



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
LT. GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
MARYLAND STATE POLICE
1201 REISTERSTOWN ROAD
PIKESVILLE, MARYLAND 21208-3899
410-486-3101
TOLL FREE: 1-800-525-5555
T D D: 410-486-0677



COLONEL
WILLIAM M. PALLOZZI
SUPERINTENDENT

June 30, 2017

The Honorable Edward Kasemeyer
Chairman
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, Suite 3 West
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairmen Kasemeyer and McIntosh:

In accordance with the 2016 Joint Chairmen's Report, page 151, the Maryland Department of State Police submits this Report on Improving Department of State Police Hiring. The Department appreciates your interest in our internal and external hiring policies.

Should you or any member of the Committees have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone at 410-653-4254 or by email at thomas.williams@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Williams
Director
Government Affairs Unit

TMW:tmw

cc: The Honorable Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, President of the Senate
The Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House
Ms. Sarah Albert, Maryland Department of Legislative Services Library (5 Copies)

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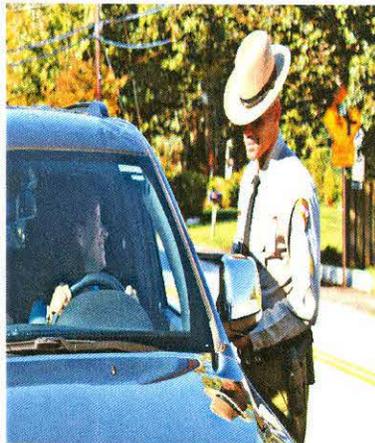




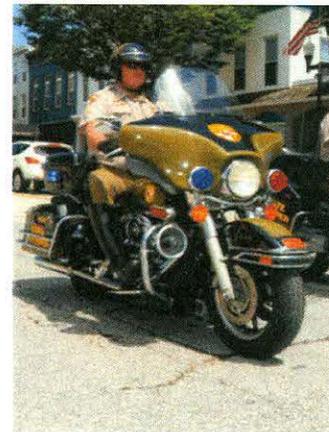
MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE



REPORT ON IMPROVING HIRING



GOVENROR LARRY HOGAN



LT. GOVERNOR BOYD RUTHERFORD

WILLIAM M. PALLOZZI, SUPERINTENDENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) is comprised of the Office of the Superintendent and three bureaus (Support Services, Criminal Investigation, and Field Operations), which oversee the various units within the Department. The fiscal year 2017 budget authorized 2,366 positions. As of *May 1, 2017, 90% of all MDSP positions or 2,127 were filled. This same time last year, May 2016, only 88% of MDSP's 2,367 authorized positions or 2,103 were filled. The MDSP fully expects to see continued success in hiring as our marketing and recruitment efforts continue to improve.

Traditionally, the average vacancy rate for MDSP is 10%. The MDSP civilian vacancy rate began to increase in 2014, when a statewide hiring freeze was implemented, permitting the filling of only a select few positions. Compounding these staffing deficiencies, in 2015 and 2016, the Department experienced higher than normal separations. In both years, the Department's attrition outpaced hiring. As of May 1, 2017, the MDSP has 115 sworn vacancies from which 55% or 63 conditional offers of employment have been extended. Similarly, of the 124 civilian vacancies, 70% or 87 positions are actively in the hiring process.

This positive hiring picture, combined with the recommendations listed in this report, is expected to contribute to a successful staffing environment from which the MDSP will thrive.

*All staffing numbers in this report are as of May, 2017

REPORT REQUIREMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

The budget committees continue to be concerned with the vacancy rate among the Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) sworn and civilian staff. The committees request that the MDSP work collaboratively with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to review both the internal and external hiring policies and procedures to identify potential areas that could be streamlined or modified in order to expedite filling existing vacancies and improve overall hiring within the MDSP. This report is due to the budget committees no later than July 1, 2017.

The MDSP working with DBM, conducted its evaluation with the below listed objectives in mind:

1. Review sworn and civilian recruitment policies and procedures to ensure they are in compliance with State guidelines and standards.
2. Review sworn and civilian applicant processing policies and procedures to ensure compliance with State and federal requirements.
3. Establish standard speed and efficiency measurements for civilian hiring.
4. Determine the effectiveness of recruiting and use of selective qualifications by comparing the number of candidates presented to a hiring manager against the number of candidates selected for interview.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of hiring practices by tracking and monitoring the age of requisitions to fill vacancies.
6. Determine the competitiveness and attractiveness of sworn/civilian vacancies to the candidate market by establishing a baseline, then documenting and tracking the offer acceptance rate or the percentage of offers made to sworn/civilian candidates that are accepted.
7. Examine both the external and internal factors that impact turnover. These include but are not limited to market economy, salary, MDSP supervision and leadership, opportunities for career advancement, training and employee development.

