

# Recruiting and Retaining Women

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research proposal is to study the factors that may influence recruiting and retaining women in law enforcement. Examined as well are those factors which contribute to females being hesitant about entering into the law enforcement career field. Additionally the research outlines factors which influence those women who are in the career field. Many women leave an agency after only a short tenure due to issues which are specific to their gender. This empirical data will contribute to the current literature concerning those factors which affect women's decision to enter into law enforcement as a career and whether to continue their chosen career. This will add to the information available to agencies which desire to improve the recruitment and retention aspects of female police officers within the department they represent. Information and research gleaned may serve as a basis in making new policies and procedures to increase the job satisfaction level for women officers and thus reflect higher levels of retention.*

## **Introduction**

Women police officers have been involved in uniformed patrol for over thirty years. In a study conducted by the National Center for Women & Policing (2001) women accounted for only 12.7% of all sworn law enforcement positions in large agencies, 8.1% in small and rural agencies and 14.4% in federal agencies. Although women gained an average of approximately half a percentage point per year within large police agencies from 1972 to 1999, there is mounting evidence that this trend has now stalled and even begun to reverse. The years 2000 and 2001 showed representation of women in large agencies actually declined from the prior year, from 14.3% in 1999 and 13.0% in 2000 to 12.7% in 2001(2001). With the numbers given, women will not achieve equality in agencies for many generations to come. The figures clearly demonstrate that barriers continue to exist for women in law enforcement.

There has been a great deal of debate throughout the years concerning whether females can effectively perform the job of a law enforcement officer the same as their male counterparts. This is not the question that should be asked, but rather it should be whether they can do the job of a police officer. Female police officers should not be compared to their male peers, but rather consideration given to whether they can do the job or not. The problem is women should be afforded the same opportunities for hiring, training, assignments, and promotions within the career field of law enforcement and research suggests this is not the case. The research method utilized was an extensive review of current data compiled from the National Center of Women & Policing and a review of criminal justice books, periodicals, and the World Wide Web relating to women in policing. Recruiting and retaining women in law enforcement are topics that have been examined and continue to be debated within the law enforcement community. Recruiting women to enter into the law enforcement field is defined as actively seeking and pursuing

females to become employed by a law enforcement agency in the capacity of a sworn law enforcement officer. Retaining those females is described as keeping those women employed as sworn law enforcement officers within the agency for an extended career through retirement. There are many factors which affect the recruiting and retention of these women within the career field. The agency must consider the skills and attributes that female police officers bring to the agency to include communication skills and lowered tendencies to use excessive use of force while performing their official duties. The process of incorporating women into the agency should not discontinue once they are hired. The agency should continue to actively retain those women as they gain expertise and skills which add to the agency.

Though the number of women entering the career field of law enforcement is shown statistically to have grown since the early 70's through 2001, it seems to have reached a plateau. There are still far fewer women employed as sworn law enforcement officers than males (National Center for Women & Policing, 2003). National averages reflect that women continue to make up 10-14% of any given law enforcement agency within the United States. Only through actively recruiting qualified females to enter into the career field do agencies increase the number of female police officers. Once the females are hired, the retention of those women becomes another task for the agency (2003).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this research proposal is to study the factors that may influence recruiting and retaining women in law enforcement. Also the purpose of this research is to outline those factors which contribute to females being hesitant about entering into the law enforcement career field. Additionally the research will outline factors which influence those women who are in the career field but leave an agency after only a short tenure due to issues which are specific to women. This empirical data will contribute to the current literature concerning those factors which affect women's decision to enter into law enforcement as a career and whether to continue their chosen career. The data will also add to the information available to agencies which desire to improve the recruitment and retention aspects of female police officers within the department they represent. This data could serve as a basis in making new policies and procedure to increase the job satisfaction level for women officers and thus reflect higher levels of retention.

A law enforcement agency is more likely to hire women officers if they actively seek appropriate venues to recruit qualified females and educate those women coming into the career field. Once an agency hires qualified females, the agency must work to support those officers if they desire to retain seasoned female officers. This may be accomplished by:

1. implementing mentoring programs for female officers
2. enforcing zero tolerance policies for sexual harassment and discriminatory practices
3. providing appropriate health care and family considerations for pregnant female officers
4. Fostering a work environment whereby female officers feel they are part of the team and a valued member of the organization.

## **Problem Statement**

There are a number of law enforcement agencies which actively recruit female law enforcement officers and seek measures to retain those female officers. However many agencies in the United States remain indifferent to the small number of female police officers they employ and remain complacent in their efforts to retain those women officers. The number of women who are in the law enforcement career have increased by a small percentage over the past 20 years, however they remain significantly low compared to the number of male officers. Statistics show that gender does not reflect the ability to be a police officer and perform the duties of a police officer. Studies reflect that female officers are sued less often for excessive use of force when compared to male officers. Statistics indicate that in situations requiring law enforcement intervention female officers tend to use communication skills whereas male officers tend to use physical force. This translates into fewer law suits for agencies to defend with the result of fewer tax dollars being expended for use of force suits. In a review of the Los Angeles Police Department (2000) records indicate that for the years 1990-1999, the city of Los Angeles paid out 63.4 million dollars in lawsuits involving male officers for use of excessive force, sexual assault, and domestic violence. For that same time frame, 2.8 million dollars was paid out for cases involving female officers, who were found to have used excessive use of force. Furthermore, no female officers were involved in lawsuits for the city of Los Angeles, as a defendant, in a sexual assault or domestic violence suit (2000). These numbers translate into a factual basis as to the benefits and enhancements female officers bring to law enforcement.

### **Research Questions:**

This study will attempt to address several research questions concerning the various factors which influence law enforcement agencies recruiting and retaining women in law enforcement. The basic research questions are:

1. What are the significant factors which enable a law enforcement agency to successfully increase the number of female sworn law enforcement officers hired and retained within that agency?
2. Does an agency which actively seeks venues to find qualified female candidates and is proactive in recruiting females into a law enforcement career significantly increase the numbers of female police officers within the agency?
3. Is there greater job satisfaction and likelihood of retaining women officers in agencies which provide mentoring programs for their female recruits?
4. Does an agency retain female officers if the agency works with those officers who face pregnancy during their employment and family issues that come along with the role of mother?
5. Will an agency retain women officers, who provide invaluable experience and expertise over time, if the agency strictly adheres to and enforces policies regarding discriminatory practices and sexual harassment?

These are but a few of the questions to be addressed in this research paper. (Bureau of Justice, 2001) Statistics show that the average length in service of a female

police officer is self-terminated between four to eight years with the department (2001). The reasons given in exit interviews from within the law enforcement community are in some way related to the questions posed in this study. Females state the most significant reasons for leaving an agency are non-acceptance by peers, career change due to feeling isolated, need to find less dangerous careers once pregnant or after birth of child, discriminatory practices reference job assignments , upward mobility, sexual harassment by peers and supervisors, and double standards as they relate to male and female officers.

## **Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of this research will be as follows:

1. Peer acceptance by male coworkers in law enforcement directly affects recruitment and retention of female officers.
2. Perceived discriminatory practices, to include sexual harassment in a predominantly male profession affect recruitment and retention of female law enforcement officers.
3. Health issues to include physical and domestic issues unique to women affect recruitment and retention of female officers.
4. The lack of advancement opportunities for women in law enforcement and perceived bias in career paths adversely affects the recruitment and retention of female law enforcement officers.

