

Promoting Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruiting and Hiring

Pursuant to the Attorney General's ("AG") Guideline on Promoting Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruiting and Hiring issued on December 7, 2021, the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office ("BCPO") has established a program to identify underrepresented groups and take action to address any under representation within our law enforcement staff. The Guideline was issued in accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:17B – 4.10 et seq. which requires each law enforcement agency in New Jersey to establish a program to ensure that every agency is comprised of law enforcement officers who reflect the diversity of the population of the community the agency is charged with protecting.

Although the AG Guideline relates to law enforcement, the BCPO extended the mission to our entire workforce, including our prosecutors, clerical staff and information technology ("IT") staff. We have compiled our demographic information and have set goals for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce in terms of people of color and gender diversity.

In order to identify any underrepresented groups within the BCPO staff, we referenced Bergen County July 1, 2021, demographic data compiled by the United States Census Bureau. That data reported that the estimated population of Bergen County is 953,819. Of that number, 72.9% identified as White alone, 17% Asian alone, 7.4% Black or African-American alone, .5% Native American or Alaskan Native alone, .1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone and 2.2% identified as two or more races. 21% of the population reported being of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. In addition, the data reported that the population is 51.4% female and 48.6% male.

BCPO collected demographic information of our law enforcement staff in accordance with the AG Guideline. The data shows that BCPO's law enforcement staff is 78% male and 22% female, with 65% identifying as White alone, 11% identifying as Black or African-American alone, 2% identifying as Asian alone, and 1% identifying as two a more races. 21% of our staff identified as being of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

As evidenced by the data, when compared to the greater Bergen County community, the only cognizable underrepresented group within our law

enforcement staff is the Asian demographic with a difference of 15% between the percentage in the Bergen County population and our law enforcement staff. In an effort to address the deficit, BCPO is making efforts to engage our various Asian communities to make them aware of the employment opportunities in law enforcement at the BCPO. One of our efforts is to partner with KABLE, the Korean American Brotherhood in Law Enforcement, to identify candidates interested and eligible for hire. Our intention is to also reach out to our Asian communities to make our citizens aware of our employment opportunities and the process to prepare for entry into law enforcement.

Similarly, BCPO collected demographic data from our entire staff. That data showed that our workforce is 54.2 % male and 45.7% female. The staff self-identified their race as 71.1% White alone, 7.7% African-American or Black alone, 3% Asian alone, .4% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, .4% two or more races, and 2% as other. Of those, 15.4% identified as being of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

BCPO is aware and sensitive to the possible bias that may be encountered during the application process. In order to address that possibility, BCPO is discussing methods to standardize our application and interview process and reduce any subjectivity that may impact applicants. Various BCPO staff members, depending on the type of position, participate in the interview process. Our process consists of a two-tiered process for clerical and IT, and a three-tiered process for legal staff and law enforcement staff, each conducted by diverse staff members.

To have greater exposure and be more accessible to the public, BCPO now posts employment listings for our clerical and IT divisions, along with information on how candidates can apply for law enforcement and legal positions. As it relates to clerical and IT staff opportunities, besides the website, other platforms may be used to advertise employment positions to reach a broader audience.

In furtherance of continuing to recruit and hire a diverse staff, the BCPO Community Engagement Division (“CED”) has participated and will continue to participate in job fairs at our local colleges and universities to speak with potential candidates interested in various areas of law enforcement. In addition, CED developed the EAGLE Program, a mentorship program with its inaugural start this summer. For seven (7) weeks, 18- to 22-year-olds will be exposed to law

enforcement through interactions with local police departments and other BCPO outreach efforts in the County.

In hopes of establishing relationships with Bergen County's younger citizens, BCPO partners with the Bergen County Sheriff's Office each summer to operate the Bergen County Youth Police Academy. The Academy is a free, two-week program offered to Bergen County high school students interested in law enforcement, the legal profession, and other careers in public service. The Academy curriculum consists of educational activities as well as physical training activities. The format is similar to what actual police academy cadets experience. All the squad instructors are law enforcement officers. The objective is to educate the cadets about public service including law enforcement, emergency services, the judiciary, and county government.

Lastly, BCPO maintains relationships with our Chaplain Bureau comprised of members of various faiths throughout the County. We utilize those relationships to disseminate information, including employment opportunities, from BCPO to the various congregations throughout the County.

To ensure that the identified underrepresentation is addressed, BCPO established a Diversity Committee (the "Committee") made up of 8 members from our law enforcement, legal, clerical and IT divisions. The Committee will meet quarterly and review the methods implemented to remedy the identified underrepresentation. Each year, BCPO will readminister the demographic survey to the law enforcement and other members of our staff. In accordance with the AG Guidelines, we will analyze the results in relation to the present population in Bergen County and identify if any underrepresentation that still exists. BCPO will also compare the numbers from the previous year, to see if improvement has been made in the area we have already identified. If improvement has not been made, the Committee will reevaluate and consider additional methods to address the underrepresentation.