

Running head: LACK OF DIVERSITY IN DAPHNE

The Lack of Diversity in the Daphne Fire Department

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that the appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore the diversity Daphne Fire Department (DFD) based on gender and race. The problem was that the workforce of the DFD did not reflect the demographics of the population served. The descriptive research method was used to investigate how the level of diversity of the DFD compared to other Alabama fire departments, what recruiting methods had been successfully used by other Alabama fire departments, and which internal and external factors were preventing female and minority applicants from pursuing firefighting positions.

The procedures used for this research included an external survey of career/combo fire departments throughout the state of Alabama. The external survey was used to determine if the demographic disparity experienced by the DFD was an isolated problem, or if it existed throughout the state. It also investigated which factors were preventing female and minority applicants from pursuing firefighter positions. The purpose of the internal questionnaire was to determine what internal factors and job requirements uniformed DFD personnel saw as being a deterrent to these applicants.

The results of this research indicated that other departments were experiencing a similar level of disparity as the DFD. It was determined that the use of television and radio advertisements were the recruiting methods most successfully utilized by other departments. The external factors most identified were a general lack of interest and a lack of qualified applicants. A majority also believed that no professional qualifications were limiting the applicant pool. The internal factors identified included the current lack of diversity and the pre-employment job requirements of CPAT and firefighting experience.

The researcher recommended that the DFD use targeted recruiting and specific media outlets to recruit minority and female applicants. The DFD should also consider hiring entry level applicants with no prior firefighting experience to fill positions.

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The Lack of Diversity in the Daphne Fire Department

Introduction

The problem is that the Daphne Fire Department (DFD) has been unable to recruit a diverse workforce that is representative of the community in the areas of gender and race. This has resulted in a workforce that does not reflect the demographics of the community it serves. This lack of diversity within the department could impact the delivery of services to the citizens of the City of Daphne through a lack of understanding of their diverse needs.

The purpose of this applied research project is to evaluate recruitment practices and potential barriers that are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions available within the DFD.

The descriptive research method will be used to identify and describe the factors which are attributing to the lack of diversity in the DFD. The research will attempt to answer the following research questions: How does the level of diversity of the DFD compare to other fire departments throughout Alabama? Which recruiting methods have been used successfully by other fire departments throughout Alabama to recruit female and minority applicants? What external factors are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions? What internal factors are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions at the DFD? These research questions will be answered by conducting a survey of fire departments throughout the state of Alabama (Appendix A) and using an questionnaire (Appendix B) completed by a random sample of uniformed members of the DFD.

Background and Significance

Recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce is a goal of most organizations in both the public and private sector. It has been especially important to the public sector where the goal has been to achieve a government workforce that is representative of the population which it serves. Achieving this goal has been especially difficult in the American fire service, an occupation traditionally dominated by Caucasian males. The experiences of the DFD are no different than those of the national fire service. In order to attain this goal, the DFD must identify the barriers preventing female and minority applicants from pursuing firefighter positions within the department. The DFD must also draw from the successes of other departments to develop a model for establishing hiring practices which achieve this goal.

The City of Daphne, Alabama is a suburban community which is on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, on the Alabama gulf coast. The current population of the jurisdiction served according to 2010 census data is 21,575 within an area of 14.1 square miles. The DFD is a combination department with 50 uniformed career positions and an average of 10 volunteers. The department responds to an average of 2,400 emergency calls per year from four fire stations. The career fire department was not established until 1997, from which the department has grown to its current size. Prior to 1997, the department was staffed completely by volunteer personnel.

During the first nine years as a career department only one minority employee was hired, an African American male. He retired from the department in 2006. During that time period and especially in the year immediately following his retirement, numerous instances of public outcry regarding the lack of diversity were experienced. This led to pressure from elected officials to seek the recruitment of minority and female applicants. From 2007 to present, two African American males were hired to fill full time vacancies, one whom is the current fire chief and the

other filled a part time vacancy. Despite these small successes, the number of minority and female applicants remained proportionally smaller than that of Caucasian males. The City of Daphne and the DFD are currently involved in litigation with an African American male who alleges discriminatory hiring practices from not being hired for a position in 2009. The litigation was still in progress during the time of this research.

