

# Staffing Challenges in Small Law Enforcement Agencies

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## ***Abstract***

*The purpose of this research paper is to review staffing challenges in small law enforcement agencies. The research was conducted on Florida Law Enforcement Agencies with between 11 to 15 sworn members. The research focused on shift hours, recruiting, and retention in small law enforcement agencies.*

## **Introduction**

One of the most significant challenges facing small law enforcement agencies is staffing. Staffing challenges are however not unique to only small law enforcement agencies as even the largest agencies are challenged in this area. Agency staffing affects many areas of law enforcement service delivery to communities such as response time to calls and services they provide their community.

There are many contributing factors that affect small law enforcement agencies abilities to properly staff their agencies. Retention of staff is challenging for small law enforcement agencies to remain competitive in their market. Larger agencies that have much larger budgets allows them to pay better wages. Small law enforcement agencies have to budget to remain competitive with employee benefits such as the rising cost of quality employee and family medical insurance which will allow them to retain employees. Another important factor for retaining employees is to invest in their career development through providing specialized training which allows the employee to grow and feel challenged.

Within a small law enforcement agency scheduling of employees is a great challenge which is impacted having fewer officers. Small law enforcement agencies have to evaluate shift hours for scheduling whether their agency benefits from eight-hour, ten-hour, or twelve-hour shifts. The number of hours per shift has different effects on each size agency so it must be fully evaluated to determine which one is best suited for the agencies scheduling needs. No matter what size the agency is law enforcement shares a common scheduling requirement that is different than a lot of employers which requires adequate staffing for the agency 24-hours a day.

Recruitment of employees is a challenge for almost every law enforcement agency no matter what size they are. Small law enforcement agencies have limited resources usually not having a full-time recruiter or recruiting section to devote the time to attend many job fairs or recruit in other states to search for the most qualified candidates. It is also important for small law enforcement agencies to recruit women and minorities so they can have diversity in their agencies similar to larger agencies. Many candidates in law enforcement that apply or begin the hiring process wash out at some point in the process for issues such as criminal backgrounds, drug testing, polygraph tests, and psychiatric assessments.

Law enforcement agencies have to compete with higher paying jobs in other professions outside of law enforcement. Many of these jobs outside of law enforcement have better work schedules with nights or weekends off. All of these factors contribute to the reduction in the qualified candidate pool that agencies have to draw from.

The questions this study asks and seeks to answer what is the best shift for a small law enforcement agency? Scheduling of shifts whether eight-hour, ten- hour, or twelve hours and the effects of shift lengths on employees. What can small law enforcement agencies do to better their recruitment and retention practices to hire and retain quality candidates?

## **Literature Review**

### **Recruitment Challenges:**

Recruiting for law enforcement agencies creates many challenges which is multiplied for small agencies. These additional challenges for small agencies come from lack of resources where larger agencies have designated recruiters or recruiting sections that are able to attend many job fairs and recruiting opportunities. Large agencies also have the ability to recruit outside their jurisdiction and even in other states allowing them to seek the best of the best in the way of candidates. For small agencies they do not have the ability to have recruiting sections of even a fulltime recruiter. Small agencies relying on an officer that does other tasks to include sometime on a part time basis to perform recruiting duties. The practice of using a part time recruiting strategy is generally much less effective than fulltime recruiting. (Wilson, et al, 2013)

In today's law enforcement it is very important to the communities to have diversity in organizations. Law enforcement agencies are perceived by many as having institutional racism in recruitment and retention of minorities. Today typical police agencies recruitment campaigns consist almost exclusively of advertising in news publications that generally cater to the white community. It is important that agencies recruit in the communities to reach everyone. Some opportunities for recruitment that are commonly overlooked are visits to community centers, recreation facilities, local shopping areas, and other community locations which are identified as parcels of minority communities. Local church leaders are also important in the black and minority communities to provide direction to young men and women that are looking at improving their future. Law enforcement has also increased the time it can take to complete the hiring process with increased screening processes. Law enforcement has also increased the length of training for new officers for training on additional new equipment as well active shooter situations. The additional length of time added for the hiring process and new officer training has greatly affected how long it takes to get new officers on the street. (Wilson, et al, 2013)

In today's law enforcement there is a crisis for attracting qualified candidates especially female and minority candidates. Small agencies feel victimized by the larger agencies recruiting and taking their sworn members from small agencies leading to reoccurring vacancies. Another factor that has created difficulties for law enforcement agencies recruiting female and minority officers is the concern about race and sex

discrimination. The negative publicity from recent law enforcement use of force incidents on minorities perceived to be excessive by many creates the racial profiling effect. An emerging controversial topic in recruiting and hiring new officers is tolerance of experimental drug use and minor criminal infractions committee by candidates. Another requirement that many agencies have done to increase their candidate pool is to eliminate or lessen their college education requirement. Some larger agencies have developed additional compensation to lure experienced and well-trained officers from other agencies by offering signing bonuses to come over to their agency. Larger agencies have offered relocation allowances to lure experienced officers from other jurisdictions and even other states to increase their candidate pool. (Jordan, Fidel, Faggioli, & Kubu, 2009)

### **Shift Schedules and Staffing:**

Almost all law enforcement agencies have looked at and evaluated work schedules from many different angles. This includes whether the eight, ten, or twelve hour schedule is more beneficial to their agency. To both attract new officers as well as retain existing ones agencies have to look at flexible schedules, increased time off, and condensed work weeks. Shift schedules impact every agency but small agencies are impacted the hardest with the requirement to have minimum staffing on duty at all times with limited officers to fill that role. Small agencies also do not have different sections that play different roles having to use at times the same officer that covers a shift to also cover specialized functions in the agency. (Jordan, Fidel, Faggioli, & Kubu, 2009)

Schedules and hours that police officers work have always been a concern related to safety, health, quality of life, fatigue, performance, and efficiency.

