

Officer Retention in Small Police Departments: Identifying Issues While Offering Solutions

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Retaining quality police officers is an ongoing issue with all law enforcement agencies. Small police departments, such as Eustis Police Department, traditionally have to work harder to retain quality officers while competing with larger agencies that have more to offer with higher salaries, more internal transfer opportunities, and more promotional opportunities. Information was gathered by surveying Florida police officers who are currently employed with small police departments, those employing 35 to 65 sworn officers. Surveys were also given to police recruits attending Florida police academies. This paper will identify factors that cause officers to leave small agencies and discuss those findings. Career expectations of police recruits will be identified and analyzed. By identifying factors contributing to retention issues within small departments, suggestions will be offered to increase retention and minimize the exit of quality officers.