Recommendations to Support Diversification in Law Enforcement
Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force

Current status of diversity in policing

Nationally, law enforcement agencies demonstrate limited diversity. National data on law enforcement personnel[1] show that law enforcement officers in the United States are:

- 65.7% White
- 10.4% Black
- 19.8% Hispanic
- 2.9% Asian
- 1.0% Native American

These percentages have not changed significantly in the last two decades. In Connecticut, agencies are[2]:

	All agencies	Large agencies[3]
White	84.1%	71.7%
Black	5.8%	11.9%
Hispanic	6.3%	15.5%
Asian	0.6%	0.6%
Native American	0.1%	0.04%

Why is diversity in policing important?

While it is easy to see through popular media that the public outcry after Ferguson and George Floyd includes calls for increased diversity in policing, public sentiment is not the only driving rationale supporting increasing diversity in policing.

What is diversity in policing?

Diversity[4] in policing is generally discussed along two dimensions. The first is racial diversity, and the second is gender diversity. While racial diversity has recently received substantial attention, gender diversity is also an important consideration. Underlying racial and gender diversity is the idea of ideological diversity.

Racial diversification

Racial diversification in policing carries several substantial benefits. While limited evidence has supported differences in outcomes between White and Black officers, a recent study[5] that now reflects the best available evidence on the subject shows that:

- Black and Hispanic officers use less force than White officers.
- Black and Hispanic officers make fewer stops and fewer arrests than white officers. This reflects a greater reliance on community interaction and problem solving.

In addition to these advantages, racial diversity also relates to representative bureaucracy, the idea that government should reflect the characteristics of the governed.

Gender diversification

Gender diversification in policing carries similar benefits. Studies have shown that female officers:

- Use comparably less force than male officers[6]
- Use less coercion[7]
- Receive fewer complaints and engage in less misconduct[8]

In addition to these benefits, female officers are better at communication and de-escalation and enhance perceptions of procedural justice[9].

Ideological diversity

Together the benefits of racial and gender diversification support improved police/community relationships and police legitimacy. As well, a diversification supports ideological diversity or the inclusion of many points of view. Police agencies generally do not foster diversity in thinking due to strict command structure, adherence to authority, an institutional culture. Diversity supports different perspectives when framing problems and proposing solutions, two benefits that might help police agencies transform.

[1] Reaves, 2019

[2] Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics 2013

[3] Reporting agencies that serve a population more than 100,000: Bridgeport, Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, Stamford, Waterbury

[4] While diversity is a larger concept incorporating principles of inclusivity for other marginalized groups, studies of diversity in the policing context are generally limited to the categories traditionally measured within police organizations.

[5] Knox et al., 2021

[6] Knox et al., 2021; Schuck et al., 2005

[7] Paoline et al., 2004

[8] Corsianos, 2011

[9] Novich et al., 2018

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Recommendations to Agencies

While there are substantial benefits to diversification, law enforcement agencies have struggled to diversify. Several evidence-based recommendations below can help agencies as they attempt to attract, hire, train, and retain a more diverse workforce.

Recruiting
Recommendation 1: Diversify the types of outreach activities conducted related to recruiting. Expand beyond job fair, military, cultural event, and university recruiting[10].

Recommendation 2: Openly address concerns about sexism in law enforcement when recruiting women[11].

Recommendation 3: Openly address concerns about ability when recruiting college-age women[11].

Recommendation 4: Emphasize the challenge aspects of law enforcement careers to attract more female and racial/ethnic minority candidates[12].

Recommendation 5: Emphasize job security in law enforcement careers to attract more female and racial/ethnic minority candidates[12].

Hiring
Recommendation 6: Reduce processing times for applicants to limit loss through attrition[13].

Recommendation 7: Simplify hiring process instructions/processes to limit confusion among applicants[13].

Recommendation 8: Incorporate supportive messaging (nudging – e.g., statements like "most applicants complete this process within a week")[13].

Recommendation 9: Analyze qualification criteria to determine which aspects disproportionately impact female and racial/ethnic minority candidates[14].

Recommendation 10: Set standards for evaluating disproportionate impact at equal passing rates rather than at the 80% EEOC compliance threshold[15].

Training
Recommendation 11: Adopt or expand adult or active learning principles in academy training[16].

Recommendation 12: Reduce emphasis on paramilitary approaches to training[17].