When scheduling officers and staff at any law enforcement agency one common practice that seems to be reoccurring is to do more with less officers and staff. Traditional scheduling for law enforcement agencies has been a five day, forty-hour workweek. With the fiscal challenges that many law enforcement agencies face currently and, in the future, they must examine ways that can reduce payroll and overtime spending which is often the largest portion of any agencies budget. (Amendola, et al, 2011)

When law enforcement agencies fully evaluate the benefits of ten and twelve hour shifts to their particular organization, they must consider the cautions made by scientists on the use of long work hours in public safety positions. Because of the effects of long shift hours and fatigue many federally regulated industries have put in place regulations on the number of hours that can be worked on a shift. Some examples of federal regulations on work hours are in place for truckers, train engineers, commercial pilots, and nuclear power plant operators. Surprisingly no such regulations have been put in place for police officers. Yet, police officers face considerable risks to the public or the officer themselves and there are still no federal regulations on work hours. The studies on the effects of long shifts on police officers are less frequent and less rigorous than what has been conducted in many other industries. (Amendola, et al, 2011)

When evaluating ten hour shifts in law enforcement, they have shown advantages to both the agency and the individual officer. The benefit found to the agency was that officers working ten-hour shifts worked the least amount of overtime of any other shift option. The individual officer benefit of the ten-hour shift was a higher quality of work life and getting significantly more sleep. When twelve-hour shifts were evaluated individual

officers' quality of work life was lower than ten hour shifts. Twelve- hour shifts also showed less of a benefit to the agencies with increased overtime costs associated that shift. When eight-hour shifts were evaluated they showed the effect on the agencies was more overtime than ten- or twelve-hour shifts. Eight hour shifts also showed a lower quality of work life to the individual officer than ten-hour shifts. Another factor that effects the shift length is the size of the agency as some smaller agencies are not able to schedule ten or twelve hour shifts with adequate coverage. (Amendola, et al, 2011)

There are four traditional approaches to staffing a law enforcement agency. The per capita approach is where the number of officers a community needs is determined by the population of that community. In this approach the agency must determine an optimum officer rate which is commonly done by comparing their rate with a peer agency similar in size, location, or crime. The advantage of per capita approach includes its methodological simplicity and is an approach that is easy to interpret. The International Association of Chiefs of Police has determined that per capita approach of using ratios such as officers-per-thousand population are totally inappropriate for staffing decisions based on the risk of biased determinations. The per capita method doesn't consider different policing style or service delivery such as traditional or community-oriented service delivery. Staffing of a law enforcement agency is complex and consideration must be given to many factors of reliable data. (Wilson, 2014)

Another staffing approach is the minimum staffing approach. This approach requires an estimate of sufficient officers that must be deployed at any one time to provide public protection and officer safety. Minimum staffing approach is a fairly common approach and reinforced by collective bargaining agreements and agency policies. Many agencies use the minimum staffing approach and determine minimum staffing for their agency without any factual data such as workload, response time, officer presence, immediate availability, distance to travel, or any other performance criteria. On the other hand some agencies use factual data from population, call load, crime rate, and other variables which make minimum staffing numbers much more effective to successfully police their community. (Wilson, 2014)

The authorized level approach uses budget allocations to dictate how many officers that are allocated. The authorized level approach of staffing is driven by resource availability and political decision making not from efficiency analysis or demand for police services. Authorized level staffing creates the misperception when an agency is below the authorized level, they are under staff which is not always true. Unless an agency stays well above the authorized level in staffing, they will continually be below the authorized level from retirements or officers leaving the agency for any other reason. (Wilson, 2014)

The work-load based approach to staffing is a comprehensive approach which takes into account actual police service workloads based on demand for service indicators. It also models the agencies level of current activity to estimate future staffing needs of the agency. Unfortunately, when it comes to workload-based assessments there is not an accepted standard method for conducting them and they are not always used as part of the decision-making process for police leaders. An important factor when determining the workload-based staffing approach for an agency is identifying peak call times to ensure they have the highest number of officers working during those time periods. Agencies must also factor in the nature of the calls for service they receive to

understand the work officers are regularly doing and can vary from area to area in the same jurisdiction which would different staffing needs. (Wilson, 2014)

When using workload –based staffing it is important to remember this approach relies heavily on averages and may leave an agency severally short staffed during unpredictable situations or substantial emergencies. This approach also doesn't factor in longer response times for agencies with large geographical areas where the travel time may delay response time outside of an acceptable level of service. The workload- based approach is found to function the best with agency's that respond to a minimum of 15,000 citizen generated calls per year. If used with less calls per year the time required for calls is so low that it will drive the officer recommendation lower than reasonable for that agency to function effectively. (Wilson, 2014)

### **Staff Retention:**

There is a continual demand in law enforcement for new officers which is largely brought on by turnover of officers leaving an agency. Indictors of the health or function of an organization are often shown in the turnover rate in an agency. Frequently agencies do not examine or consider the costs associated with officer turnover ignoring the organizational investments that have compounded over the years. Instead many agencies focus primarily on the short-term cost associated with replacing an officer. It has been quantified that the cost associated with replacing one officer with three years of experience at an agencies cost more than twice their annual salary. This cost can rise substantially depending on specialized training or additional costs associated with selection processes. (Wilson, 2012)

Agency retention and turnover is greatly affected by their ability to provide competitive wages and benefits to their officers. Many communities are struggling to fund police expenses in their budget and are using hiring freezes to control these expenses. Frequently experienced and well-trained officers leave agencies for better wages or benefits which leaves behind poor performers who are less than effective. When experienced top performing officers leave an agency that lowers the agency service levels and creates a loss of overall productivity. (Wilson, 2012)

One of the biggest retention problems for agencies is that top performers are not compensated in any way for being a hard worker. So hard working top performers are paid the same as officers that do just enough to get by and constantly take the easy way out. Job security is also a big factor for officers to consider when staying with a small agency in particular as some do not have all the labor association protection that officers employed by a larger agency would have. Law enforcement officers that work at Sheriff's Departments also have to be concerned with Sheriffs leaving and newly elected Sheriffs bringing in new staff with them to replace staff from the previous Sheriff. This is especially true as you move up the ranks to upper management levels. (Wilson, 2012)

