

## **Promoting Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruiting and Hiring**

**Reporting Year: 2024**

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 underrepresentation 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.

In order to identify any underrepresented groups within the BCPO staff, we referenced Bergen County July 1, 2023, demographic data compiled by the United States Census Bureau. That data reported the estimated population of Bergen County is 957,736. Of that number, 71.1% identified as White alone, 17.7% Asian alone, 8% Black or African American alone, .7% Native American or Alaskan Native alone, .1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone and 2.5% identified as two or more races. 23.3% of the population reported being of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. In addition, the data reported that the population is 51% female and 49% 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 77% male and 23% female, with 80% identifying as White alone, 10% identifying as Black or African American alone, 1% identifying as Asian alone, and 1% identifying as two a more races. 25% 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 16% between the

percentage in the Bergen County population and our law enforcement staff. In an effort to address the deficit, BCPO engages 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 53.09% male and 46.91% female. The staff self-identified their race as 80.73% White alone, 7.27% African-American or Black alone, 3.27% Asian alone, 0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1.82% two or more races, and 6.91% as other. Of those, 21.45% 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. BCPO uses a criteria method for the application and interview process, whereby subjectivity is reduced as much as possible by engaging all prospective hires in the same way and with a format that supports substantially similar probes to measure minimum requirements for the position, background, skills, abilities, trustworthiness, competence, and character.

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 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 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 meets and reviews 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 re-evaluate and consider additional methods to address the underrepresentation.