complaints, disciplinary history, and use-of-force incidents. While review of documented work performance is not always possible for all applicants due to variations in employer recordkeeping practices, the Division considers this review mandatory for lateral or previously employed officers.

Background investigations serve as the foundation upon which hiring decisions are made. The process is designed to ensure that applicants possess the integrity, honesty, judgment, and overall suitability required for service as a Cleveland Police Officer.

The comprehensive nature of the hiring process reflects the Division's commitment to selecting qualified candidates while maintaining professional standards, accountability, and public trust.

Background investigation attrition continues to be a significant factor throughout the hiring process. While a substantial number of applicants advance to the background phase, many do not successfully complete all required components of the investigation. For Class 159, a total of 102 applicants began the background investigation process, with 64 successfully completing it. Class 160 saw 125 applicants enter the background phase, with 44 completing the process. Similarly, for Class 161, 127 applicants initiated the background investigation, while 43 successfully completed all requirements. These figures demonstrate the rigorous standards maintained throughout the

background investigation phase and highlight the importance of continued applicant engagement and preparation throughout the hiring process.



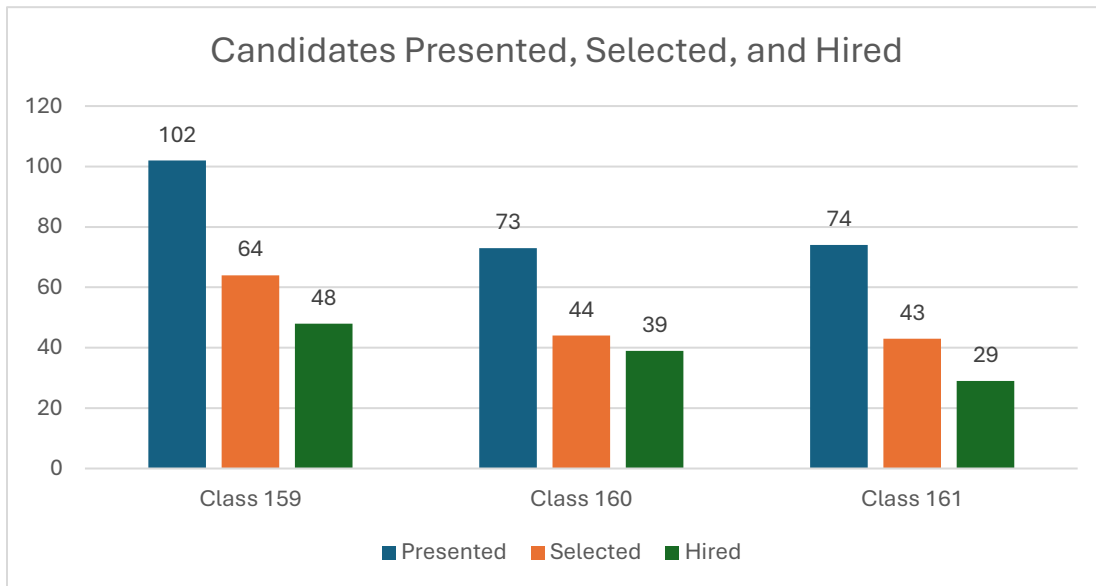
X. Screening Committee Review and Selection Process

After the background investigation phase is completed, investigators prepare summary reports for each applicant, which are evaluated during a screening process involving designated personnel and representatives. During this process, applicant files are discussed and advisory recommendations may be made based on investigative findings; however, these recommendations are advisory in nature and are not the sole determining factor in selection decisions.

Following the screening process, the Chief Director of Public Safety conducts a separate review of applicant materials and the selection of candidates. Medical and psychological assessment results are maintained separately to ensure they are not considered during the initial selection review.

Recent hiring outcomes for Classes 159, 160, and 161 reflect the progression of applicants through the presentation, selection, and hiring stages. For Class 159, 102 candidates were presented, 64 were selected, and 48 were ultimately

hired. For Class 160, 73 candidates were presented, 44 were selected, and 39 were hired. For Class 161, 74 candidates were presented, 43 were selected, and 29 were hired.



XI. Conclusion

The Cleveland Division of Police continues to strive for excellence by adapting to evolving demands and implementing innovative recruitment strategies that reflect the changing times. In recent years, hiring qualified police officers has become increasingly challenging, with those challenges continuing to grow over the past several years. In response, the implementation of targeted hiring events has contributed to increased staffing levels and strengthened recruitment efforts. Every individual involved in the hiring process plays a vital role, as demonstrated through their commitment, collaboration, and dedication to supporting each phase of recruitment. The Division's continued focus on identifying, processing, and hiring qualified candidates remains a top priority for all personnel involved.