Table 1 is a breakdown of the current and historical, racial and gender demographics of the population of the City of Daphne, retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 1

City of Daphne Population Demographics

	2000 % of total	2010 % of total
White	84.2%	84.1%
African American	13.5%	11.8%
Native American	0.3%	0.4%
Asian	0.6%	1.5%
Other/Multiple	1.4%	2.2%
Total	100%	100%
Male	48.9%	48.3%
Female	51.1%	51.7%
Total	100%	100%

Note. Figures are expressed as a percentage of the overall population of the jurisdiction.

Table 2 is a breakdown of the current demographics of the DFD.

Table 2

Daphne Fire Department Demographics of Uniformed Personnel

	2011 % of total	2011 Whole Numbers
White	92%	46
African American	6%	3
Native American	0%	0
Asian	0%	0
Other/Multiple	2%	1
Total	100%	50
Male	100%	50
Female	0%	0
Total	100%	50

Note. Figures are expressed as a percentage of the overall demographics of uniformed personnel, followed by the whole number of uniformed personnel.

This research problem is linked to the United States Fire Administration's (USFA) strategic goal of "improving fire and emergency services' professional status" (Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2010). Ensuring that the fire service is representative of the entire population will help to improve its professional status. A diverse work force is able to bring forth a wider array of perspectives and solutions to solving problems, and meet the wide array of needs experienced by the community.

This research is also linked to the Executive Fire Officer Program, *Executive Development Student Manual* (2010), *Unit7: Organizational and cultural change*. According to

the course manual, organizational culture is a product of “the actual experiences of people within the organization adapting to the internal and external environments” (Executive Development Student, 2010). A diverse group of perspectives is a valuable resource for a leader and an organization. It forces a leader as, as well as all members of the organization, to question long held beliefs or perceptions when approaching a problem.

Literature Review

The researcher conducted a review of relevant literature to investigate the findings of other researchers regarding the topic of recruitment of female and minority candidates for firefighter positions. The literature reviewed was collected from fire service, governmental, and other pertinent organizations.

The problem of gender and ethnic diversity in the fire service is a problem that continues to plague the American fire service as a whole. According to the U.S. Fire Administration (2011), women only make up 3.6% and African Americans only 7.5% of the fire service in the United States (Gaines, 2011). This is despite the population of females and African Americans in the United States making up over 50% and 12.6% of the population respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Many industries have successfully achieved acceptable levels of diversity, but the United States fire service has been unable to achieve this goal.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), 19.6% of the population of the United States speaks a language other than English. This figure has grown from 17.9% in 2000. In his *2010 Decade Forecast: Cultural Barriers*, Cochran identifies this as a problem that will face the fire service over the next decade. As the diversity of the population increases, the fire service will face problems connecting with the community. Language and cultural barriers often cause

citizens to be reluctant to seek medical care, report crimes, or participate in prevention activities. Cochran (2010) goes on to add the “We’re not as prepared as we need to be to serve certain ethnic groups, especially those with languages and cultural nuances to which we are not accustomed.” Having a workforce that is prepared to deal with these cultural differences will ensure that departments are able to carry out their essential missions.

The first step in resolving the diversity issue is to determine which factors are preventing female and minority candidates from pursuing firefighter positions. Although the job duties and face of firefighters have changed tremendously over the last few decades, stereotypes about the profession may still be in place. According to Rogers (2006), “lingering cultural stereotypes have made it difficult to recruit and retain women”. This cultural stereotyping of firefighters began with most people at an early age. According to Levitch and Gable (2005):

A stereotype is a way to categorize or typecast people. According to Piaget’s cognitive developmental theory, 3- to 6-year-old children are in the preoperational stage of thinking in which they focus on what they can see. Preschoolers are likely to form stereotypes about others based on observable characteristics, material possessions, or preferences (e.g. likes or dislikes).

For most people currently in or entering the workforce, their first experiences with firefighters during this developmental period were purely with white males. As Andrea Walter (1999) wrote “As a child, I believed for many years that police officers were always male, because I’d only ever heard the term “policeman.”” A key to long term recruitment of minorities and female candidates will be breaking these stereotypes at an early age. The development of stereotypes as described by Levitch and Gable reinforces the need for a diverse workforce to interact with the community.

According to Horvath and Sadowski, in young women, “aspirations form by age 11” (2006, p.9). They begin to make life changing decisions, such as career choices, which may last a lifetime. They recommend targeting these young women and other children through volunteer, cadet, and seasonal programs while they are at this age. They also recommend using this approach to targeting other minority groups. This process actively empowers youth to prepare for these careers and invests in future recruitment. Horvath and Sadowski (2006 p.9) also suggest recruiting women through locations such as “sports and fitness centers, medical occupations, and campuses”.