Loosing officers is not always bad such as in the case of officers retiring and being replaced by less expensive, more –skilled, and younger officers that are more committed to policing. In some cases agencies are ridding themselves of poor performers and facilitating change as well as increase productivity. (Wilson, 2012)

Many agencies are looking at different retention strategies other than strictly wages. Many times officers consider other benefits or factors more important that solely

their wage. In a healthy job market based on wages it would take a twenty percent wage increase for a happy officer to leave their agency versus an unhappy officer will leave for a five percent wage increase. Agencies need to devote their efforts on taking steps to increase job satisfaction. One important way to increase job satisfaction is through an ongoing professional development program. Many employees know that in law enforcements constantly changing profession they must increase their skills and value an agency that works with them to help expand their knowledge. It is important to include employees in agency decisions that are related to their expertise such include agency firearms instructors to help with decisions on the type of firearms to purchase for the agency. Another important factor that will retain officers and encourage them to not seek employment with others agencies is to provide pleasant working conditions. (Terra, 2009)

Agencies have to continually look at different or better ways to retain officers. Many agencies have found it to be cheaper to spend money on officers they currently have instead of the much higher costs of starting over training a new officer. To be effective officer retention must begin early during an officer's probationary period as unlike the military an officer is free to leave or seek better opportunities at any time. One way some agencies are helping to retain officers during their probationary period is through a mentoring program. This mentoring program is accomplished by assigning an experienced and caring officer to mentor an individual or small group of new officers through some or the entire probationary period. ("Law Enforcement Personnel", 2007)

Agencies must also consider gender retention and the needs of different genders. Female officers are more likely to be single custodial parents which creates childcare issues especially with associated shift work and varied schedules. Some agencies are emphasizing the family approach using department open houses for families, spouse ride-alongs, and including families in other department events. Take-home cars are a great incentive to retain officers and an added benefit to help agencies be competitive. Many agencies have hired back retired officers for sworn and civilian administrative positions to fill vacancies. In an effort to retain officers' agencies have begun to offer year-end retention bonuses, big uniform allowances, or lump sum payouts. Year-end payouts encourage officers to stay with their agency rather than seek other options. ("Law Enforcement Personnel", 2007)

When agencies evaluate why new officers leave not just their agency but law enforcement entirely, they find the majority of the time it is because the job was not what they thought it would be or people are mean to the new officer. New officers also discover truly how dangerous law enforcement is when they encounter life threatening situations. The most successful way agencies have addressed this is through pre-hire indoctrinations and ride-alongs to allow officer candidates to see first-hand what they will be exposed to as a law enforcement officer with a particular agency prior to starting. ("Law Enforcement Personnel", 2007)

One agency in California is providing dorm like housing for officers to stay in during their off-duty hours on their days they work then they go home on their three or four days off a week. Some agencies are allowing officers to park their travel trailers in the agency's parking lot. This allows officers that work twelve hour shifts the ability to avoid driving home especially for those that live a considerable distance from where they work. The other benefit to the officer is that this allows them to live in more affordable areas or rural areas that have better school for their children. The benefit to the agencies with take home

car programs is by having the officer stay at the agency during their work week is a significant savings on fuel and mileage on the agency vehicle. (“Law Enforcement Personnel”, 2007)

## **Methods**

The purpose of this research project was to identify best practices and effective ways to address staffing challenges in small law enforcement agencies. Data was reviewed on specific schedules for officers. The 8-hour, 10-hour, and 12-hour shift were selected to determine what shift would be the most effective for small agencies. Recruiting and retention practices were also reviewed for small agencies.

Data was gathered from Florida law enforcement agencies with an officer count between 11 to 15 officers that are identified on the FDLE 7 training region list dated March 22, 2019. The survey was emailed to each agency in the selected survey size between 11 to 15 officer count. The survey was sent by email to the following listed agencies:

1. Lake Clark Shores Police Department (FT 11)  
(561) 964-1515 Population: 3578
2. Chattahoochee Police Department (FT 11)  
(850) 663-4383 Population: 3000
3. Manalapan Police Department (FT 11)  
(561) 585-4030 Population: 457
4. Eatonville Police Department (FT 11)  
(407) 623-1300 Population: 2000
5. Valparaiso Police Department (FT 11)  
(825) 729-5400 Population: 5072
6. Gulfstream Police Department (FT 11)  
(561) 278- 8611 Population: 1001
7. Edgewood Police Department (FT 12)  
(407) 851-2820 Population: 2852
8. Chipley Police Department (FT 12)  
(850) 638-6310 Population: 3580
9. Ponce Inlet Police Department (FT 12)  
(386) 236-2160 Population: 3220
10. Williston Police Department (FT 12)  
(352) 528-4991 Population: 2760

11. Belleair Police Department (FT 12)  
(727) 588-3787 Population: 4022
12. Chiefland Police Department (FT 12)  
(352) 493-6777 Population: 2225
13. Blountstown Police Department (FT 13)  
(850) 674-5987 Population: 2500
14. Lake Alfred Police Department (FT 13)  
(863) 291-5200 Population: 5766
15. Oakland Police Department (FT 13)  
(407) 656-9797 Population: 2887
16. Windermere Police Department (FT 13)  
(407) 876-3757 Population: 3327
17. Madison Police Department (FT 14)  
(850) 973-5077 Population: 2853
18. Belleview Police Department (FT 14)  
(352) 693-4354 Population: 4869
19. Wauchula Police Department (FT 14)  
(863) 773-3265 Population: 4922
20. High Springs Police Department (FT 14)  
(386) 454-1415 Population: 5941
21. Atlantis Police Department (FT 14)  
(561) 965-1700 Population: 2122
22. Juno Beach Police Department (FT 14)  
(561) 626-2100 Population: 3564
23. Flagler Beach Police Department (FT 14)  
(386) 517-2023 Population: 4999
24. Highland Beach Police Department (FT 15)  
(561) 278-4548 Population: 3760