HIRING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Review sworn and civilian recruitment policies and procedures to ensure they are in compliance with State and federal rules and regulations – The MDSP’s Human Resources Division structurally segregates its sworn and civilian hiring processes.

Findings – The MDSP completed a thorough review of its internal policies and procedures for both sworn and civilian recruitment and selection. It was determined that policies and practices were in compliance with State and federal laws and regulations. This determination is consistent with, and supported by the MDSP Fiscal Year 2016 four-part audit conducted by DBM in March 2016.

Recommendations for improvement – Sworn recruitment and selection is supported by a comprehensive recruiting plan of action which is implemented by no less than 30 sworn recruiters statewide. In contrast, by policy, the MDSP defers to DBM for civilian recruiting, which focuses instead on the civilian selection process.

When comparing and contrasting the MDSP’s sworn and civilian recruitment and selection processes it was determined that the civilian program would benefit from the development and implementation of a civilian recruitment plan of action. The plan would incorporate a dedicated employee who focuses on general civilian recruitment activities as well as general civilian vacancies.

The MDSP has dedicated civilian recruiters who concentrate on the recruitment and selection of specialized civilian vacancies such as Aviation, Forensic Sciences, and Fire Marshal. The plan would recognize a general civilian recruiter who is expected to liaison with DBM to maximize State recruitment resources and garner MDSP more exposure in the civilian hiring arena. To that end, the MDSP has reclassified a position to account for these job functions and partnered with DBM to secure training, conduct joint recruiting exercises, and take advantage of recruitment opportunities and resource sharing.

Another recommendation was the development of an automated personnel identification number (PIN) tracking program, or dashboard, which monitors and reports on the initiation and progress of sworn and civilian hiring. The dashboard will be shared with hiring managers within the MDSP to confront hiring and selection performance shortcomings. Informing MDSP stakeholders at each step in the hiring and selection process is expected to ensure more timely processing and accountability as it relates to required selection tasks such as interviews and employment screening requirements.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

Establish standard speed and efficiency measurements for civilian hiring – According to DBM, more important than timeliness in filling a vacancy is an agency’s commitment to adhering to the merit selection process. The gold standard of hiring performance is determining which job seeker has the knowledge, skills and abilities most suitable for the position. Therefore, performance measurements should be developed which rate the quality of the various phases included within the application and selection process. Timeliness, while a valid concern for each respective agency, is contingent on wavering variables such as mandated vacancy rates, hiring freeze exemptions, turnover, and budget.

Findings - While DBM did express general employment processing timeline standards for early phases of selection such as job posting, list development and scheduling of interviews, there is no State processing time standard. A review of the MDSP’s internal practices found that, unlike sworn selection, MDSP does not have a centralized method to track, monitor, or evaluate standard speed and efficiency performance measurements for civilian hiring.

Recommendations for improvement – As already noted, when comparing and contrasting the MDSP’s sworn and civilian recruitment and selection procedures, it was determined that the civilian program would benefit from the development of an automated PIN tracking program that monitors and evaluates standard speed and efficiency measurements for civilian hiring.

RECRUITING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Determine the effectiveness of recruiting and use of selective qualifications by comparing the number of candidates presented to a hiring manager against the number of candidates selected for interview - By policy, the MDSP maintains a permanent, full-time Recruitment and Selection Unit within its Human Resource Division, responsible for administering the sworn recruitment action plan. This plan provides a framework that helps the MDSP achieve its hiring goals for trooper applicants. A portion of the recruiting plan requires dedicated recruiters to actively identify and solicit individuals interested in the trooper position. In contrast, by policy, the MDSP defers to DBM for civilian recruiting focusing instead on the civilian selection process.

Findings – Civilian recruitment for MDSP relies primarily on the DBM website and on-line employment center. Other than specialized or technical recruitment, MDSP does not actively identify and solicit individuals interested in civilian positions. As stated in the MDSP's FY18 budget response, although the automation of State employment application, JobAps, has its advantages, the on-line application process has increased administrative processing times. It is not uncommon for the MDSP to receive 600-1000 applicants for a single job posting.

A review of the MDSP's civilian processing found that while the majority of civilian applications utilize supplemental questionnaires to obtain qualifying or disqualifying information, only 24% used the automation feature designed to filter out applications not to be considered. When not used, recruiters manually review each application to determine eligibility instead of relying upon the automated feature to automatically eliminate applications not to be considered. For example, a job posting may call for a crime scene technician to work in Garrett County. The supplemental questionnaire will ask applicants to select the counties from which they are willing to work. The automated feature will filter out all eligible applications who did not indicate that they are willing to work in Garrett County.