## **Scope**

The Research utilized for this project included in depth literature review from numerous sources. The World Wide Web and statistical data compiled by the National Women for Women & Policing were primary sources. The internet was most beneficial in successfully obtaining the most current data available regarding the percentages of women in law enforcement and the statistics of supervisory positions held by female personnel. The limitations encountered were the statistics provided by the National Center for Women & Policing reflected numbers through 2002 only. Though the numbers did reflect updates annually for five years prior to 2001. The most recent data included some statistics for the year 2003. The purpose of the research was to show the numerical disparity between the number of men and the number of women in law enforcement. This is also reflected in supervisory positions within the departments. Research supported the purpose stated and it provided information which verified that a problem does exist. Many explanations were offered as to why there are fewer women in policing and within the supervisory ranks; however there are no definitive solutions to remedy the situation. Though the numerical disparity of male and female officers may adversely affect an agency, the community too is affected.

## Literature Review:

### Dependent Variable:

The dependent variable for this study is recruiting and retaining women in law enforcement. The concept of leveling the playing field for women entering into and staying within law enforcement has been an ongoing problem for many years. There are many considerations should women continue to be underrepresented within law enforcement agencies. The scope goes beyond the agency and extends into the community. Women must be considered for the beneficial qualities which they bring to agencies and communities.

To understand the issues of recruiting and retaining women in law enforcement and the problems that currently plague women in law enforcement, we must first review the historical background of the progress of women in law enforcement. To understand how disproportionate the percentage of policewomen in law enforcement is in comparison to male officers in the profession, a more detailed historical account must be considered. The first females to become employed in law enforcement were termed “matrons” during the mid-1800s. Matrons in law enforcement were primarily responsible for the care of women and juveniles in police custody. According to Owings, in 1893, the Chicago Mayor appointed a woman named Mrs. Marie Owens to the Chicago Police Department. She was given the rank of police officer, but this was the result of her status as the widow of a policeman. This was a common practice during this era in law enforcement because widows of police officers were not provided with any death benefits or pensions. It was a way for police departments to care for families of fallen officers. Not until the early 1900’s, less than a century ago, was a female actually hired onto a police department and was given the official title of policewoman (1925). In 1910, Alice Stebbins Wells joined the Los Angeles Police Department as the first policewoman in the United States. Though her title was police officer she carried no gun and she was not allowed to wear a uniform. Alice Wells had to present a petition with prominent signatures to the Mayor in order to gain employment. Her duties primarily dealt with enforcement of laws which dealt with women and children and facilities where they were most frequently found. Through Wells’ efforts she laid the groundwork for crime prevention and juvenile units to come (1925).

Women in law enforcement became more popular in the 1920s and it was not unusual to see one or two females on small departments or women’s bureaus within larger departments. The women’s bureaus, however, still operated as a separate entity from the rest of the police agency. Alice Wells took the lead as she spoke at conferences and convinced others of the value of women in law enforcement. Women began to be considered regular entry-level police officers but were still assigned to “appropriate” positions. Because of the efforts of Wells and other women at that time women began earning pay comparable to the men. The Depression-era slowed the progress and hiring of the female police officer due to societal/economic circumstances. With the onset of the Depression, jobs became scarce. Those jobs that were available were first offered to men. The prevailing belief at the time was that men worked outside the home and women took care of the home. The combination of economics and societal expectations virtually eliminated the opportunities for women to enter into law enforcement. Society

focused on returning the woman to the home in order for them to take care of their husbands and families. What strides previously had been made were virtually eliminated. World War II proved to create a resurgence of females entering into law enforcement and made up for ground lost during the depression. The number of female officers quickly increased during World War II. According to Martin (1980), the 1940 census counted 1,775 policewomen and detectives, a slight increase over the 1930 figure of 1,534, but this figure is misleadingly high, since it combines public and private agencies. A 1945 government publication, basing its numbers on the census, estimated that in 1940 there were about 1,000 publicly funded policewomen and fewer than 3 percent of the nation's law enforcement agencies employed them. By 1950, the census reported 2,610 publicly employed policewomen, comprising approximately 1 percent of all police officers and detectives (1980). Even though female police officers saw their numbers increase, their roles in the profession did not change. Female officers continued to be assigned to prevention efforts within the department and they continued to deal with primarily female citizens whether they were victims, suspects or witnesses.

As women's roles in law enforcement evolved, so too did the expectations of the females entering into the career. Women entering into law enforcement didn't come into the career to become social workers. They insisted they wanted a career in law enforcement that mirrored the same career goals as male police officers. Female officers desired to be treated and viewed as equals to their male counterparts. There were tremendous differences between the standards applied to a male versus a female in the police officer selection process. Though female Police officers were granted full police powers, they continued to be restricted in using them on an equal basis compared to male officers. Women were paid the same, but written tests were more difficult and physical tests were initially nonexistent. In addition, women had no procedures in place to advance their careers with regards to promotion. Women were finally given the "privilege" of entering into uniformed patrol in the 1960's.

Milton (1972) highlighted the entry of women into uniform. In 1968, two policewomen from Indianapolis, Blankenship and Coffal, were allowed to put on the uniform and get into a patrol car. They were called "Car 47" and answered calls for service the same as the male officers. They had always desired to work road patrol and had approached a male academy instructor about the idea. When he later became Chief, he did what he promised by assigning female police officers to road patrol (1972). Eventually they were able to prove themselves and additional women were put into patrol cars and expected to do the same job as their male counterparts. Women had established a desire and ability to work in the field equal to the men.

The history of women in policing reflects the struggles of women law enforcement officers and serves to show how the past roles of policewomen have paved the way for those who currently seek to enter into law enforcement today. Though many advances have been made, there remains many obstacles in the recruitment, hiring and promotional processes for females which are perpetuated by perceptions from years past. Understanding the significance of this problem is necessary so that a solution may be discovered. According to the National Center for Women & Policing (2002), a plateau and a slight decline in the number of women police officers over the past years has occurred within agencies across the United States (2002). Possible explanations as to why will be discussed later.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Independent Variable: Acceptance:**

Peer and Supervisor acceptance is a factor in job satisfaction and retention of women officers. (Campbell, 1992) In general women are motivated to enter into and remain in the law enforcement career field for the same reasons men are. This includes desirable pay, benefits, job security, and associated challenges of the job, promotional opportunities and the fulfillment in helping others (1992). However women often leave the profession of law enforcement for very different reasons than do men. Women officers face stressors unique to their gender which are not faced by their male counterparts. (Adams, 2001) Stressors include co-worker gossip, training, lack of promotional opportunity, inflexible work patterns and administrative policies that disadvantage female officers (2001). Women also face the extra burden of having to “prove themselves” above and beyond what male officers must. Female officers often find themselves isolated from informal “networking” affiliations, so often reserved for “the boys”. These informal social networking sources which are so often reserved for male officers are needed for sharing of information, developing friendships and professional bonds which procure mentoring of new officers and protection. Women are often excluded because of fear of girlfriends, wives or significant others misinterpreting the “professional” aspect of the relationship. Men often shy away so as not to become involved in any jealousy issues their partners may feel, because of gender. (Williams, 2000) Because of these factors women officers report that they often feel isolated when they join the department and have no one to whom they can turn to for advice or support (2000). The establishment of mentoring programs within agencies can assist greatly in the retention of female officers. The goal of such a program is to create a one-on-one partnership between new officers and veteran officers. The veteran officers can help the new female officers to “navigate the waters” and help them to understand the nature of the career and what pitfalls to avoid. The mentor acts much like a ship’s captain who has sailed specific waters many times and understands where the shallows and rocks are and where to steer the ship in order to avoid running ashore. Through the use of mentoring, new officers develop a sense of belonging and importance to the agency. This will encourage an employee to develop to their full potential as a law enforcement professional, ultimately adding to the agency and the community.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Variable: Discrimination:**