The survey only focuses on the agency as a whole collecting data on the entire agency. The weakness of the survey data collected was agencies lack of openness to provide negative data and practices that they are still using that are unsuccessful. The importance of the negative data and unsuccessful practices is to focus on what doesn't

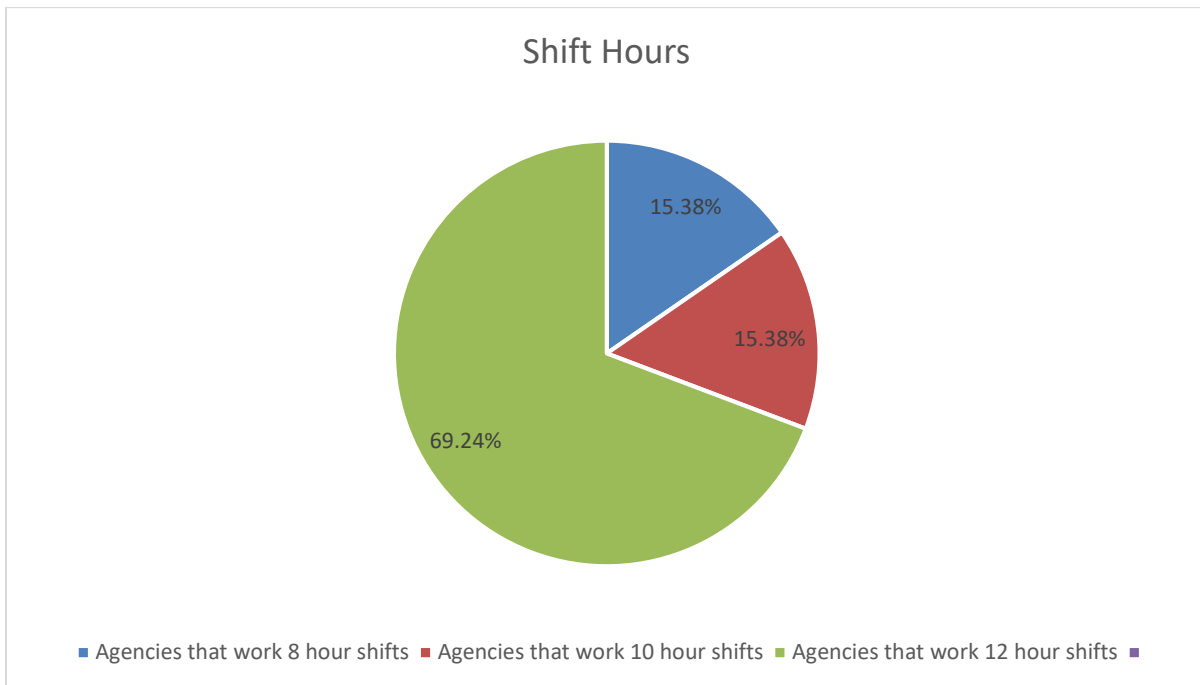


work so more successful ways can be found. Another weakness I found is agencies have different policing philosophies, different workload and number of calls for service. Populations also vary in jurisdictions from 457 to 5941 residents which significantly effects the way agencies police.

### Results

The survey was sent to 24 law enforcement agencies in Florida with between 11 to 15 sworn members. The response rate for my survey was 54 % receiving back 13 completed surveys out of the 24 sent out. A 19 questions survey was sent out to these 24 agencies. One agency did not respond to the question that asked what their agency's primary method of recruiting was.

The first question asked the shift length for patrol in their agency. The response was two agencies (15.38%) advised they work eight hour shifts. Another two agencies (15.38%) advised they work ten hour shifts. The remaining nine agencies (69.24%) advised they work twelve hour shifts. The questions also allowed another shift option which other no agency indicated working other shift hours.

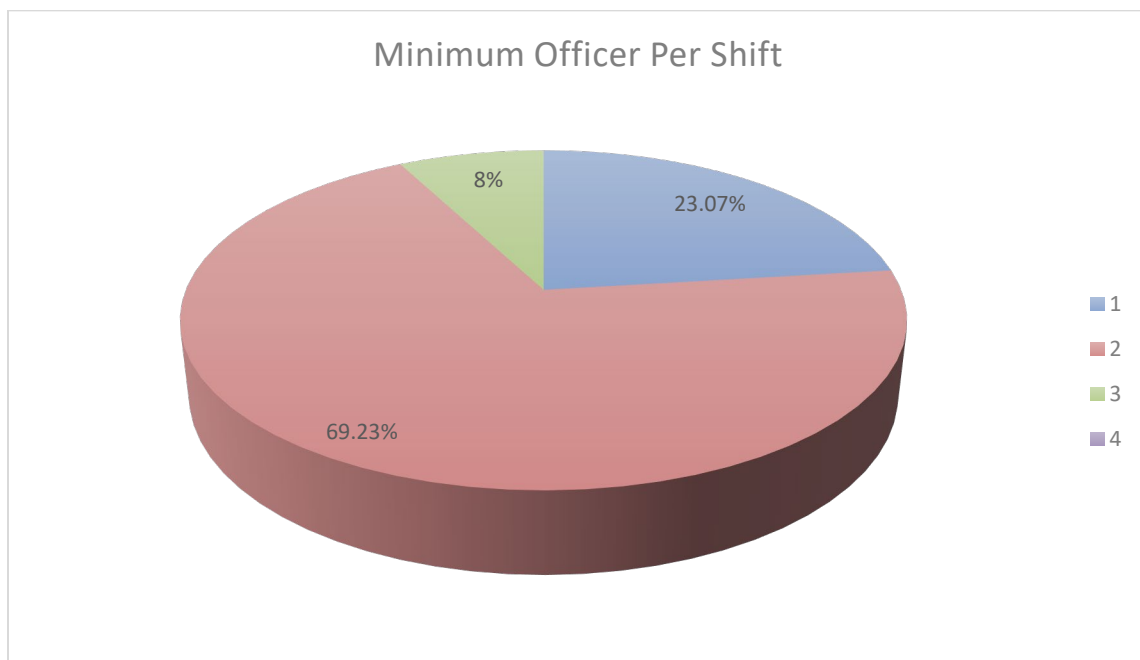


Agencies that work 8 hour shifts	15.38%
Agencies that work 10 hour shifts	15.38%
Agencies that work 12 hour shifts	69.24%

The second question asked if their agency was currently looking at other shift hours. Two agencies (15.38%) stated they were looking at other shift hour options. The remaining eleven agencies (84.62%) advised they were not looking at other shift hour options.