The recruitment of a diverse workforce can also be hindered by the pre-employment qualifications attached to applying for a position. Qualifications for firefighter positions throughout the nation can vary from only a high school diploma to experienced firefighter paramedics. Stringent entry level requirements can exclude certain minority groups when attempting to build a diverse workforce. Each department should determine if stringent entry level requirements are necessary for performance of firefighting tasks. “The diversity of the applicant pool directly affects the outcome of the hiring process” (Cardona, 2009).

Fire service entry level requirements should ensure that candidates will be able to perform job duties while not excluding a particular class. In June 2011, the City of Colorado Springs, CO recently chose not to continue forcing applicants for firefighter positions to obtain an emergency medical technician (EMT) certification prior to application. The cost of attending an EMT course was found to be a “socioeconomic barrier” that was preventing minorities from applying for firefighting positions (Laugesen, 2011). It may be difficult for applicants seeking entry level positions to apply with firefighting experience or fire service certifications. This may

be especially difficult for minority applicants seeking employment in a field which has traditionally consisted of non-minority workers.

Physical ability tests have also been cited as a factor limiting the applicant pool for fire service positions. The most commonly used test is the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT), which was developed by the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF). The CPAT exam was designed to “be a good predictor of a candidate’s ability to perform firefighting tasks (IAFF, 2011). The validity of the CPAT examine has been challenged as discriminatory to certain minority groups, most specifically women. In 2006, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) signed a conciliation agreement with the IAFF concerning CPAT. The EEOC agreed not to file suit in regards to a complaint concerning the exam, in return for pass/fail rate data collected by the IAFF (International Association of Fire Chiefs [IAFC], 2009). Many women’s groups such as the International Association of Women Firefighters (IAWF) continue to challenge the validity of the CPAT exam. The official policy of the IAFF concerning accusations of CPAT being discriminatory is as follows:

The goal of the CPAT is to test for those individuals physically qualified to perform the job of fire fighter without separating from the department’s broader goal of attaining a properly trained and physically capable workforce whose members reflect the diversity of the community. Diversity should never come by lowering validated entry standards. Rather, it should come from actively recruiting qualified men and women candidates from all racial and ethnic backgrounds for careers in the fire service. It is the position of the IAFF/IAFC Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative Task Force that fire departments should increase the diversity of their workforce by actively recruiting

candidates from throughout their communities rather than lowering candidate physical ability standards.

The CPAT exam is currently accepted by the EEOC as being a valid measure of a candidate's ability given adequate preparation time and is becoming the industry standard. Despite which test is utilized by an agency to gauge a candidate's physical ability, it should reflect the actual duties to be performed.

Determining which methods work best to target female and minority applicants is a difficult task. Most open firefighter positions yield a large pool of applicants, but not of a diverse nature. Traditional methods of mailings, internet, etc. seem to be ineffective in targeting females and minorities. This issue was examined in the *2006 International Association of Firefighters Diversity Initiative* (Fox, Hornick, & Hardin, 2006). This study identified many successful methods for recruiting minority groups. These methods include "specifically targeting the group" and "promoting a message of inclusiveness" (Fox Et al., 2006, p. 14). Specifically targeting a group can be achieved through numerous methods. This can include targeted advertising on media outlets during specific time slots and meeting with minority community groups. Promoting the "message of inclusiveness" refers to activities such as sending a female or minority firefighter to deliver the message or be the spokesperson for the agency. When recruiting, "giving specific information about the job" (Fox Et al., 2006, p. 17) should be part of the message. Giving specific information about job duties, training requirement, and opportunities for advancement can help to dispel some of the long held beliefs about the positions

While working to target a diverse workforce, potential employers should be careful to avoid reverse discrimination. According to the EEOC, it is "illegal for an employer to recruit new

employees in a way that discriminates against them because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or genetic information” (2011). Over targeting one specific group can exclude other groups and open a department up to other potential litigation. Departments should use a variety of recruiting methods to target a wide array of candidates, rather than remaining focused on one particular group.

In summary, the literature revealed several barriers which were preventing applicants from pursuing firefighter positions throughout the United States. Once identified, these barriers could be broken down through specifically targeted advertisement, community outreach programs to educate candidates, and targeting specific facilities within a community. Agencies should also ensure that their methods for establishing minimum qualifications for candidates be valid according to the job for which they are applying. Minimum qualifications should not be so stringent that they exclude a specific minority group or socioeconomic class. The works of these other authors provided a foundation for continued investigation by this researcher.