Discriminatory Practices and sexual harassment within law enforcement agencies directly affect the retention of female officers. (Polisar, 1998) Studies have found that 60 to 70 percent of women officers experience sexual/gender harassment. Interestingly, only 4 to 6 percent of these women ever report the harassment (1998). In a study conducted by Felkenes and Schroedel (1993) the statistics reflect an even higher percentage of women officers having experienced sexual harassment on the job. Those numbers reflect 68-86% experiencing such behavior (1993). The tendencies not to report the harassment that occurs can be directly attributed to the “code of silence” which permeates the law enforcement subculture. Many women fear retaliation, should they report misconduct or sexual harassment. Female officers often fear being further alienated from their male co-workers if they object to off color jokes, discriminatory

practices, derogatory comments, unwanted sexual advances or any other unwanted behaviors. The mindset of female officers going into the career field is fixated on “proving” they can do the job and “fitting” in. The dilemma which is created is that female officers often place themselves in a catch twenty two situation through their desire to fit in and prove they can be one of the guys! By not objecting to such jokes to maintain the façade of being “one of the guys”, women are communicating that such environments are acceptable and possibly enjoyable. However, when a male co-worker goes too far with such jokes and taunts and she complains then it makes the female officer as though she is picking and choosing when to “blow the whistle”. She is then tagged as someone to alienate from the team or stay away from. Female officers are in a no-win situation. If they object to the inappropriate behavior then they are labeled as a “trouble maker” or a “malcontent”. The choice has to be made at some point in a female officer’s career as to which path she will take. If she keeps her mouth shut she denies herself a professional environment in which to work. However, if she objects it most likely will result in isolation from the group. The choices made can easily wear on the psyche of the female which leads her to leave the career field. Frequently the stressors of choices and enduring inappropriate behavior can cause severe sometimes debilitating effects. In a study conducted by Captain George V. Robinson of the Ocala, Florida Police Department (1999), 1200 female law enforcement officers in Florida were studied. Of that number 61% reported they had been sexually harassed in the workplace. Furthermore 40% of those women stated that sexually oriented materials or jokes with sexual overtones were a daily occurrence. Those who responded said that they believed that it is their plight to endure otherwise unacceptable working conditions if they want to maintain a career in law enforcement (1999). Sexual and gender harassment are two of the top two reasons most often given by female law enforcement officers for leaving their careers as police officers.

Agencies that seek to retain female officers have strong policies and directives that prohibit such conduct, directives for immediate investigation of allegations of unlawful acts, and appropriate disciplinary measures in place when allegations are substantiated.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Independent Variable: Personal Issues:**

Health and Family issues unique to women affect a female officer’s decision to remain within the law enforcement career. (Seagram, 1992) The Royal Canadian Mounted Police reported an attrition rate of 16% for women compared with a rate of 8.7% for men. Women cited family-related issues as the main reason they left policing (1992). Pregnancy and childcare issues affect many women in law enforcement. While men may continue to make progress within their careers on a day to day basis, women periodically have their careers interrupted because of pregnancy and demands related to family issues. If a child is sick at home, the expectation is the mother will stay at home with the child rather than the father. The complaint most often made by pregnant female officers is that when they notified their agency that they are taken out of their position. Many agencies make no effort to find light duty positions for pregnant officers. In addition to pregnancy and family issues, women also face problems with ill fitting uniforms and equipment. Injuries can result from equipment that does not fit properly and over time may lead to chronic conditions. Police Chief Joseph Polisar (1998) of the Albuquerque



Police Department found that within the APD thirty-three percent of the department's female officers reported that their uniforms and equipment did not fit properly compared to eleven percent of male officers. Eighty-one percent of the women had reported the equipment problems to their supervisors but were told that uniforms and equipment were not available in smaller sizes (1998). Those agencies which have implemented policies relating to pregnancy and accommodations for women's health and family issues reflect a greater retention rate of female officers.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Independent Variable: Career Opportunities:**

The lack of assignment and promotional opportunities for women in law enforcement affects recruiting and retaining female officers. According to a study conducted by the National Center for Women & Policing (1998) progress in promoting women to higher ranks has been slow. While women comprise 12-14% of sworn law enforcement officers, they make up only 5.6% of supervisory positions (1998). Assignments for women within departments often reveal female officers are placed into positions viewed as more appropriate for women. Those positions considered to be more of a social workers place for which females are well suited include juvenile related, domestic violence assignments and sex crimes. These positions are most often viewed as not real police work. When the time comes for promotions, women may be considered not well rounded because they have been placed in the aforementioned duties. With a perceived glass ceiling within the promotional process of a department a chilling affect dissuades women from applying for promotional and specialized assignment opportunities. Whether or not the perception of the glass ceiling is real or not, perception becomes reality. A rating system that relies upon oral interviews whose raters comprise a vast majority of males gives the impression of gender bias. Without proper representation in training of those involved in the selection process for promotion, women applicants justifiably feel that the rating process is biased against them. Coupling this with a systematic exclusion of females from line officer supervisory positions puts them at a great disadvantage in gaining field supervisory experience.

### **Method**

The data collected for this topic was originally based upon literature review from a variety of sources. Literature review, internet research and confidential interviews with women within the law enforcement career field provided a basis for the body of this work. (See bibliography for listing of literature resources)

The measuring instrument for this study is a basic 5 question survey to gain information relevant to current statistics within Florida Law Enforcement Agencies as it pertains to the numbers of female officers within agencies. Upon entry into this class my classmates as well as other law enforcement agencies were kind enough to provide data from their departments relevant to the numbers of female officers within their departments as well as those serving in supervisory positions. The questionnaire consisted of five (5) questions:

- 1) What is the total number of sworn Law Enforcement Officers employed by your agency?
- 2) How many sworn female Law Enforcement Officers?
- 3) What is the total number of sworn Law Enforcement Officer supervisory/rank/administration (ie. Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Chief, Sheriff, etc.) positions within the agency?
- 4.) What is the total number and breakdown by supervisory/rank/administration position (ie. Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Chief, Sheriff, etc) of sworn female Law Enforcement Officers?
- 5.) What is the breakdown, by assignment, of the sworn female Law Enforcement Officers (ie. Investigations, Court Security, Patrol, Civil, etc.)

The questionnaire was sent via e-mail to forty (40) law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Florida. I received sixteen (16) responses. These responses formed the basis for the conclusions cited in this paper as it relates to current figures that represent the male to female ratio within these departments. This information was received and verified current as of August, 2012.