The third question asked if their agency has had officers come forward with complaints about long shift hours. One agency (7.69%) stated they have received complaints about long shift hours. The remaining 12 agencies (92.31%) advised they have not had anyone come forward about complaints of long shift hours.

The fourth question asked what agencies minimum officers on duty are for each shift. Three agencies (23.07 %) stated their minimum officers on duty was one officer. Nine agencies (69.23%) stated their minimum officers on duty is two officers. One agency (7.70%) stated that their minimum officers on duty is four officers.



One Officer Minimum Per Shift	23.07%
Two Officer Minimum Per Shift	69.23%
Four Officer Minimum Per Shift	8%

The fifth question asked how each agency recruited new officers for their organizations. Out of the thirteen agencies surveyed no agency utilizes a full-time recruiter. Two agencies (15.38%) utilize a designated part-time recruiter. Nine agencies (69.23%) use different agencies members to recruit having no designated recruiter. Two agencies (15.38%) selected other on the survey for recruiting. One of the agencies selecting other stated they post open positions on their website and social media for

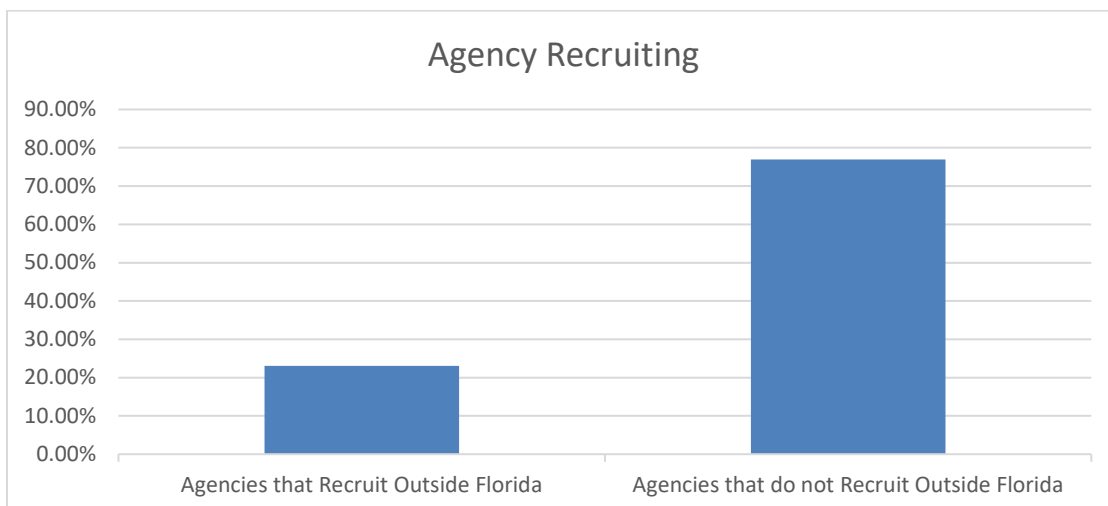
recruiting. The second agency that selected other advises they speak at the academy and accept applications for their recruiting.



Full-Time Recruiter	0%	
Part-Time Recruiter	15.38%	
Use Different Members to Recruit	69.23%	
Other	15.38%	

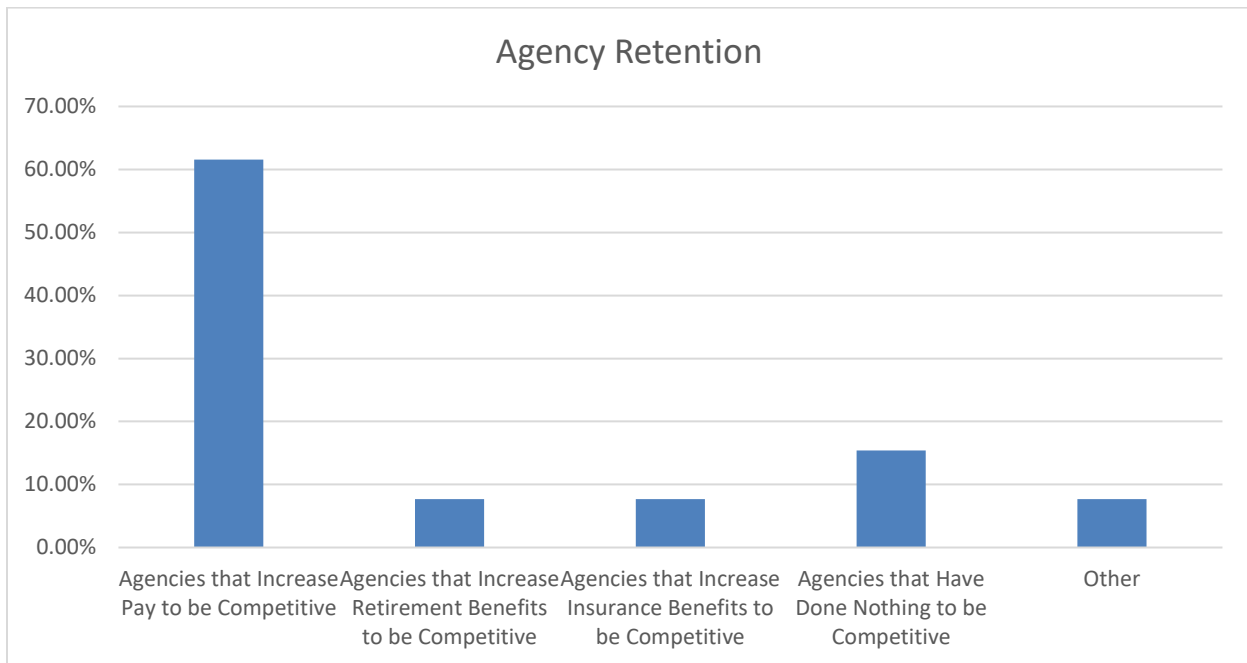
The sixth question asked if their agency recruited out of their jurisdiction. Twelve agencies (92.30 %) stated they did recruit outside their jurisdiction. One agency (7.7%) stated they did not recruit outside their jurisdiction.