Recommendation 13: Increase support networks for cadets through mentoring programs[18].

Recommendation 14: Monitor developments in training academies in other jurisdictions that are advancing these issues through novel training protocols[19].

Recommendation 15: Compare implementation of similar curriculum across other jurisdictions to determine best approach to content delivery and format[20].

Strategic initiatives
Recommendation 16: Engage in data collection and self-study to isolate areas of impact that increase early-career attrition among female and racial/ethnic minority officers[21].

Recommendation 17: Establish diversification as an institutional priority[21].

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[10] Kringen, Uchida, Hock, & Land, forthcoming; Taylor, Kubu, Fridell, Rees, Jordan, & Chaney, 2006.
[11] Kringen, 2018
[12] Linos, 2018
[13] Linos, 2019
[14] Kringen & Kringen, 2014; Kringen et al., forthcoming
[15] An 80% relative passing rate for a group that composes less than 50% of applicants implies that the majority group passes a higher proportion of individuals. Ergo, more individuals from the majority group enter the training academy than from the minority group.
[16] Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, 2019
[17] Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, 2019; Prokos & Pavadic, 2002
[18] National Institute of Justice, 2019
[19] National Institute of Justice, 2019
[20] UK Policing Gender Equality Summit, 2019
[21] Kringen et al., forthcoming

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Recommendations to the State of Connecticut

While the evidence-based recommendations presented can help law enforcement agencies to attract, hire, train, and retain a more diverse workforce, the longstanding lack of diversity in law enforcement agencies is a structural issue. Few agencies have made substantial progress toward diversification despite effort indicating a need for more support in the process. State-level programs oriented toward increasing diversify among law enforcement officers in Connecticut may be a viable avenue for this support.

At the state level, there are several things that can be done to support agencies in the areas of recruiting, hiring, training, and retention. While some strategies would support agencies attempting to implement these evidence-based practices, others would supplant the need for agency-level efforts through state actions. Beyond strategies oriented toward these goals, state-level data collection and monitoring would provide a better way of evaluating changes in these processes to refine strategies employed in Connecticut over time.

Recruiting
In the area of recruiting, the state can take a leadership role in addressing sexism and addressing concerns about suitability for law enforcement careers through an active program of statewide recruitment. A campaign of this nature can incorporate the evidence-based practices noted in the recommendations to agencies and can serve not only to actively recruit current applicants but to begin the process of shifting the public's perception of law enforcement careers beyond the entrenched view of law enforcement agencies as male-dominated organizations. A campaign of this nature would provide the opportunity for multiple agencies to participate increasing interaction between agencies related to recruiting. This is an important consideration as cooperative recruiting has demonstrated initial success in other jurisdictions outside the state.

Hiring
In the area of hiring, the state should work to develop state guidelines to define the hiring process use by all agencies within the state. As well, the state can assume the responsibility for developing materials that agencies can use to guide the hiring process. This effort should incorporate the recommendations to agencies by developing a fast and efficient process using documentation that limits confusion among applicants. The documentation developed should include the supportive criteria as noted. Beyond these recommendations, the state should begin a process of analyzing the impact of qualification criteria. This should help the state understand which criteria in the hiring process are serving as barriers across the state. The state can work to remove these criteria when they do not represent bona fide occupational qualities from hiring. Moreover, the state can mandate that passing rates in Connecticut must at least be proportional rather than relying on EEOC's 80% guideline. These changes should be highlighted on the state's website to publicize the state's commitment to diversifying law enforcement agencies.

Training
The area of training provides another opportunity where state-level intervention can substantially impact lack of diversity. Given that some jurisdictions outside the state have already begun to redevelop their training models to increase diversity in law enforcement, the state has the opportunity to build off of successful training models from other jurisdictions. The POST curriculum should be re-aligned to emerging best practices including enhanced adult learning, reduction of paramilitary vestiges, and changes to the curriculum should be featured on the state's website alongside curriculum from other jurisdictions. Importantly, these changes should be evaluated in an ongoing fashion.

Strategic initiatives
Finally, the state is in a stronger position to develop and implement a data system to track all applicants and disqualifications, all cadets and separations, all officers and officer attrition at all state agencies. These data should be analyzed to determine the impact of state and agency-level changes in recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining law enforcement officers. In areas where these forces limit diversification, the state might consider implementing and testing other novel approaches to address the problem.