RECRUITING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (CONT'D)

Recommendation for improvement - Civilian recruitment will increase its use of the automated filter to remove applications from consideration based upon questionnaire responses concerning geography, working conditions or minimum requirements. This will reduce the amount of manual reviews and subsequent interviews. Additionally, civilian recruitment will add supplemental questionnaires to position postings so that applicants have to affirm they meet the minimum qualifications and requirements. If the posting is for a "sensitive position," the applicant would be required to agree to pre-employment screenings such as a polygraph, a credit check, drug testing, and background investigations.

DURATION OF VACANCY

Evaluate the effectiveness of hiring practices by tracking and monitoring the age of requisitions to fill vacancies.

As discussed in the performance measures section, more important than timeliness in filling a vacancy is an agency's commitment to adhering to the merit selection process. As such, DBM has not established State standards by which an agency is expected to evaluate the rate at which a particular vacancy is filled.

Findings – The MDSP's sworn employment process operates on an open and continuous vacancy processing model. As such, the on-line process never closes and prospective applicants are constantly moving through the seven phases of the standardized, centralized, and specifically structured sworn hiring process. The average trooper applicant is processed within three to six months from the submission of a completed application.

In contrast, by policy with few exceptions, the MDSP relies upon agency commanders and directors to initiate filling a position once it becomes vacant. This process is decentralized, and often relies upon our statewide workforce to assist with various phases of the civilian hiring process. This is especially true if the position is specialized or technical. As such, there exists no single, centralized tracking or monitoring of the speed at which MDSP fills civilian vacancies. The average applicant for a civilian vacancy processes within three to six months from the submission of a completed application.

Recommendation for improvement – During this evaluation, the MDSP's Human Resources Commander met with civilian recruiters and human resources specialists. The purpose of the meeting was to gather information from each regarding common practices for monitoring and tracking position vacancies and hiring processes. What resulted was the development of a "civilian dashboard." This dashboard is a centralized database that represents the best monitoring and tracking practices from within the Human resources Division. The dashboard offers all stakeholders, to include commanders and employees responsible for any phase of a civilian hiring process, the ability to track and monitor the filling of a position. The database collects information from the initial notification of a vacancy, through each phase, until appointment. The database has built in performance measurements which includes efficiency standards that are phase specific.

COMPETITIVENESS AND ATTRACTIVENESS

Determine the competitiveness and attractiveness of sworn/civilian vacancies to the candidate market by establishing a baseline, then documenting and tracking the offer acceptance rate or the percentage of offers made to sworn/civilian candidates that are accepted – The starting salary for Troopers, while in the academy, is \$35,000. Upon successful completion of the academy, the salary is increased to \$46,000. The starting salary for a Prince Georges County police officer, \$47,076, is approximately 2.3% higher than the Maryland State Police. Baltimore City’s starting salary, \$48,971, is approximately 6% higher. The Salary Survey of MD County Government FY 2017, prepared by Maryland Association of Counties, December 2016, reports that for those counties who reported, the average actual salary for a deputy or police officer in Maryland is \$54,248.

When compared to other state police departments in the Mid-Atlantic Region, the starting salary for the Maryland State Police ranks 5th out of 7 and is below average for both pre- and post- academy salary.

	<u>Academy</u>	<u>Graduation</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Maryland State Police	\$35,000	\$46,000	5
Delaware State Police	\$44,527	\$54,115	4
New Jersey State Police	\$20,222	\$62,404	2
New York State Police	\$50,374	\$69,608	1
Pennsylvania State Police	\$30,212	\$58,962	3
Virginia State Police	\$36,207	\$36,207	7
West Virginia State Police	\$33,996	\$41,258	6
Average	\$35,923	\$53,759	
Median	\$35,102	\$56,539	

*Salary survey data provided by State Law Enforcement Officers Labor Alliance (SLEOLA)

COMPETITIVENESS AND ATTRACTIVENESS (CONT'D)

State guidelines define sensitive positions as those positions in which the employee is required to carry a firearm, work in or with drugs, or is responsible for the safety of others. In addition, many MDSP civilian positions require the employee to maintain, access, and utilize sensitive information. State and federal polices require access to sensitive information be safeguarded and protected against unwarranted disclosure. As such, all MDSP positions require the employee to undergo a comprehensive background investigation and in most cases a polygraph examination.