Procedures

This applied research project used the descriptive research method to evaluate the following research questions: How does the level of diversity of the DFD compare to other fire departments throughout Alabama? Which recruiting methods have been used successfully by other fire departments throughout Alabama? What external factors are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions? What internal factors are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions at the DFD?

The following questions were answered by soliciting survey information from fire departments throughout the state of Alabama: How does the level of diversity of the DFD

compare to other fire departments throughout Alabama to recruit female and minority applicants? Which recruiting methods have been used successfully by other fire departments throughout Alabama? What external factors are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions? A ten question survey (Appendix A) was developed to assess the level of diversity of similar fire departments throughout Alabama, gather statistics regarding which recruiting methods have been used successfully by other fire departments to recruit minority and female applicants, and to determine which factors prevent female and/or minority applicants from pursuing firefighting positions.

On May 27th, 2011, the survey was disseminated through the online e-mails groups of the Alabama Fire Chief's Association and the Baldwin County Fire Chief's Association electronically, using the web site SurveyMonkey.com. A cover e-mail was attached with a link to the survey (Appendix A, p.37). The initial question of the survey requested the name of the person completing the survey, department name, and location to prevent duplication of data. Those participating in the survey were assured that personal and departmental information would be utilized for statistical purposes only. One survey was removed from the sample due to duplication. Question three asked participants in which type of fire department do they serve; all career, combination, or volunteer. Responses from volunteer departments were excluded from this survey because volunteer departments do not fall within the researched scope of paid positions within fire departments.

Questions three through five solicited whole numbers regarding the demographics of each respondent's department based on gender and race, as well as overall number of employees. These figures were then converted to a percentage of the overall demographic for each department. The percentages were then compared to the gender and ethnic demographics of the

state of Alabama overall. Statewide demographics were utilized in lieu of demographics from each individual jurisdiction due to the number of responses. Participants were then asked whether they believed their departments were demographically representative of the communities they served. The researcher then converted these answers to a percentage of overall responses.

In questions six through ten, the researcher solicited responses to questions regarding the success of specific recruiting methods, barriers preventing female or minority applicants from applying for firefighting positions, and entry level requirements. The researcher then converted the responses to each factor as a percentage of the overall responses.

An internal, six question, questionnaire was developed (Appendix B), and administered to a random sample of fifteen uniformed employees of the DFD by the researcher. The sample included two battalion chiefs, two lieutenants, and eleven firefighters. The questionnaires were completed by each member while on duty. Each respondent was assured by the researcher that data would be used for statistical purposes and could not be tied to an individual response. The purpose of this questionnaire was to answer the research question: What internal factors are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions at the DFD?

Questions one and two assessed each respondent in regards to his perception of whether or not the DFD was representative of the demographics of the City of Daphne. Each of these questions was converted to a percentage of yes or no answers from the entire sample. The perception of the participants was then gauged against the actual facts regarding the demographics of the DFD and the City of Daphne.

Questions three and four solicited responses to questions regarding internal factors and entry level professional qualification requirements which are preventing applicants from

pursuing firefighting positions within the DFD. Questions five and six solicited responses to questions regarding the success of advertising methods for open positions. The researcher then expressed the number of responses as a percentage of the overall number of responses.

This researcher experienced several limitations while conducting this research. Many departments were unwilling to participate in the external survey due to the inflammatory nature of this topic. Despite assurances that data would be used for statistical purposes only and that no information could be tied back to individual department or members, they remained unwilling. Thirty six usable responses were received to the external survey. Both the external survey and the internal questionnaire also relied on the honesty of those completing the survey. It was assumed that the data submitted were accurate depictions of the demographics of the represented departments. While administering the internal questionnaire to DFD members, three were unwilling to complete the exercise for undetermined reasons.

Results

Research Question One

In order to address the first research questions, how does the level of diversity of the DFD compare to other fire departments throughout Alabama, the researcher analyzed the results of the external survey (Appendix A). Table 3 represents the results of question three of the external survey, which examines the number of male and female members of each responding department and question four which asks for the number of department members based on race.

Table 3

Demographics of Alabama Fire Departments Compared to the DFD

	Surveyed Departments % of total	DFD Personnel % of total
White	90.91%	92%
African American	8.40%	6%
Native American	0.15%	0%
Asian	0.10%	0%
Hispanic	0.30%	2%
Other	0.05%	0%
Total	100%	100%
Male	98.8%	100%
Female	1.2%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Note. Figures are expressed as a percentage of each demographic group.

