

# Choosing to Serve: Views of a Career in Law Enforcement



May 2025 Report

Prepared by  
Annie Rexford-Boren,  
Research Coordinator



Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

# Choosing to Serve

Views of a career in law enforcement



Annie Rexford  
Research Coordinator  
May 2025



# Contents

Introduction .....	1
Demographics.....	3
Motivations & Concerns .....	16
Promotional Aspirations .....	22
Moving Laterally .....	26
Leaving Policing .....	30
Conclusion .....	35
Resources.....	37
References .....	38
Appendix : Factor Options .....	45

## List of Figures

---

Figure 1 Recruitment & retention cycles (PERF, 2023a) .....	1
Figure 2 Agencies by size .....	3
Figure 3 Agency size by agency type .....	4
Figure 4 Total officer counts, 2004-2024.....	5
Figure 5 Distribution of officers by agency type.....	5
Figure 6 Percentage of women and men officers, 2004-2024 .....	6
Figure 7 Women officers by agency size as of March 7, 2025 .....	7
Figure 8 Women officers across ranks as of March 7, 2025.....	8
Figure 9 Oregon officers versus survey respondents.....	9
Figure 10 Respondent education by agency size .....	13
Figure 11 Respondent education by gender.....	14
Figure 12 Respondent ranks by gender.....	14
Figure 13 Top five career motivators by gender .....	16
Figure 14 Concerns about policing by gender.....	18
Figure 15 Career motivators by agency size.....	19
Figure 16 Career concerns by agency size.....	20
Figure 17 Reasons not to promote by gender .....	22
Figure 18 Reasons for promotion .....	25
Figure 19 Lateral officer movement by gender .....	26
Figure 20 Reasons to move laterally by gender.....	27
Figure 21 Reasons to move laterally by agency size .....	28
Figure 22 Reasons for moving laterally, agency versus officer responses .....	29
Figure 23 Reasons to leave policing by gender.....	30
Figure 24 Reasons to leave policing by agency size.....	31
Figure 25 Reasons to leave policing, agency versus officer responses.....	32
Figure 26 Reasons for probationary separations .....	33
Figure 27 Incentives offered by agencies .....	34

## List of Tables

---

Table 1 Agency and officer counts, by agency size.....	4
Table 2 Personal demographics of current officer survey respondents .....	10
Table 3 Professional demographics of current officer survey respondents .....	12
Table 4 Top five career motivators, by gender .....	17
Table 5 Career motivators with significant differences between genders.....	17
Table 6 Top five career concerns, by gender.....	19
Table 7 Top five reasons not to promote in next two years, by gender .....	23
Table 8 Reasons not to promote with significant differences between genders .....	24
Table 9 Top five reasons to promote in next two years, by gender .....	24
Table 10 Top five reasons to move laterally by gender .....	27
Table 11 Top five reasons to leave policing in next two years by gender.....	31