## **Results**

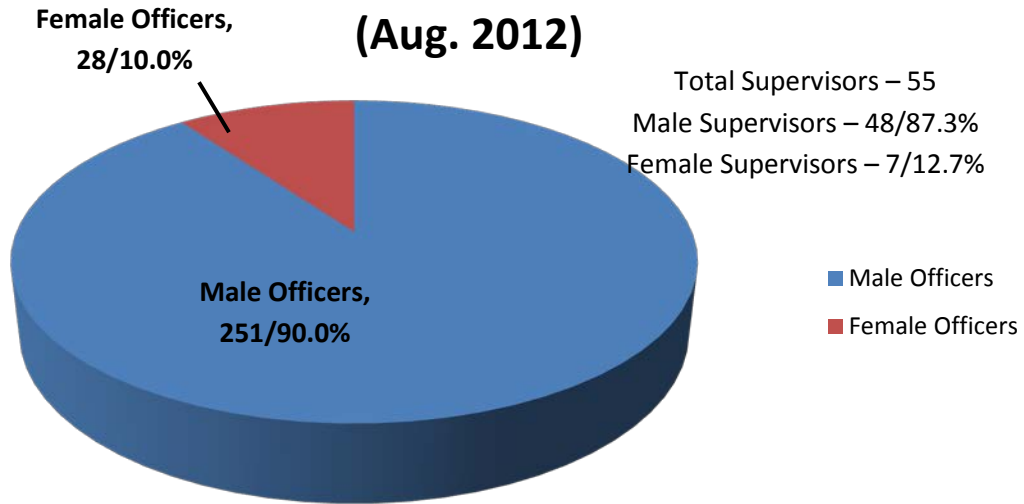
The results of the questionnaire and the numbers provided by the responding agencies were consistent over the geographical area of Florida. Agencies reflect a 10-14% female representation of sworn officers within the agency. For those agencies which provided details reference the total number of supervisors and the total number of female supervisors, these too reflected similar percentages. This data reflects little or no change over the course of the past decade. The most recent data collected on a national basis was in 2003. The same percentages exist now as they did then. Any efforts at recruitment and retention of women by departments have had little to no affect on these percentages. Policing within the University system maintains a higher percentage of female officers. This statistic appears to be consistent throughout the state of Florida's institutions of higher learning that have law enforcement departments. The numbers reflected in those University police departments maintained 18%-27% ration of female officers compared to male. This data is based upon a limited number of university agencies which responded to the questionnaire.

The data collected from those respondents which provided the breakdown of total number of supervisor positions within the agency and the total number of female supervisors and their rank demonstrated a unique statistic. With the limited number of responses, it appears that those agencies where females were in the top echelon of the department were also represented by a larger ratio of non-supervisory females.

The responding agencies and the numbers provided are listed below, utilizing pie charts:

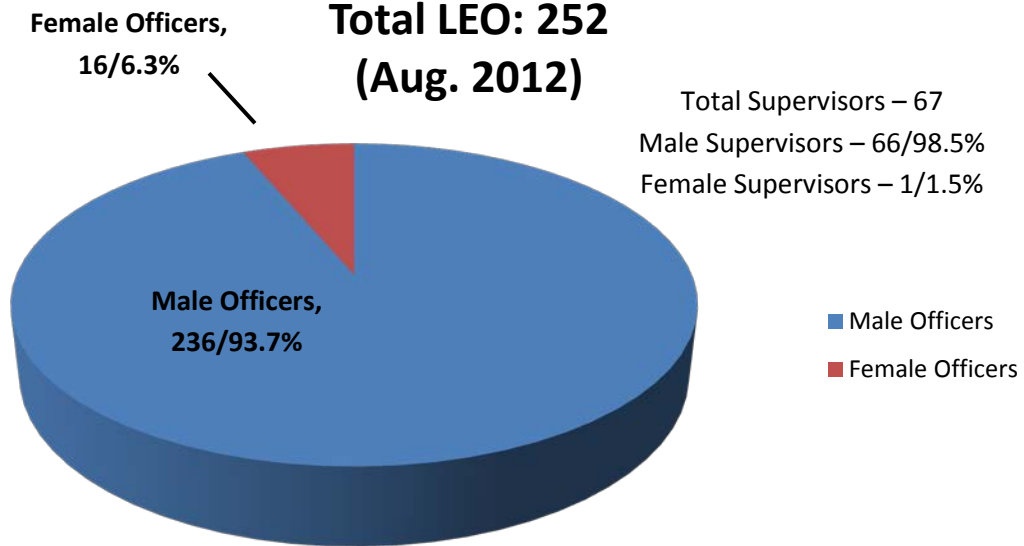
### Charlotte County Sheriff's Office

**Total LEO: 279  
(Aug. 2012)**



### Clay County Sheriff's Office

**Total LEO: 252  
(Aug. 2012)**



### Escambia County Sheriff's Office

Total LEO: 403

(Aug. 2012)

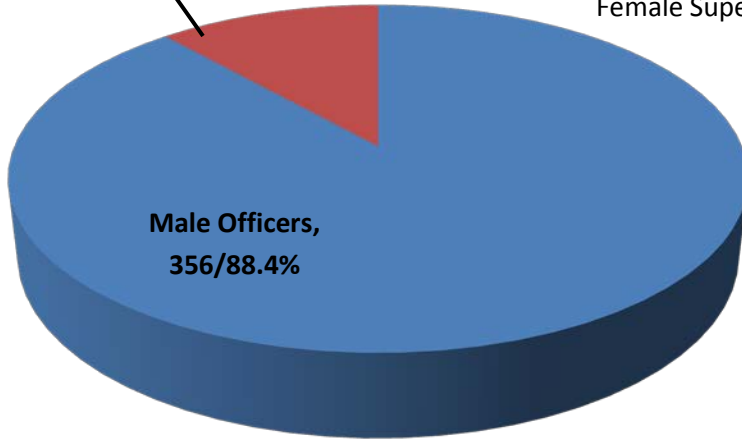
Total Supervisors – 97

Male Supervisors – 86 [88.7%]

Female Supervisors – 11 [11.3%]

Female Officers,  
47/11.6%

Male Officers,  
356/88.4%



■ Male Officers

■ Female Officers

### Eustis Police Department

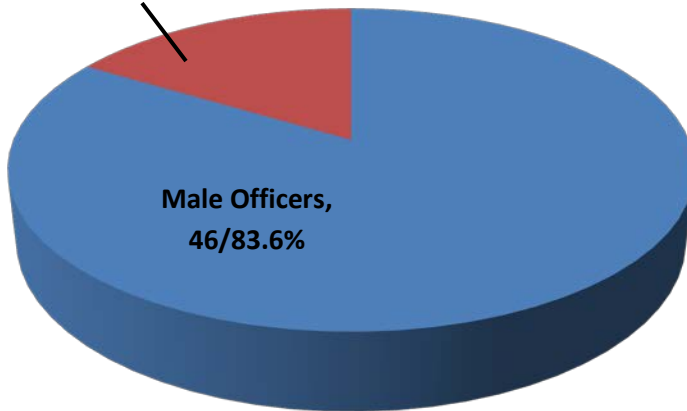
Total LEO: 55

(Aug. 2012)