A review of the data collected shows that the demographics of other career fire departments in regard to gender and race are similar to those of the DFD. Question five of the external survey asked participants, do you feel that the racial demographic of your department is representative of the community it serves. 50% of participants answered “yes” to this question.

Research Question Two

Research question two asked which recruiting methods have been used successfully by other fire departments throughout Alabama to recruit female and minority applicants. This question was answered using the external survey of Alabama Fire Departments. Table 4 represents the percentage of those participating who have utilized each recruiting method followed by the success rate of each.

Table 4

Successful recruiting methods utilized by Alabama Fire Departments

	Utilization by Surveyed Departments	Success Rate
Newspaper Advertisement	26.0%	52.0%
Television Advertisement	2.8%	66.7%
Radio Advertisement	5.7%	60.0%
Direct Presentations to Community Groups	11.4%	51.0%
High School Programs	20.0%	54.0%
Secondary Education Institutions	5.7%	56.0%
Internet	17.1%	50.0%
Mailings	5.7%	54.5%
None	34.3%	NA
Other	34.3%	50.0%

Note. Figures are expressed as a percentage of the overall departments which utilize each method, followed by the success rate of those who utilize it.

The recruiting method utilized by Alabama fire departments with the most success in recruiting minorities and female candidates was found to be television advertisement with a

66.7% success rate. The second and third highest success rates were achieved through radio advertisement at 60% and targeting secondary education institutions at 56%. The methods of recruiting which were found to have the lowest success rates among Alabama fire departments were internet advertisements and direct presentations to community groups.

Research Question Three

Research question three asked what external factors are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions. This question was answered through the external survey of Alabama fire departments. Participants were asked to choose, which of the following do you feel have resulted in a low percentage of female and/or minority applicants for firefighter positions overall. The factors included the following: physical requirements, education requirements, stereotypes about the profession, salary and benefits, job duties, hours, lack of interest, discrimination, a lack of qualified applicants. Table 5 summarizes the percentage of participants who cited each factors as being a cause for the lack of female and minority applicants.

Table 5

Contributing Factors-External Survey

	Surveyed Departments
Physical Requirement	44.1%
Education Requirements	11.8%
Stereotypes of the Profession	8.8%
Salary and Benefits	8.8%
Job duties	20.6%
Hours	8.8%
Lack of Interest	64.7%
Discrimination	0%
Lack of Qualified Applicants	44.1%

Note. Figures are expressed as the percentage of surveyed departments who cited each factor.

Of the respondents surveyed by the external survey, the most commonly identified factor preventing female and minority applicants from pursuing firefighter positions was a lack of interest at 64.7%. The next most identified factors were physical requirements and a lack of qualified applicants, which were both identified by 44.1% of participants.

An additional area explored in researching question three was which job requirements are preventing female and/or minority applicants from applying for vacant firefighter positions. Question eight of the external survey asked participants to choose which entry level requirements are placed on applicants. Question nine then asked them to identify which of these requirements were preventing female and/or minority applicants from applying for firefighter positions within their departments. Table 6 presents the percentage of Alabama fire departments surveyed which

utilize each entry level requirement followed by the percentage of those who cited each factor as preventing female and/or minority applicants from pursuing firefighter positions within their departments.

Table 6

Entry Level Minimum Qualifications of Alabama Fire Departments

	Dept.'s Requiring	Cited Factor
Candidate Physical Agility Test	64.7%	23.5%
Certified Firefighter	14.7%	8.8%
Certified EMT	14.7%	2.9%
Certified Paramedic	2.9%	2.9%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	88.2%	0%
Post-Secondary Education	0%	0%
Firefighting Experience	5.8%	0%
Other Professional Certifications	2.9%	0%
None	14.7%	61.8%

Note. Figures are expressed as a percentage of departments who require each qualification, followed by the percentage of those who cited it as a factor in deterring female and minority applicants.

The external survey revealed that the qualifications most often required by Alabama fire departments were the CPAT at 64.7% and a high school diploma or equivalent at 88.2%. Of these qualifications, participants identified CPAT as the qualification which most often deterred female and minority applicants from pursuing firefighter positions. The majority of those surveyed, 61.8% believe that none of these professional qualifications are deterring applicants.