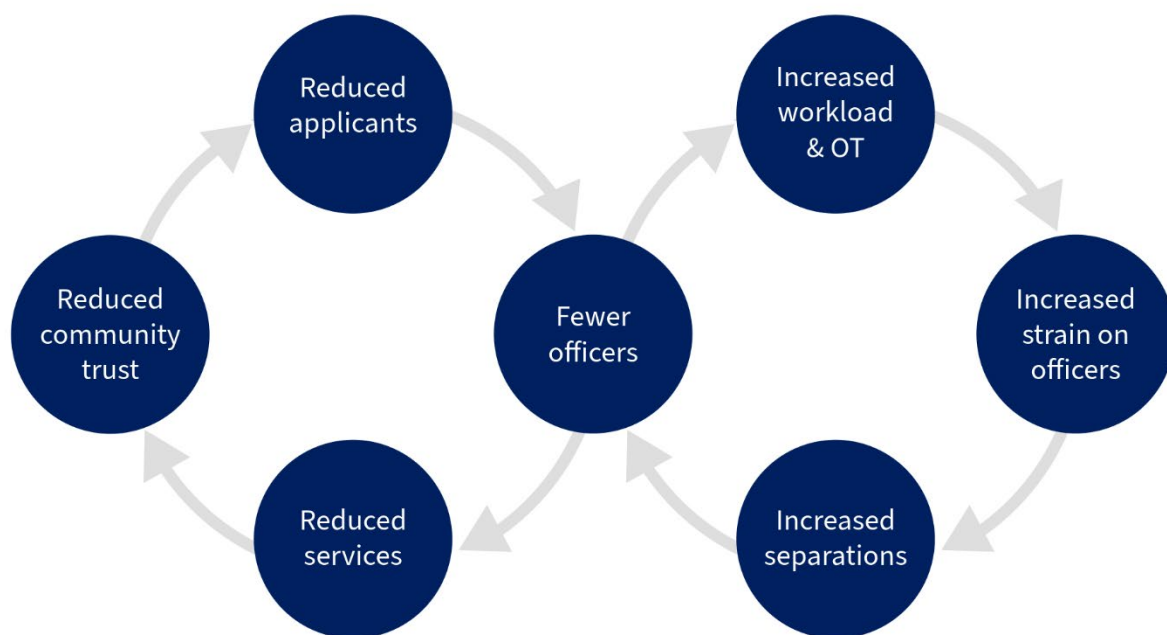


# Introduction

---

The staffing challenges faced by police agencies throughout the country in recent years have captured the attention of researchers, professionals, and media alike. This report combines state-level and national data to describe this challenge in Oregon. It adds to the knowledge base by offering insight into the career decisions of Oregon police officers – hiring, promoting, leaving agencies, and leaving policing - after the events of 2020, including intensified calls for police reform after the death of George Floyd and the COVID-19 pandemic, both of which negatively influenced perceptions of police (Morrow et al., 2021; Mourtgos et al., 2022).

*Figure 1 Recruitment & retention cycles (PERF, 2023a)*



The phenomena of recruitment and retention are closely intertwined, as Figure 1 illustrates. Consistent with other research, a report from the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) states that staffing levels are decreasing as a consequence of decreased applications and increased separations (2023). The International Association of Chiefs of Police (2024) reported that successful hiring efforts have been stymied by unqualified applicants, an increasingly competitive job market, and a general disinterest in police

work. These issues are compounded by jurisdiction-specific challenges such as benefits, agency reputations, the variety of assignments, and affordability of local housing.

In Oregon, agencies reported an average of 22 applicants per job posting (72 for large agencies, 25 for medium, and 11 for small)<sup>1</sup> and 46% of agencies reported they had failed – closed with no job offers - at least one recruitment in the preceding calendar year (DPSST, 2025). Consistent with IACP findings (2024), many agencies also reported “no shows” – applicants with conditional job offers who never begin employment – citing failures during the hiring process such as failing a background check or psychological evaluation.

While separations include retirements, increased separations in recent years appear to be driven largely by voluntary resignations (Adams et al., 2023). Nationally, agencies estimate that the cost of replacing an officer is one to five times the officer’s annual salary due to the steps and resources involved in the hiring process (Orrick, 2008). In Oregon, the potential per-officer training cost alone averages almost \$55,000 for the agency and \$20,000 for the academy (DPSST, 2025).

In addition to being costly, reduced staffing levels and the consequential loss of officer experience results in a potential reduction of external services, a loss of proactive problem-solving, slower responses to calls, improper decision-making, more citizen complaints, and a significant loss of “environmental and institutional knowledge” (Adams et al., 2023; Rossler & Scheer, 2025, p. 1).

The aim of this report is not to provide specific prescriptions for policy and practice for Oregon’s robust and varied network of law enforcement agencies. Rather, this report is intended to provide agencies with relevant information to use as a starting point to pull back the curtain on their own recruitment and retention trends. Moving forward, the report can help facilitate discussions between agencies and their staff, researchers, and DPSST.