3 Female Supervisors

Female Officers,  
9/16.4%

Male Officers,  
46/83.6%



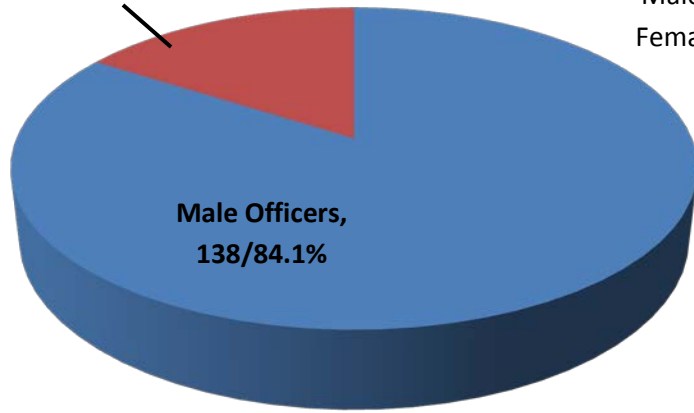
■ Male Offices

■ Female Officers

**Ocala Police Department**  
**Total LEO: 164**  
**(Aug. 2012)**

Female Officers,  
26/15.9%

Total Supervisors – 40  
Male Supervisors – 34/85%  
Female Supervisors – 6/15%

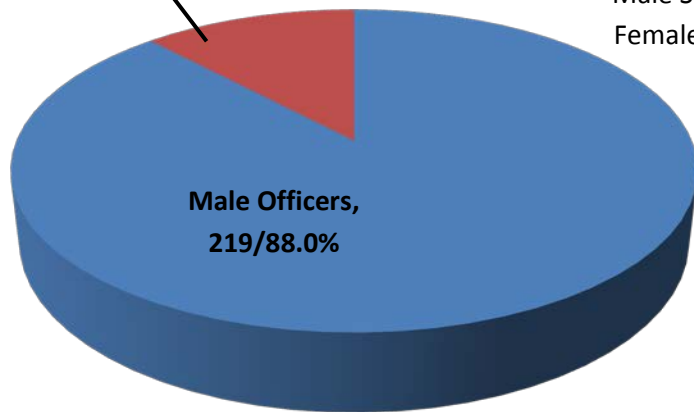


■ Male Officers  
■ Female Officers

**Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office**  
**Total LEO: 249**  
**(Aug. 2012)**

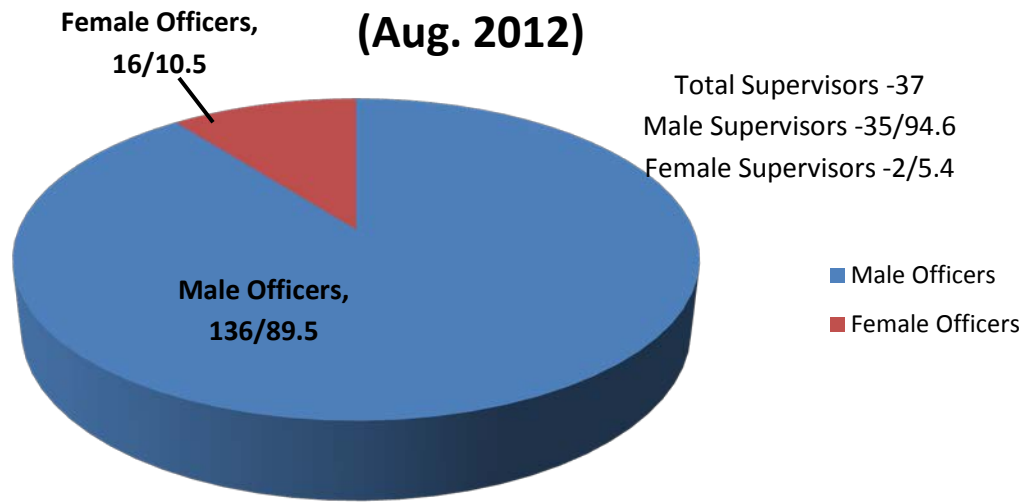
Female Officers,  
30/12.0%

Total Supervisors – 77  
Male Supervisors – 73/94.8%  
Female Supervisors – 4/5.2%

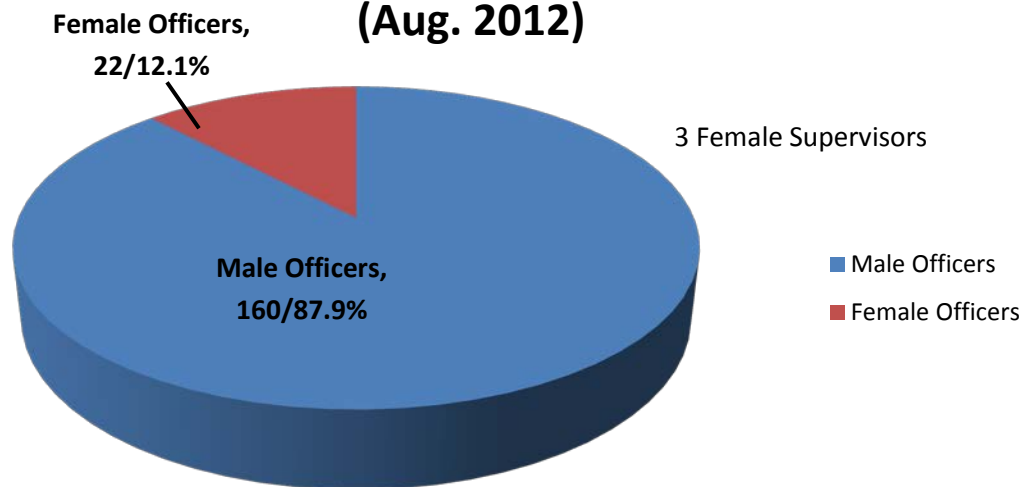


■ Male Officers  
■ Female Officers

**Pensacola Police Department**  
**Total LEO: 152**  
**(Aug. 2012)**



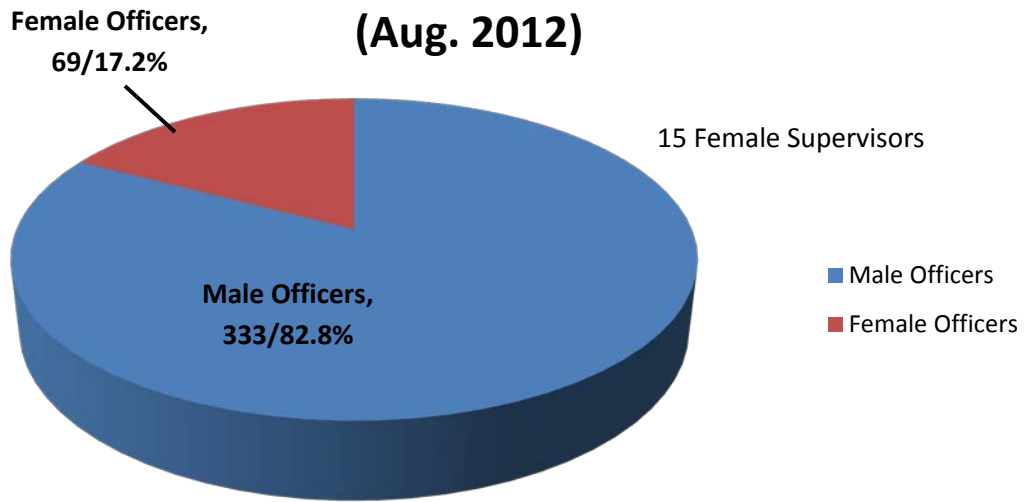
**Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office**  
**Total LEO: 182**  
**(Aug. 2012)**