These comprehensive vetting procedures are a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they ensure the MDSP has a world-class workforce and they make incumbent MDSP employees extremely attractive to both private and public employers, who often offer higher salaries.

Below are examples of civilian positions with corresponding salary information that MDSP finds difficult to fill and retain:

***Police Communications Operator I – Police Dispatcher**

Maryland State – \$32,038 - \$46,774

Delaware State Police - \$36,359

Montgomery County - \$37,091 – \$60,601

Harford County - \$33,100 - \$66,298

****Automotive Services Specialist**

Maryland State - \$39,341

Private Sector - \$52,886

*****Maintenance Mechanic Sr.**

Maryland State - \$27,048

Private Sector - \$35,058

* Police Communication Operator/Dispatcher regional salary survey conducted by Department of State Police

**Salary estimated from 606 employees, users, and past and present job advertisements on Indeed in the past 12 months. Last updated: April 30, 2017

***Salary estimated from 932 employees, users, and past and present job advertisements on Indeed in the past 12 months. Last updated: April 30, 2017

COMPETITIVENESS AND ATTRACTIVENESS (CONT'D)

Findings –The national dialogue focused on the role of law enforcement in today’s society, coupled with incidents of civil unrest, presents challenges to law enforcement hiring that has not been seen in recent years. The impact of those challenges is illustrated in the chart below. The MDSP is a statewide police force that offers a high-intensity, entry-level training program. Potential sworn applicants frequently report concern and apprehension regarding the requirement to relocate, potentially to unfamiliar areas, and therefore, may find higher paying, local or county police departments more attractive.

Sworn Hiring and Selection Review			
	FY 2016	FY 2015	FY 2014
Applicants	5677	7201	6972
Interviewed	233	234	323
Hired	104	46	191

A review of 179 civilian position recruitments from 2013 to 2017 found that, on average, the MDSP receives 129 certified eligible applicants for each posted vacancy. In civilian hiring, often candidates come to interviews with the idea that they will be offered the top end of the State’s salary range for a position. In fact, State fiscal protocols call for most positions to be budgeted at base. The most frequent reason given for separation are “personal reasons” and retirement.

Civilian Hiring vs Attrition			
	CY 2016	CY 2015	CY 2014
Hired	79	69	86
Separated	82	81	69

Recommendation for improvement – Salary and jurisdiction are factors that fall outside of the MDSP’s direct influence, however each will continue to be recognized and addressed as we continue to develop and modify our recruitment and retention efforts. The MDSP will continue to evaluate the starting salary for troopers with the goal of being in the top five police agencies in Maryland and becoming competitive among state police agencies in the mid-Atlantic region.

COMPETITIVENESS AND ATTRACTIVENESS (CONT'D)

The MDSP Strategic Plan establishes the goals and priorities of our Department. Those goals are:

1. Prevent and investigate crime while supporting allied law enforcement agencies.
2. Enhance the safety of all who travel on Maryland's highways.
3. Support citizens and the communities in which they live.
4. Develop an efficient and effective workforce.

TURNOVER

Examine both the external and internal factors that impact turnover. These factors include, but are not limited to, market economy, salary, MDSP supervision and leadership, opportunities for career advancement, training and employee development - Reports published by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, and U.S. Department of Justice¹ have consistently found that long-term retention of highly skilled civilians is difficult. Low salaries combined with limited opportunities for promotion and professional advancement characterize civilian positions in policing. These facts, when added to the rigorous hiring standards required of police agencies, i.e. polygraph and drug testing, makes hiring and retention especially difficult.

Findings – In April 2017, the MDSP disseminated a civilian job satisfaction survey to better understand incumbent civilian employee’s overall job satisfaction. Topics covered in the survey included work place culture, opportunities for advancement and professional/career development. Of the 782 MDSP civilian employees, 485 or 62% completed the survey. Most employees reported feeling valued at work and hold the MDSP in high regard. When asked, other than salary what can the MDSP do to increase job satisfaction, the vast majority listed promotional opportunities and relevant training as primary recommendations.

Recommendation for improvement – As stated in the hiring policies and procedures section, the MDSP has added a general recruiting position to its dedicated specialized civilian recruiters. These positions, while primarily focused on recruitment and selection, would also benefit from concentrating on retention. Supported by MDSP’s in-house Education and Training Division, the MDSP will pair civilian recruiters with curriculum developers to review and build upon those essential job functions where civilian training can be enhanced to support the agency’s projected workforce needs while focusing on inter-agency employee development.

¹ Civilian Staff in Policing: An Assessment of the 2009 Byrne Civilian Hiring Program; May 2014