---

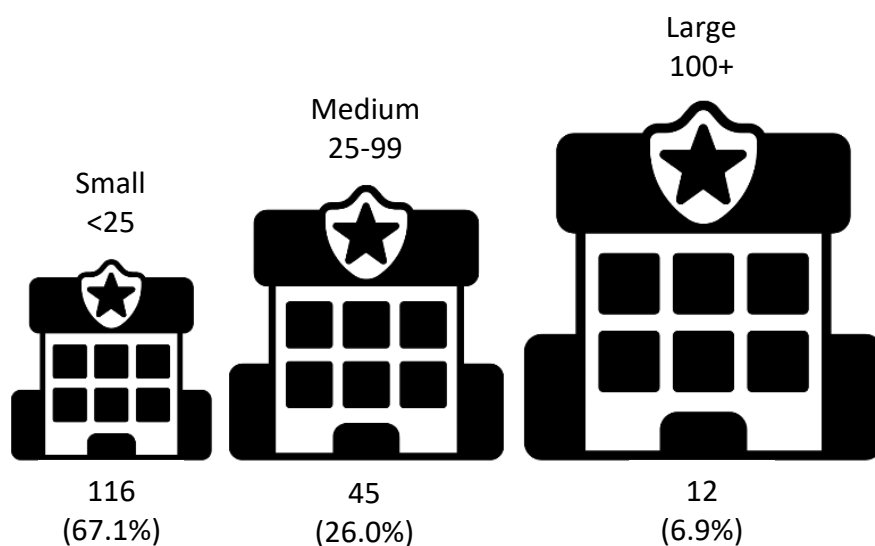
<sup>1</sup> As reported in the 2025 forecast, “for the purpose of this particular analysis, two large agencies and one medium agency were left out as their applicant estimations (1300, 750, and 500) were outliers and produced an average that was not reflective of agencies across the state. Including these agencies would result in an overall average of 46 applicants per recruitment and a Tier 1 average of 245 applicants per recruitment Tier 2 average of 39” (DPSST, 2025)

# Demographics

## Oregon Police Agencies

As of March 2025, there are approximately 173 law enforcement agencies in Oregon employing certified officers. As previous reports have indicated, this number can be fluid (DPSST, 2025).

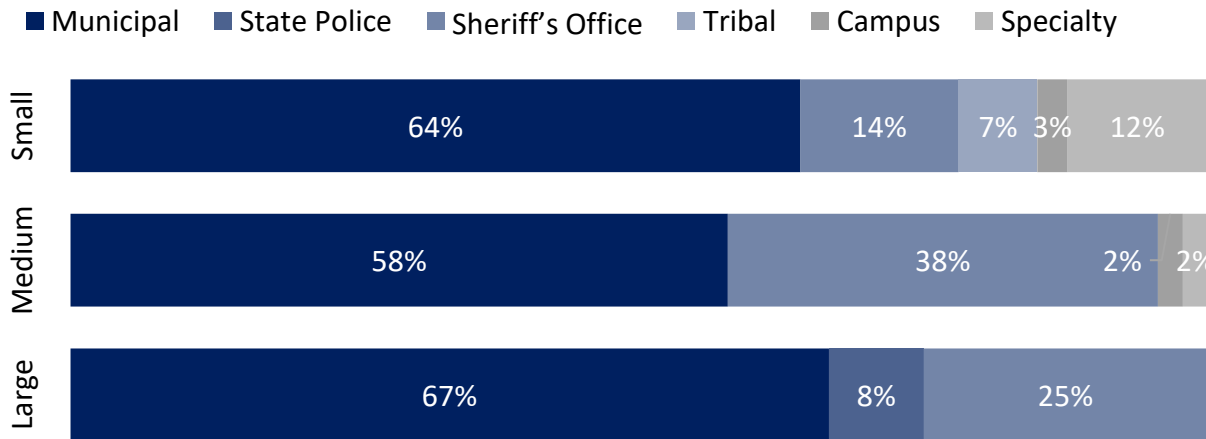
*Figure 2 Agencies by size*



The primary agency feature examined in this report is agency size, but each size group is comprised of different types of agencies, serving a variety of communities. For this reason, both agency size and agency type are explored in this section. Small agencies are the largest group, encompassing 67% of Oregon law enforcement agencies (Figure 2). Every type of agency - other than the Oregon State Police - is represented in the small agency category – municipal, sheriff, tribal, campus, and specialty<sup>2</sup>. Municipal police agencies make up the majority of Oregon police agencies (Figure 3).