### Seminole County Sheriff's Office

Total LEO: 402

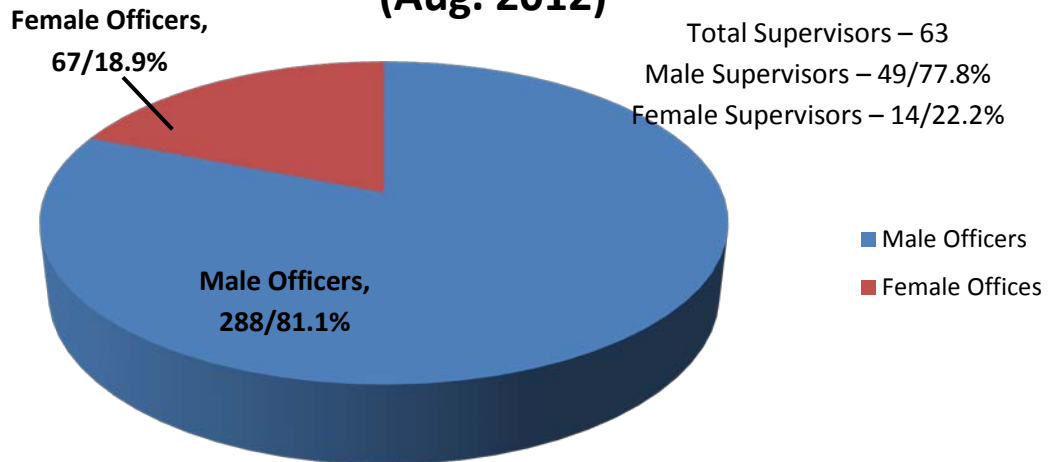
(Aug. 2012)



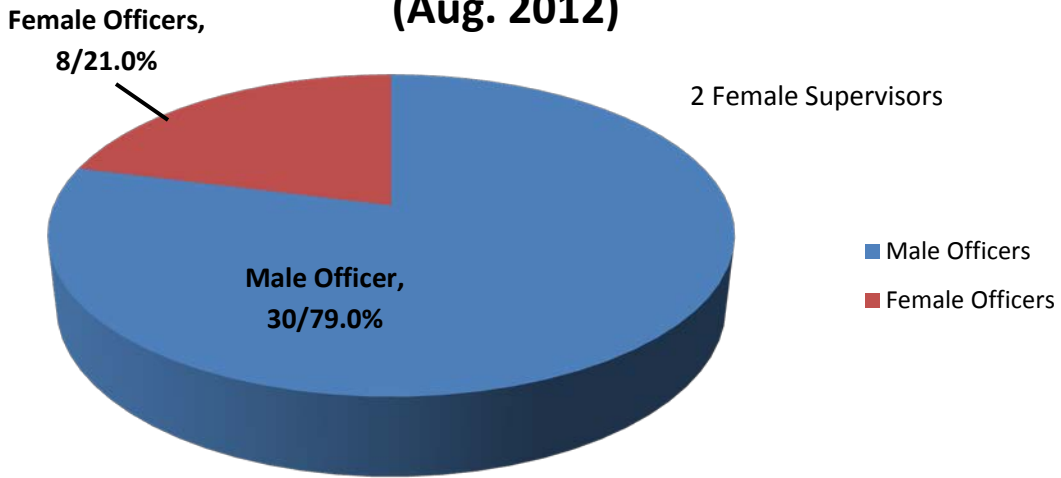
### Tallahassee Police Department

Total LEO: 355

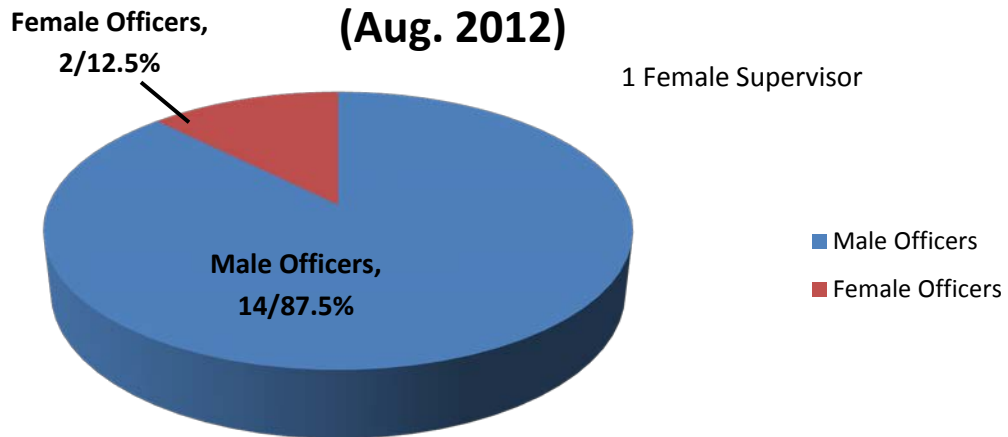
(Aug. 2012)