The seventh question asked if their agency recruited outside Florida. Three agencies (23.08%) stated they do recruit outside Florida. Ten agencies (76.92%) stated they do not recruit outside of Florida.



The eighth question asked what their agencies primary method of recruiting is. Six agencies (46.15 %) stated social media is their primary method of recruiting. Three agencies (23.08%) stated their primary method is presentations to academy classes. Three agencies (23.08 %) selected other in response. One agency (7.69%) provided no answer to the question.

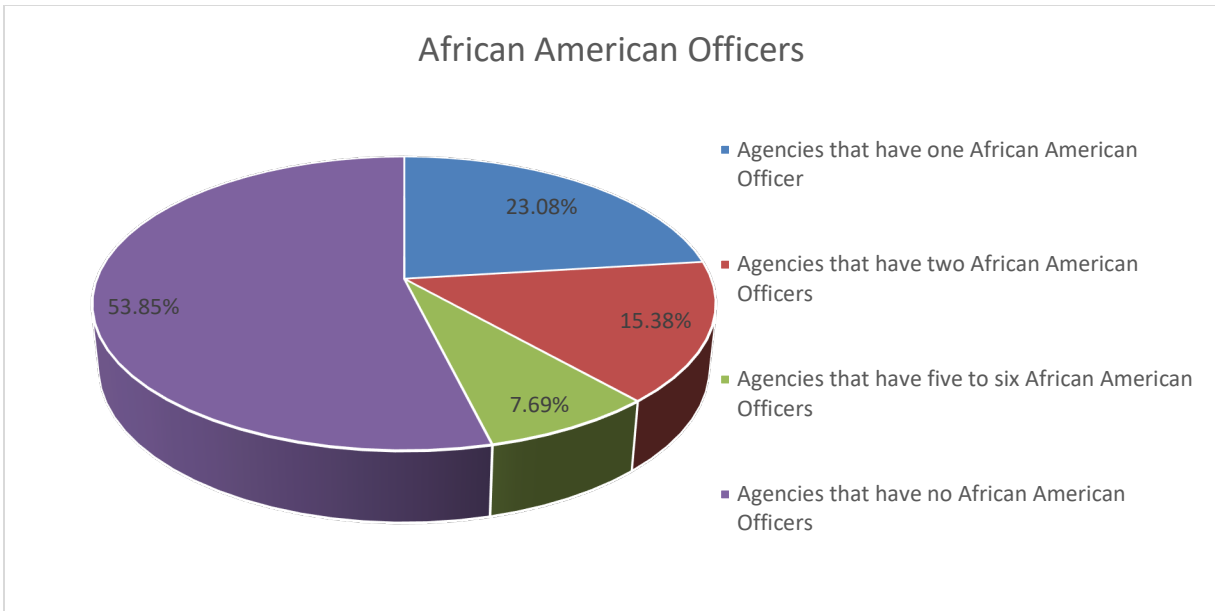
The ninth question asked what their agency has done to address retention of officers. Eight agencies (61.55 %) stated they improve officer pay to be more competitive. One agency (7.69%) stated they improve health insurance benefits to be more competitive. One agency (7.69%) stated they improved retirement to be more competitive. Two agencies (15.38%) stated they have done nothing to improve officer retention. One agency (7.69%) selected other in response to the question.



The tenth question asked if their agency has a take home car program for officers. Seven agencies (53.85%) stated they do have a take home car program. Six agencies (46.15%) stated they did not have a take home car program.

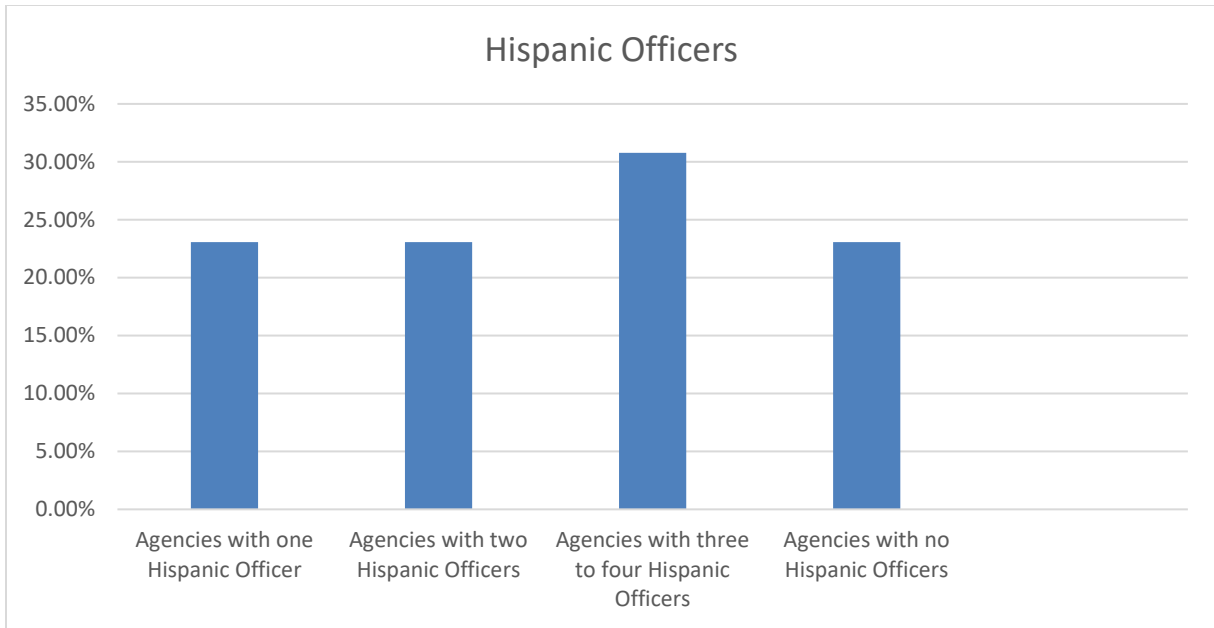
The eleventh question asked agencies how many female officers their agency has. Four agencies (30.77%) stated they have one female officer. Three agencies (23.08%) stated they have two female officers. Four agencies (30.77%) stated they have three to four female officers. One agency (7.69%) stated they have more than six female officers. One agency (7.69%) stated they have no female officers.