<sup>2</sup> “Specialty” includes railroads, Bureau of Land Management, Humane Society, school districts, district attorney’s offices, Oregon Department of Justice – Criminal Justice Division, Oregon Judicial Department – Marshal’s Office, and Portland Fire Bureau - Investigations

Figure 3 Agency size by agency type



## Oregon Police Officers

Over the last 20 years, the yearly total of *certified*<sup>3</sup> officers in Oregon has remained relatively stagnant, with a minimum of 5252 officers and a maximum of 5658 certified officers (Figure 4). This is over the contrasting backdrop of a 19% increase in Oregon's population between 2004 and 2024 (Portland State University Population Research Center, 2011, 2024).

Table 1 Agency and officer counts, by agency size

	No. of agencies (N=173)	Officers – Women (n=669)	Officers – Men (n=5381)	Total Officers (N=6050)
Small (< 25)	116 (67.1%)	100 (15.0%)	1039 (19.3%)	1139 (18.8%)
Medium (25 – 99)	45 (26.0%)	201 (30.0%)	1668 (31.0%)	1869 (30.89%)
Large (100+)	12 (6.9%)	368 (55.0%)	2674 (49.7%)	3042 (50.28%)

<sup>3</sup> The number of certified officers may differ from total agency counts of officers most likely due to two factors: foremost, agency counts include officers still in the process of obtaining certification; second and less impactful, there may be a limited number of double counting within agency counts.