**Florida Atlantic University Police Department  
Total LEO: 38  
(Aug. 2012)**

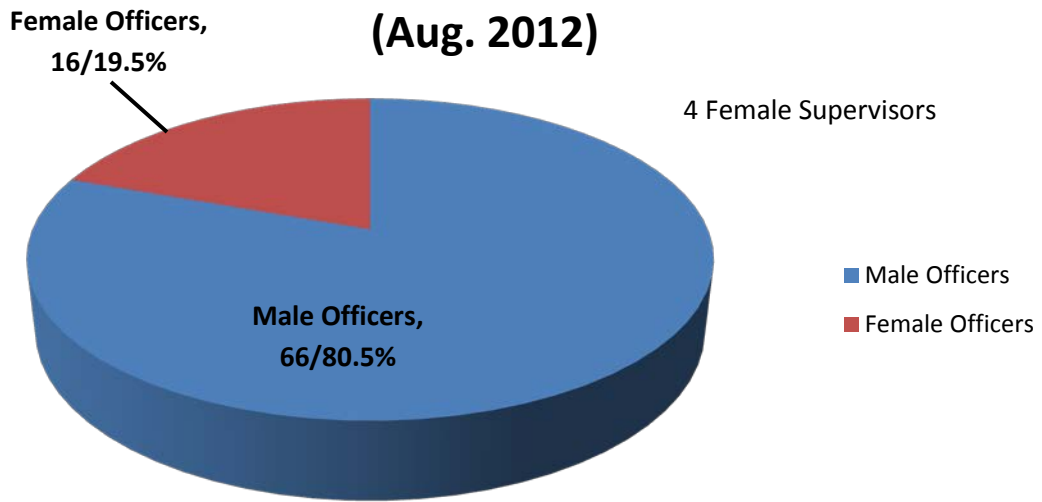


**Florida Gulf Coast University Police  
Department  
Total LEO: 16  
(Aug. 2012)**

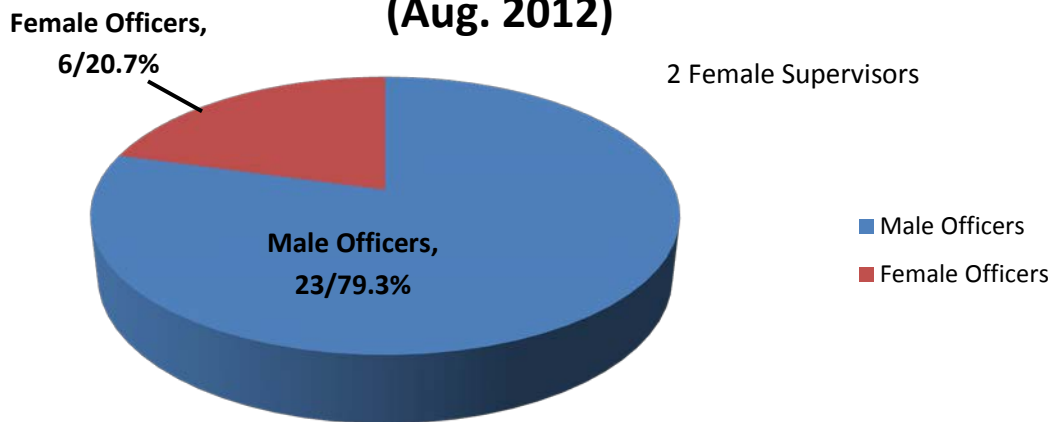




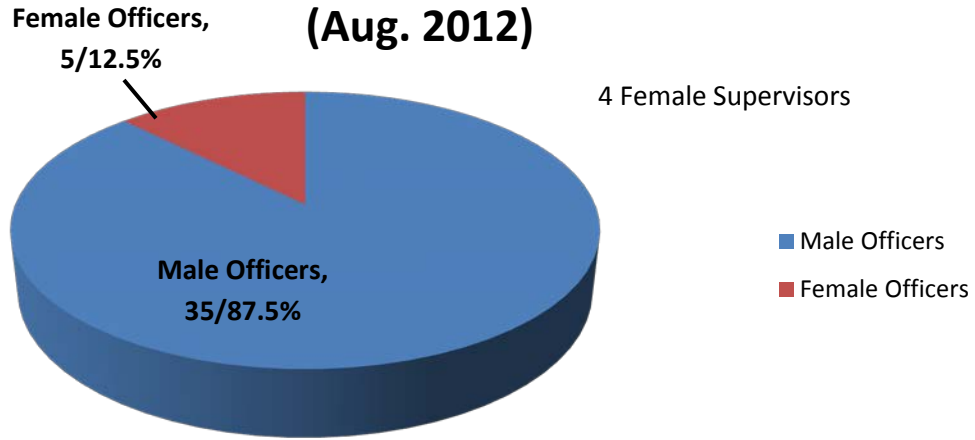
**University of Florida Police Department  
Total LEO: 82  
(Aug. 2012)**



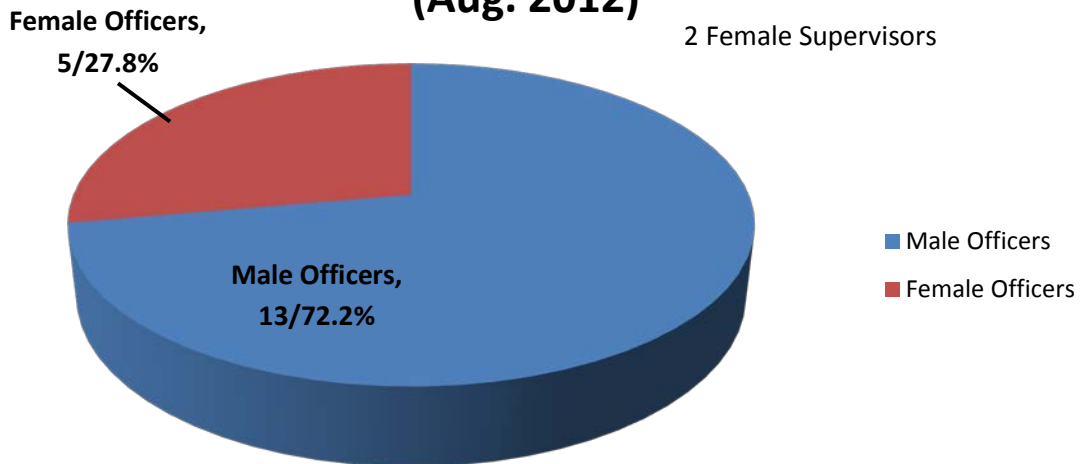
**University of North Florida Police  
Department  
Total LEO: 29  
(Aug. 2012)**



**University of South Florida Police  
Department  
Total LEO: 40  
(Aug. 2012)**



**University of West Florida Police Department  
Total LEO: 18  
(Aug. 2012)**



## Discussion

### Findings:

This research demonstrates that the inclusion of females into the law enforcement profession lags behind the proportionate number of males in the career field. Statistics continue to reflect that on average 10-14% of any given law enforcement agency is comprised of female officers. Those numbers fluctuate, yet the demographics of the community reflect women represent more than 50% of the population. Research has shown that female officers bring alternative skills to a department when compared to their male counterparts. Research has proven that female officers bring to the table superior communication skills, fewer law suits involving excessive use of force, and enhanced community policing relationships, to name just a few. Those agencies which seek to actively recruit and retain female officers must recognize those special qualities and the differences that women bring to the profession and enhance the agency's ability to deliver quality service to their communities.

The data is suspected to suggest that female officers continue to remain underrepresented within the law enforcement community. The average number of females within departments has remained constant over the past 15-20 years. While strides have been made for inclusion of minorities of various races and ethnic origins female representation within the departments has been stagnant, remaining at 10-14 % of sworn law enforcement officers. Female police officers average tenure in service within a department is 5-8 years. The numbers reflected in the makeup of female officers remains consistent only as a result of new female officers entering the career field as many are choosing to leave the profession.

The first hypothesis examined the impact which acceptance by peers had on female officers and the women's decisions to stay within the law enforcement career field. Data shows that peer acceptance and inclusion into the organization impacts 85-90% of female officers and often leads to the female officer's decision to remain with or leave an agency.

The second hypothesis examined discriminatory practices (sexual harassment, demeaning gender jokes, etc.), and the ramifications that these practices have on recruitment and retention of female law enforcement officers. The data suggests 65-86% of all female law enforcement officers experience discriminatory practices and/or sexual harassment within the career field. The impact of these practices directly influences female officers and their decisions relating to the career field. Statistics indicate not only do female officers suffer at the hands of those who participate in discriminatory actions but the organization itself is also affected as the result of legal actions which may be taken against the agency. Many female officers leave the law enforcement career when they are compelled to choose between career and psychological wellbeing.

The third hypothesis examined female personal issues and their effects on recruitment and retention of women in law enforcement. There are many health, family and equipment issues unique to female officers within the law enforcement career field. Statistics indicate 60-65% of female officers reported facing issues relating to pregnancy, child care, ill-fitting equipment and other female specific health conditions (menstruation, bladder control, menopause, etc.). Many female officers indicated that those issues

relating to physiological needs were not considered or often scoffed at by their male peers and supervisors. Personal issues figured into the equation for many women in law enforcement who chose to leave the profession.