Research Question Four

Research question four asked what internal factors are preventing minority and female applicants from pursuing firefighter positions at the DFD. This question was answered using a questionnaire administered to the uniformed personnel of the DFD. Only 53.4% of those participating in the questionnaire believed that gender diversity was an issue within the DFD, despite there currently being no female employees. Eighty percent of those participating believed that the ethnic demographic of the DFD is representative of the community served.

Table 7 represents the internal factors identified by DFD personnel as preventing female and minority candidates from pursuing firefighter positions within the DFD. Each factor is presented as a percentage of questioned personnel who cited that factor as deterring female and minority candidates from pursuing firefighter positions. Personnel were allowed to choose multiple answers to this question.

Table 7

Internal Factors Deterring Female and Minority Applicants

	Personnel Identified
Attitudes of Firefighters	0%
Attitudes of Supervisors	0%
Stereotypes	20%
Perceived or Actual Discrimination	6.6%
The Current Lack of Diversity	40%
None	40%

Note. Figures are expressed as a percentage of the questioned DFD personnel who cited each factor.

The internal factor most identified by DFD personnel as contributing the lack of diversity was the current lack of diversity. Forty percent of those participating in the questionnaire identified that as contributing factor. An additional 40% of those participating responded that no internal factors were contributing to the lack of diversity.

Participants to the internal questionnaire were also asked which minimum job qualifications for firefighter positions in the DFD were deterring female and minority applicants. Table 8 displays the percentage of participants who cited each factor as deterring these applicants. Personnel were allowed to choose multiple answers to this question.

Table 8

Minimum DFD Qualifications Deterring Female & Minority Applicants

	Personnel Identified
CPAT	66.6%
Certified Firefighter	40%
Certified EMT	6.6%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	6.6%
Certified Paramedic	0%
Firefighting Experience	26.6%
None	6.6%

The qualification chosen by DFD personnel as being the primary deterrent for minority and female applicants was the CPAT exam, which was identified by 66.6% of those participating. The requirement of being a certified Alabama firefighter was the factor second most identified, which was chosen by 40% of those responding.

Discussion

The results of this research identified some information which requires further discussion of this topic. The researcher identified that the diversity problem currently being experienced by the DFD is not an isolated problem. The survey of Alabama career and combination fire departments showed that the state's level of diversity was still below the national fire service averages, which itself falls short of representing the demographics of the United States' population. Despite the national statistics and those gathered from Alabama fire departments, the results of the external survey and internal questionnaire revealed that a majority of those responding do not see diversity as an issue for their departments (50%) or the DFD (80%). This researcher feels that a major contributing factor to this problem is a lack of realization that the problem even exists. The diversity problem cannot be solved if leaders are not even recognizing that it is exists.

A goal of this study was to identify recruiting methods which have been used successfully by other fire departments throughout the state of Alabama. The two most successfully utilized methods of recruiting among the surveyed Alabama fire departments were television (66.7%) and radio advertisements (60%). This result was supported by Fox Et al. (2006, p.14) who identified direct targeting of minority groups through media outlets as a successful recruiting method. Targeting minority applicants through specific locations was also cited as a successful method utilized by Alabama fire departments. Secondary education institutions (56%), high schools (54%), and direct presentations to community groups (51%) were all cited as successful locations. This method was supported by McNeil (2008) who wrote:

Achieving diversity in the fire service requires that fire service leaders commit seriously to actively recruit in arenas that will provide qualified minority applicants without lowering any standards. College campuses, military service, and fitness/wellness centers are examples of potential sources of qualified and successful firefighter applicants.

Horvath and Sadowski (2006, p. 9) also identified “sports and fitness centers, medical occupations, and campuses” as locations where female applicants could be successfully recruited. Both the external survey and literature review support direct targeting of minority applicants at specific locations. Specific targeting would require departments to allocate more funds to advertising for open positions. Traditional advertising methods such as internet and newspaper advertisements are relatively inexpensive. Significant funds may be necessary for television/radio ads, as well as additional personnel costs for community outreach activities and events.

Entry level professional qualifications were also explored as a potential area limiting the number of female and minority applicants. Requiring the entry level personnel to possess firefighter and/or emergency medical technician certifications at the time of application may economically limit some applicants from pursuing the positions. The survey of Alabama fire departments revealed that a majority of participants (61.8%) do not believe that their entry level requirements have any effect on the applicant pool. This may be attributed to the fact that, unlike the DFD, a high school diploma is the only qualification required by most Alabama fire departments. In the internal questionnaire of DFD personnel, the requirement that personnel be a certified firefighter at the time of application was identified by 40% of participants as a contributing factor. This requirement was initiated by the DFD primarily as a measure to reduce

training costs and get new employees to work faster. In order to achieve the goal of a diverse workforce, departments may have to allocate more funds and time towards recruit training.