Figure 4 Total officer counts, 2004-2024

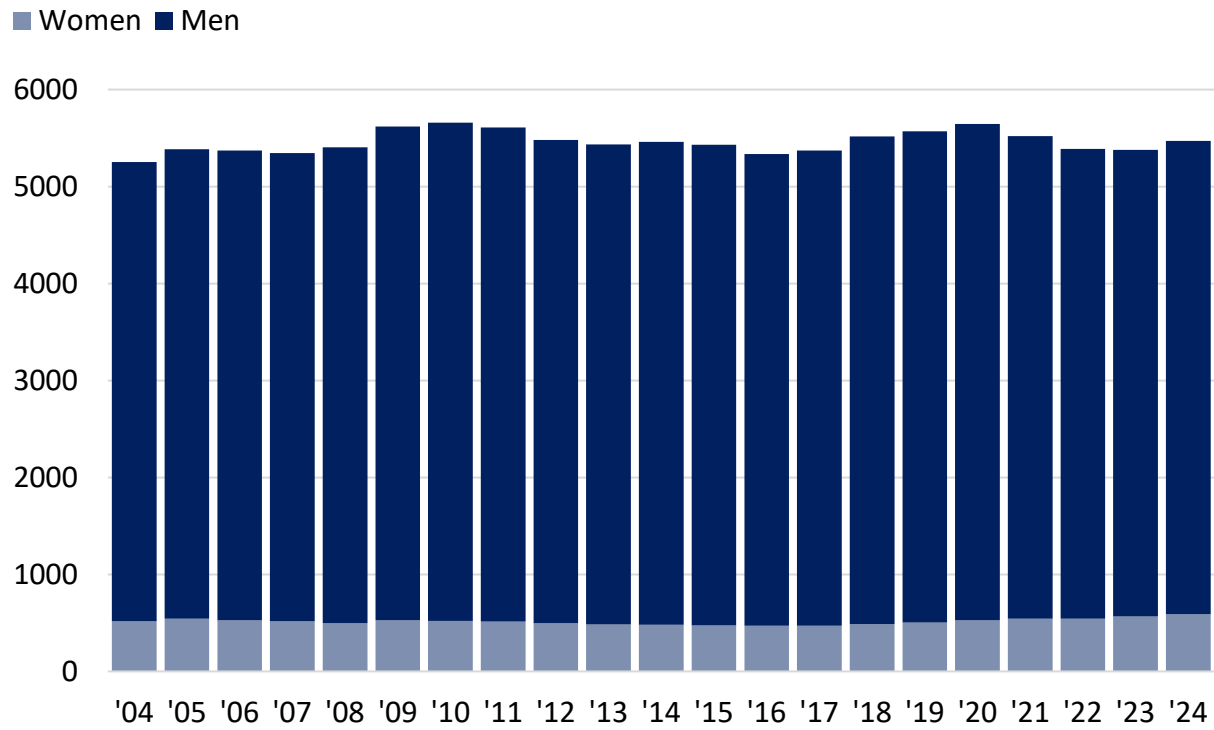
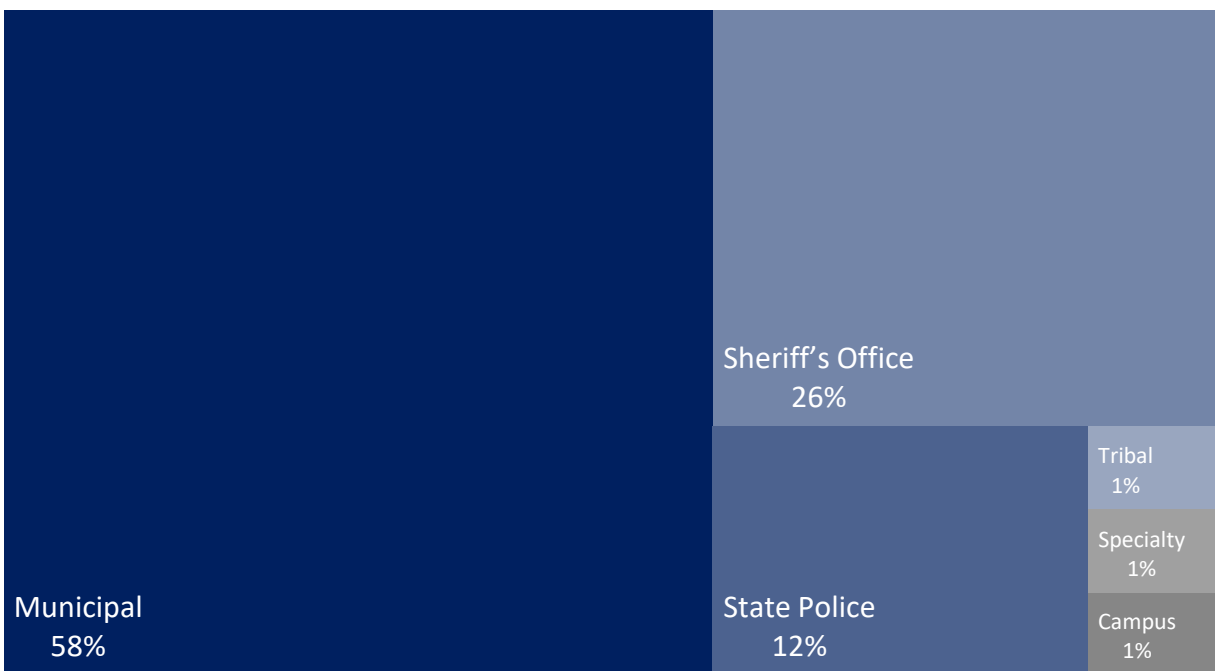