The fourth hypothesis examined career opportunities for women in law enforcement. This hypothesis should show that many female officers choose to leave the career of law enforcement because of the lack of opportunities to advance within an agency. This also examines such issues as glass ceilings, tokenism, and gender specific placement within the law enforcement career. (National Center for Women & Policing, 2003) The statistics examined show despite female officers representing 10-14% of the law enforcement population; only 4-6 % of administrative or supervisory positions within law enforcement are filled by females (2003). These limitations lead many female officers to seek alternative careers.

### **Limitations:**

This research proposal did not cover all variables that could affect the recruitment and retention of women in law enforcement. Some of the variables that may have a significant effect on women entering into and remaining within the law enforcement career field are small number of women in the population studied. These women were given a questionnaire composed of 21 items designed to reflect their thoughts on how they were recruited and/or treated within the law enforcement career field. The numbers of questions are not sufficient to fully reflect attitudes and value systems that impact recruitment and retention of female officers.

### **Implications:**

Public administrators and law enforcement administrators will have to review their current practices as it pertains to the recruitment and retention of female officers if they desire to increase their numbers of female officers within the agency they represent. Should the agency desire to increase that number, recruiting of female officers must be actively pursued and current policies and procedures must be altered in order to retain females currently employed with the agency.

### **Recommendations:**

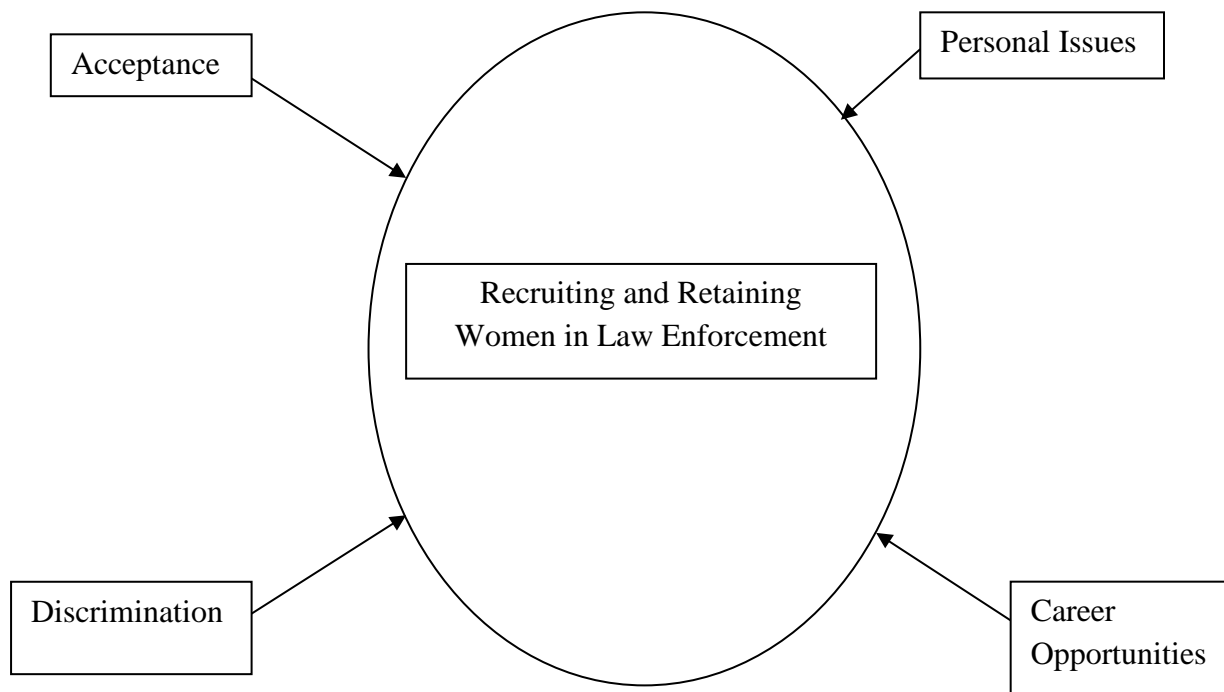
Further study in this area should include some of the variables and stressors not included in this research. Variables such as employment opportunities in a given geographic area, roles of significant others on decisions by female law enforcement officers, and psychological factors which affect female officers may also be factors which affect employment decisions for female officers. The effects of post-traumatic stress on the female officers involved in use of deadly force occurrences may also be studied to better understand its role in female officer's careers. This research has opened up a vast array of possibilities as it relates to the future of women in law enforcement. Those in the forefront must consider that without many women in these positions to have an input into decisions specific to female officers, it is unlikely that much change will occur.

Communities will not be equally represented if this trend continues and eventually may lead to a decline of women applicants to compete in this continuing male-dominated profession. Equality in both hiring and promotion of women needs serious evaluation by agency leaders and community leaders alike if women are to make any real progress with this dilemma (See Appendix B).

Lieutenant Laura Montoya began serving the Escambia County Sheriff's Office in 1998 as a corrections officer. She became a Deputy Sheriff in 2000. She has been assigned to many different units to include Uniform patrol, Investigations, Training and Court Security. She is currently assigned to the Uniform Patrol Division.

### Appendix A

#### Schematic Model:



## Appendix B:

List of Agencies with Percentages of Women Officers and their assignments, reflecting large agencies (500+ sworn officers) which have incorporated measures to actively recruit and retain female officers.

<b>APPENDIX E Agency</b>		Total Sworn Officers	Total Sworn Women Officers	% Sworn Women Officers	% Women Top Command	% Women Supervisory	% Women Line Operations
1	Pittsburgh Police	1,140	285	<b>25.0%</b>	37.5%	25.6%	24.7%
2	Washington Metropolitan Police	3,628	898	<b>24.8%</b>	11.5%	23.1%	25.4%
3	Detroit Police	4,018	869	<b>21.6%</b>	19.7%	22.0%	21.6%
4	Philadelphia Police	6,748	1,456	<b>21.6%</b>	4.6%	9.8%	24.3%
5	Miami-Dade Police	2,920	611	<b>20.9%</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
6	Toledo Police	731	146	<b>20.0%</b>	10.5%	12.1%	22.1%
7	Chicago Police	13,271	2,545	<b>19.2%</b>	3.0%	13.1%	20.0%
8	Buffalo Police	928	171	<b>18.4%</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
9	Montgomery County Police	954	173	<b>18.1%</b>	6.3%	10.1%	19.7%
10	Birmingham Police	913	161	<b>17.6%</b>	20.0%	19.5%	17.4%
11	Miami Police	979	172	<b>17.6%</b>	0.0%	14.8%	18.4%
12	Orlando Police	612	107	<b>17.5%</b>	0.0%	18.0%	17.9%
13	Pinellas County Sheriff	1,425	248	<b>17.4%</b>	4.8%	14.3%	18.3%
14	Cincinnati Police	978	170	<b>17.4%</b>	10.0%	8.1%	19.6%
15	Los Angeles Police	9,392	1,626	<b>17.3%</b>	3.3%	10.2%	18.5%
16	Sacramento County Sheriff	1,216	207	<b>17.0%</b>	5.0%	9.1%	16.7%
17	Memphis Police	1,553	260	<b>16.7%</b>	14.3%	10.2%	17.8%

*Source: NCWP Survey on the Status of Women in Policing (2003)*

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