The job qualification most identified internally and externally was the CPAT requirement. 66.6% of questioned DFD personnel cited the CPAT exam as the primary deterrent for female and minority applicants. This requirement was cited by 23.5% of Alabama fire departments surveyed as a deterrent. Alabama fire departments also cited the physical requirements (44.1%) as an overall factor deterring these applicants. The CPAT exam was created by the IAFF and endorsed by the IAFC as the accepted method of testing a candidate's physical ability. Other groups such as the International Association of Women in Fire and Emergency Services continue to challenge the validity of the exam. At the time of this study, in Alabama a candidate must have completed a CPAT examination within one year to be eligible to attend a firefighter I recruit academy (Alabama Fire College, 2009). Dropping this requirement at the time of application would cause fire departments to take on a level a risk in hiring these applicants. Departments could potentially spend a great deal of time and funds in hiring candidates who end up being ineligible to attend recruit school due to failing the CPAT exam.

Another area explored by this research was to determine which factors were deterring female and minority applicants from seeking firefighter positions. Rogers (2006) identified "lingering cultural stereotypes", as one of the major factors contributing to this trend. The results of this study revealed that the most often identified internal factors deterring these applicants were the current lack of diversity (40%) and stereotypes (20%). This result was supported by Levitch and Gable (2005) who identified "typecasting" certain groups at an early age as a root cause for developing these stereotypes. This result is further supported by Walter (2009) who further explored this issue of stereotypes. Over the years, children have come to

subconsciously associate firefighters with white males. This particular stereotype may take a significant number of years to break and may only be solved by solving the overall diversity problem experienced by the fire service.

The external factor most identified by Alabama fire departments was a “lack of interest”. 64.7% of participants identified this factor as being the primary cause for the lack of minority and female applicants. Based on the results of the literature review and other responses, this researcher views this as purely a perceived factor. Participants are viewing a “lack of interest” as a cause, when in fact, the other identified factors are the source of deterrence. Additional education is needed to bring leaders up to speed on the current issues surrounding this topic.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, this researcher recommends taking the following actions to improve the diversity of the DFD. The first action should be to educate members of the DFD concerning diversity and the benefits of hiring a diverse workforce. An overwhelming majority (80%) do not believe that a diversity issue exists, despite having no female employees and a low number of minority employees compared to the population demographic. In order for any recruiting program to be successful, the current group of employees will have to play an integral role in the process. Current employees could also provide a wealth of ideas for expanding upon the recommendations of this study.

The second recommendation of this researcher would be to expand the current methods of advertising and recruiting for open positions. The current methods of internet posting on the City of Daphne website and newspaper advertisements have proven to be inadequate. The results of this research and literature review show that targeted methods of advertising and

recruitment are necessary to recruit female and minority applicants. Recruiting efforts should utilize expanded advertisement on television and radio media as well as recruiting events. DFD personnel should make presentations to community groups, high schools, and secondary education institutions. Presentations should include the actual job duties and requirements to help break down stereotypes of the profession. The fire service should be promoted as a career rather than just a job.

Third, the long term recruiting efforts can be improved by expanding the number of individuals who participate in public education. The current public education duties of the DFD are handled by a single individual, a white male. By expanding the number of personnel participating in public education, which should include a diverse group, children will build a lasting impression of a diverse fire service which could result in future career aspirations. The goals and aspirations of these students could be nurtured with age through cadet programs, internships, or volunteerism. Being a combination department, the DFD could easily expand its current volunteer ranks to include an explorer program. The results of this recommendation may not be evident or measurable for a number of years.

The fourth recommendation of this researcher includes a close examination of the entry level requirements for applicants. Traditionally, in an effort to reduce training costs, the DFD has required that applicants be certified firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMT), or paramedics for open positions. Although additional costs would be associated, the department should expand the number of individuals which it sponsors to firefighter recruit schools and EMT training. The costs of conducting such training on site should also be explored. Additionally, the DFD should commit to training more of the current personnel to the paramedic

level. Having additional paramedics on staff would reduce the immediate need to fill an open position with certified personnel when one is vacated.