Figure 5 Distribution of officers by agency type

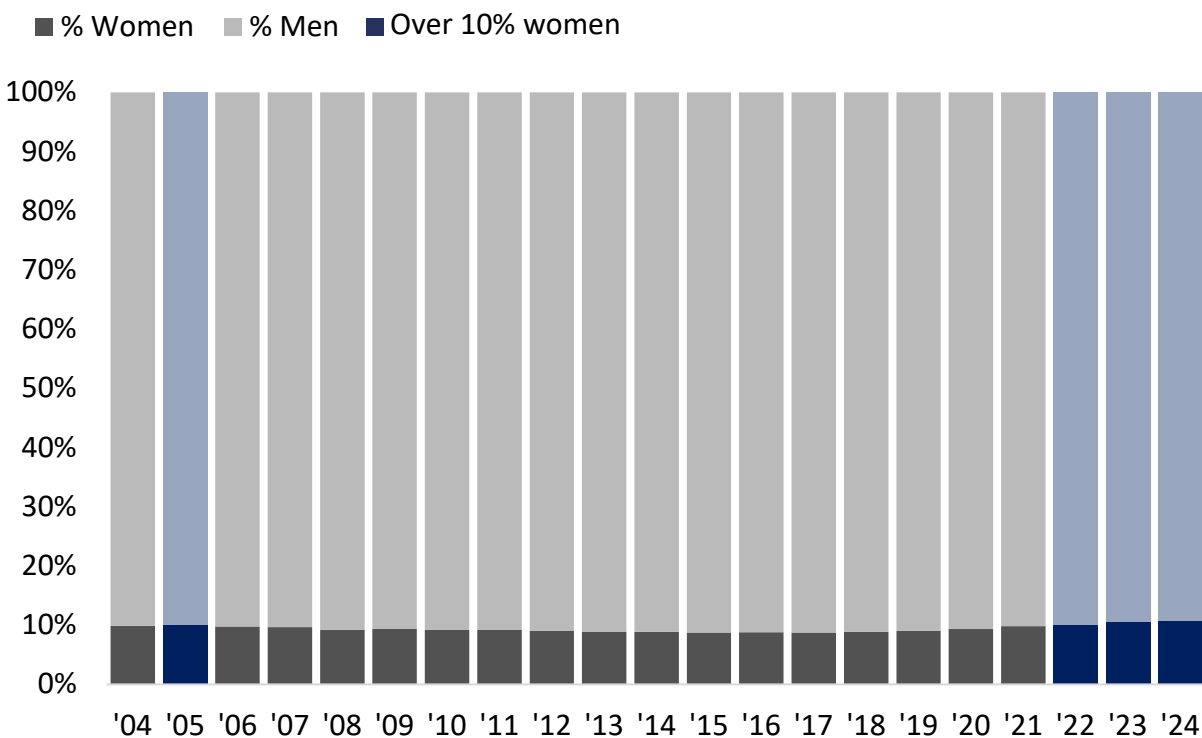


Almost 60% of officers are employed at municipal agencies, followed by sheriff's offices (Figure 5). In terms of agency size, agencies with over 100 officers employ just over 50% of all Oregon officers (Table 1), despite making up the smallest percentage of agencies, about 7%.

## Oregon Police Officers by Gender

Beyond a voluntary demographics survey for Basic Police academy students, a robust set of officer demographics (i.e. race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) other than gender is not reliably tracked or readily accessible at this time. Consequently, the demographic examination here is limited to officer counts and binary gender demographics.

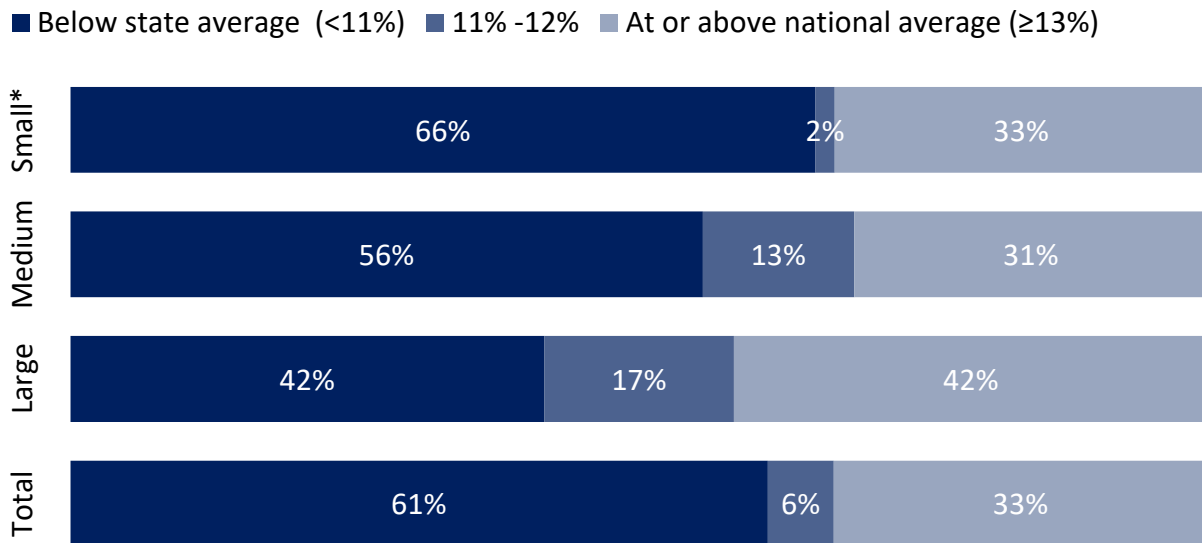
*Figure 6 Percentage of women and men officers, 2004-2024*