The twelfth question asked agencies how many African American officers make up their agency. Three agencies (23.08%) stated they have one African American officer. Two agencies (15.38%) stated they have two African American officers. One agency (7.69%) stated they have five to six African American officers. Seven agencies (53.85%) stated they have no African American officers.



Agencies that have one African American Officer	23.08%
Agencies that have two African American Officers	15.38%
Agencies that have five to six African American Officers	7.69%
Agencies that have no African American Officers	53.85%

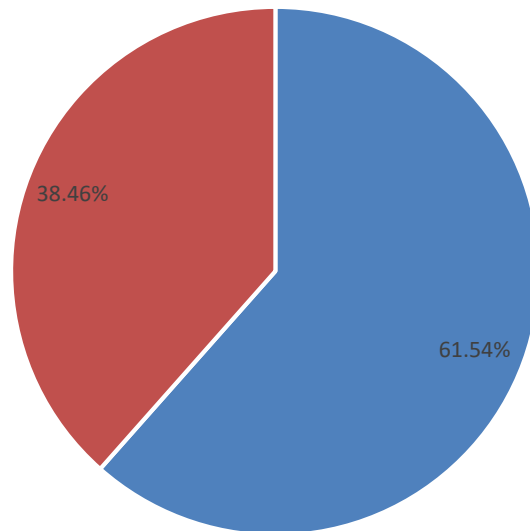
The thirteenth question asked agencies how many Hispanic officers make up their agencies. Three agencies (23.08%) stated they have one Hispanic officer. Three agencies (23.08%) stated they have two Hispanic officers. Four agencies (30.77%) stated they have three to four Hispanic officers. Three agencies (23.08%) stated they have no Hispanic officers.



Agencies with one Hispanic Officer	23.08%
Agencies with two Hispanic Officers	23.08%
Agencies with three to four Hispanic Officers	30.77%
Agencies with no Hispanic Officers	23.08%

The fourteenth question asked agencies in the past year if they lost officers to larger agencies. Eight agencies (61.54 %) stated they lost officers to larger agencies in the past year. Five agencies (38.46%) stated in the past year they have not lost any officers to larger agencies.

### Officer Retention-Lost Officers to Larger Agencies



- Agencies that have lost officers to larger agencies in the past year
- Agencies that have not lost officers to larger agencies in the past year
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Agencies that have lost officers to larger agencies in the past year	61.54%
Agencies that have not lost officers to larger agencies in the past year	38.46%

The fifteenth question asked agencies how many officers they have lost to larger agencies. Six agencies (46.15%) stated they lost one to three officers to larger agencies. Two agencies (15.38%) stated they have lost four to six officers to larger agencies. Two agencies (15.38%) stated they have lost nine or more officers to larger agencies. Three agencies (23.09%) stated they have lost no officers to larger agencies.

The sixteenth question asked agencies if they have lost officers leaving for non-law enforcement employment. Six agencies (46.15%) stated they have lost officers for non-law enforcement employment. Seven agencies (53.85 %) stated they lost no officers for non-law enforcement employment.

The seventeenth question asked agencies in the last twelve months how many officers they have lost for non-law enforcement employment. Five agencies (38.46%) stated they lost one to three officers. Eight agencies (61.54%) stated they have lost no officers.

The eighteenth question asked in the last twelve months how many officers have left their agency. One agency (7.69%) stated they lost one officer. Seven agencies

(53.85%) stated they lost two officers. One agency (7.69%) stated they lost three officers. One agency (7.69%) stated they lost four officers. Three agencies (23.08%) stated they lost no officers.

The nineteenth question asked how many calls for service each agency took in 2018. The call amount ranged from a low of 507 to a high of 11585 calls for service in 2018.

## **Discussion**

The results of the survey provided interesting feedback on staffing at smaller law enforcement agencies. Focusing on shift scheduling 69.24 % of agencies use twelve-hour shifts with 15.38 % using 10-hour shifts and another 15.38 % using eight-hour shifts. When asked about looking at other shift hours 15.38 % advised they were and 84.62 % were not looking at other shift hour options. When analyzing the data, it is difficult to determine the best shift hours for all smaller agencies as the number of officers varies in the surveyed agencies from eleven to fifteen officers. The addition of even one additional officer can greatly improve shift scheduling coverage. Another factor that makes the most significant difference in shift hour comparison is the individual agencies minimum officers on duty on each shift. The survey identified 23.07% of agencies only had one officer on duty per shift.

There are two related but different subjects which are recruiting and retention. Recruiting at smaller agencies is impacted by resources. Every one of the respondent agencies stated they do not have a fulltime recruiter that focuses solely on recruiting qualified candidates. Only 15.38% of agencies stated they have a designated part-time recruiter. Of the remaining agencies 69.23 % do not have a designated recruiter using different members to recruit. The remaining 15.38% stated they use social media or speak to academy classes as their means of recruiting. The survey identified that 92.30% of respondent agencies recruited outside their jurisdiction and that only 23.08 % recruited outside Florida. The survey data indicates the lack of regular recruiting and ability to compete with larger agencies that have designated recruiters or recruiting sections. Smaller agencies surveyed also do not recruit outside Florida which will restrict their available candidates.