Lastly, to ensure the continued success of the program, recurring research should be conducted. Changes to the programs may be necessary as failures or successes of these programs are discovered. The DFD leadership should also continuously network with other fire departments to remain abreast of innovative recruiting methods throughout the industry.

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Appendix A: External Survey

Print

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From: Kenneth Hanak (khanak864@yahoo.com)
To: AFCA@Yahoogroups.com; alfirechiefs@yahoogroups.com; BCFCFA@Yahoogroups.com;
Date: Fri, May 27, 2011 11:29:19 AM
Cc:
Subject: EFO Project Survey

I am currently working on an applied research project for year one of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. A few minutes of your time in completing this short, 10 question, survey would be extremely valuable in assisting with completion of my project. I will be using the data gathered for statistical purposes only. The initial question asking for department name is used only to prevent duplication of data. Thank you in advance for your assistance. Here is the link to the survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6FHJJ8J>

Kenneth B. Hanak, MPA
Battalion Chief
Daphne Fire Department

1. Department Information (Department name is requested to prevent duplication of data)

Name:
Dept:
City/Town:
State:

2. In what type of department do you serve?

- All Career
- Combination
- Volunteer

3. How many paid members are in your department? (Whole Numbers)

Total Paid Members
Male
Female

4. What is the demographic of your department based on race? (Whole Numbers)

Caucasian
African American
Hispanic
Native American
Asian
Other

5. Do you feel that the racial demographic of your department is representative of the community it serves?

- Yes
- No

6. What recruiting methods have been used to aid in recruiting female and/or minority applicants to your department?

- Newspaper Advertisement
- Television Advertisement
- Radio Advertisement
- Direct Presentations to Community Groups
- High School Programs
- Secondary Education Institutions
- Internet
- Mailings
- None
- Other

7. What recruiting methods have been successful in recruiting female and/or minority applicants to your department?

- Newspaper Advertisement
- Television Advertisement
- Radio Advertisement
- Direct Presentations to Community Groups
- High School Programs
- Secondary Education Institutions
- Internet
- Mailings
- None
- Other

8. What requirements does your department place on entry level applicants?

- CPAT or other physical agility test
- Certified Firefighter
- Certified EMT
- Certified Paramedic
- High School Diploma or Equivalent
- Post-Secondary Education
- Firefighting Experience
- Other Professional Certifications
- None

9. Which of the following requirements do you feel have prevented female and/or minority candidates from applying for firefighter positions in your department?

- CPAT or other physical agility test
- Certified Firefighter
- Certified EMT
- Certified Paramedic
- High School Diploma or Equivalent
- Post-Secondary Education
- Firefighting Experience
- Other Professional Certifications
- None

10. Which of the following do you feel have resulted in a low percentage of female and/or minority applicants for firefighter positions overall?

- Physical Requirements
- Education Requirements
- Stereotypes of the Profession
- Salary and Benefits
- Job Duties
- Hours
- Lack of Interest
- Discrimination
- Lack of Qualified Applicants

Appendix B: Internal Questionnaire

ARP Research Questionnaire for Daphne Fire Department Personnel

Date _____

Please check or write-in your answers

1. Do you feel that the demographics of the Daphne Fire Department in regards to gender are representative of the population of the City of Daphne?

- Yes
- No

2. Do you feel that the demographics of the Daphne Fire Department in regards to race are representative of the population of the city of Daphne?

- Yes
- No

3. What internal factors do you feel are keeping female and minority candidates from applying for firefighter positions in the Daphne Fire Department?

- The attitudes of Firefighters
- The attitudes of Supervisors
- Stereotypes
- Perceived or Actual Discrimination
- The Current Lack of Diversity
- Other (Please List) _____
- None

4. Which professional qualifications/job requirements are preventing female and minority candidates from applying for firefighter positions in the Daphne Fire Department?

- CPAT/Physical Agility Test
- Certified Firefighter
- Certified EMT
- High-School Diploma or Equivalent
- Certified Paramedic
- Firefighting Experience
- None

5. Do you feel that the methods of advertising for positions for the Daphne Fire Department adequately target female and minority candidates?

- Yes
- No

6. Which methods of advertisement do you feel most successfully target female and minority candidates in the geographic area of the City of Daphne?

- Newspaper Ads
- Television Advertisement
- Radio Advertisement
- Direct Targeting of Community Groups
- High School Programs
- Secondary Education Institutions
- Mailings
- None
- Other (Please List) _____