With 11% women officers in 2024, Oregon law enforcement hit a new high and surpassed the 10% mark for the fourth time in 20 years (Figure 6). Oregon has hovered around 9-10% women officers for over 20 years, remaining lower than the national rate

of approximately 13% (Goodison, 2022; Policing Project, 2022)<sup>4</sup>. Notably, three of those four years above 10% were 2022, 2023, and 2024, suggesting an increasing trend. The 2024 survey indicated that agencies estimate that an average 13% of their applicants are women (DPSST, 2024)

*Figure 7 Women officers by agency size as of March 7, 2025*



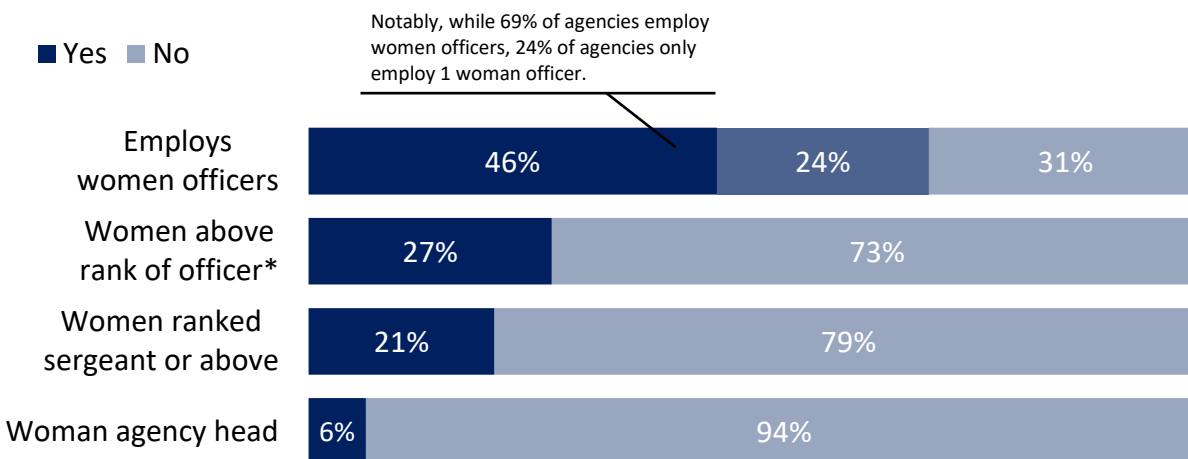
\* Of the 38 agencies above the national average, 18 have only one woman officer.

While the percentage of women in Oregon policing appears to be slowly increasing, only 33% of individual Oregon agencies meet or exceed the national rate of women in policing (Figure 7). Similar to the distribution of total Oregon officers and national trends (PERF, 2023; Cambareri & Kuhns, 2018), the majority of women (57.5%) are employed by large (38.7%) and medium (18.8%) agencies. Additionally, about 61% of agencies are below the most recent (2024) state average of 11% women.

<sup>4</sup> Various reports available provide a range of 12-14% women officers nationally. The Bureau of Justice Statistics Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) reports show 14% women at local police departments, 12% at sheriff's offices, 7% at state police agencies, and 18% at campus agencies (Brooks, 2022; Brooks, 2024; Goodison, 2022). There is a lack a of information on the number of women officers in tribal police agencies.

At the time of this writing, approximately 30% of Oregon agencies – lower than the national level of 40% (Policing Project, 2022) - still employed no women officers. All of these agencies employ fewer than 25 officers (Figure 8).

*Figure 8 Women officers across ranks as of March 7, 2025*



\*Agencies with women above officer, but not sergeant or above may include agencies with women in positions such as detective, corporal, senior officer, etc.