One significant part of staffing is employee retention. The respondent agencies largest focus on retention is on improving officer pay to be more competitive 61.55 % of agency focus on this. Another area that 7.69 % of agencies focused on was improving health insurance benefits and improving retirement benefits. It is surprising in a competitive field like law enforcement that 15.38% of agencies stated they have done nothing to improve retention. A great benefit that the majority of respondent agencies 53.85% have instituted is a take home car program.

Looking at retention data from surveyed agencies indicates 61.54% of agencies lost officers to larger agencies last year. When asking the agencies if they lost one to three officers 46.15% stated they lost them to larger agencies. Of the surveyed agencies 46.15% stated they have lost officers for non-law enforcement employment. The survey data reflects the largest portion of officers leave smaller agencies for employment with larger agencies but there is a significant number leaving law enforcement completely. I



did a phone interview on June 24, 2019 with Edgewood Police Chief John Freeburg. He advised his agency has no problem with officer retention. Chief Freeburg stated that his average officer is at his agency from ten to fourteen years. Chief Freeburg stated that the main reason for great officer retention is they improved retirement benefits to FRS, send officers to a lot of training classes, and Accreditation which makes officers proud to work there as well as provides consistent policies.

When looking at diversity in respondent agencies in some area's agencies appear to have diversity such as female officers 30.77 % stated they have one female, another 23.08 % stated they had two female officers, 30.77 % stated they had three to four female officers, and another 7.69% have more than six female officers for smaller agencies. A remaining 7.69% of agencies advised they have no female officers. Another question asked how many African American officers the respondent agencies had which produced a surprising response of 53.85 % had none. Another 23.08% stated they have one African American officer, 15.38% stated they have two African American officers, and 7.69% stated they have five to six African American officers.

## **Recommendations**

My recommendation is for smaller agencies to look at recruiting practices and opportunities out of Florida with only 23.08% of the agencies I surveyed recruiting outside Florida. Expanding their recruiting opportunities will improve diversity in agencies by expanding their candidate pool outside Florida.

My recommendation for agency retention is to look at what your agency offers and obviously you need to be competitive. For the smaller agencies that my survey focuses on wages need to be complete.

Retirement benefits are an important factor which the surveyed agencies stated only 7.69% have focused on improving retirement. Retirement benefits have been a large part of the success with retention that Chief Freeburg has found in his agency as well.

My survey identified another opportunity with improving health benefits which is very important in today's society with the raising health costs. In my survey only 7.69% of the surveyed agencies made any improvement to this area to address officer retention.

Agencies shift hours will need to be tuned to each agency's needs because of different numbers of officers employed by agencies as well different numbers for minimum officer staffing. It is very hard to almost impossible to match up exact agency size with minimum officer staffing. For example if one agency has even one more officer it would drastically impact shift coverage as well as if an agency has a one officer on duty minimum it will drastically be different then an agency requiring two or three minimum officers on duty per shift.

Lieutenant Michael Vieno has been with the Kenneth City Police Department for 18 years. He has been a Field Training Officer and Agency Instructor in many areas. In 2013 he was promoted to Sergeant. As a Sergeant he supervised patrol, Investigations, and Community Policing Sections. In 2016 he was promoted to Lieutenant where he currently supervises patrol, investigations, and is an Accreditation Manager. Mike received his Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from Thomas Edison State University and a Masters of Business Administration from California Coast State University.

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## Appendix A

### Research Survey for Staffing Challenges in Small Law Enforcement Agencies

Agency Name:

Please select the best answer for each question below.

1. Your agency uses works how many hour shifts for patrol?
  - 8-hour shifts
  - 10-hour shifts
  - 12-hour shifts
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Is your agency currently looking at options for shift hours (length)?
  - Yes
  - No
  
3. Does your agency have officers that have come forward with complaints about long shift hours?
  - Yes
  - No
  
4. What are your agencies minimum officers on duty for each shift?
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - Other
  
5. How do you recruit?
  - Designated full-time recruiter
  - Designated part-time recruiter
  - Use different agency members to recruit (No designated recruiter)
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Does your agency recruit outside of your jurisdiction?
  - Yes
  - No
  
7. Does your agency recruit outside of Florida?
  - Yes
  - No

8. What are your agency's primary method of recruiting?
- Social media
  - Circulate recruiting fliers
  - Presentation to academy classes
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. What has your agency done to address retention of officers?
- Improve officer pay to be more competitive
  - Improve officer health insurance benefits to be more competitive
  - Improve officer retirement to be more competitive
  - Improve officer working conditions to be more competitive
  - Have not done anything
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Does your agency have a take home car program for officers?
- Yes
  - No
11. How many female officers make up your agency?
- 1
  - 2
  - 3 to 4
  - 5 to 6
  - More than 6
  - None
12. How many African American officers make up your agency?
- 1
  - 2
  - 3 to 4
  - 5 to 6
  - More than 6
  - None
13. How many Hispanic officers make up your agency?
- 1
  - 2
  - 3 to 4
  - 5 to 6
  - More than 6
  - None
14. In the past year has your agency lost officer to a larger agency?
- Yes
  - No

15. How many officers has your agency lost to larger agencies?

- 1 to 3
- 4 to 6
- 6 to 9
- More than 9
- None

16. Has your agency lost officers that left law enforcement for a different career outside law enforcement?

- Yes
- No

17. In the last twelve months how many officers has your agency lost for a different career outside law enforcement?

- 1 to 3
- 4 to 6
- 7 to 9
- More than 9
- None

18. In the last twelve months how many officers have left your agency?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 to 6
- More than 6
- None

19. How many calls for service did your agency take in 2018?

## Appendix B

### Personal Communication

Interview: Chief John Freeburg Edgewood Police Department

Date: June 24, 2019

1. What is the average length your officers remain at your agency?
  - 10 to 14 years
  
2. What are the main reason you feel members stay at your agency?
  - FRS Retirement. Agency went to FRS 14 to 15 years ago and it has been successful in retaining officers.
  - Accreditation- Makes officers proud of where they work and provides consistent policies.
  - Send a lot of officers to school and training making them better at their job.