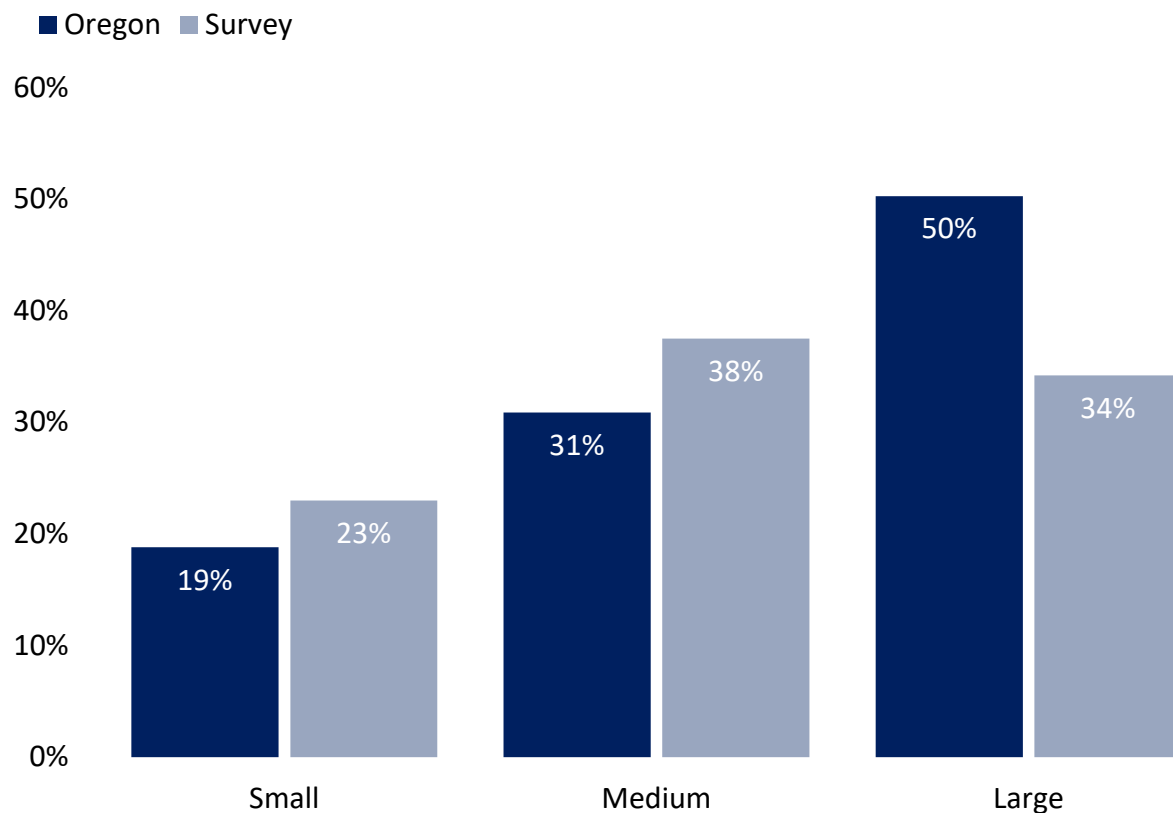
While the majority of agencies in Oregon employ women officers, as rank increases, the percent of agencies with women in formal leadership positions declines. Only 27% of agencies have women in ranks above officer, and only 21% have women in ranks above sergeant. In Oregon, 6% of agencies have a woman as an agency head. Worth noting is that this is higher than the 2020 rate of just under 4% of women agency heads nationally (Goodison, 2022).

## Survey Respondents - Current Officers

In 2023, a survey link was provided to police officers across the state of Oregon via email list serves, social media, and appeals to agency heads to share with their officers. This report continues the sample choice of much of the available literature and collects data from current applicants and officers (Cambareri & Kuhns, 2018; Krimmel & Tartaro, 1999; Kringen & Novich, 2018; Todak, 2017). This resulted in a convenience sample size of 825 current officers.



*Figure 9 Oregon officers versus survey respondents*



Respondents were spread across all agency sizes, with officers from small and medium agencies overrepresented and those from large agencies underrepresented when compared to the distribution of Oregon officers (Figure 9). Given that 70% of the agencies in Oregon are small agencies (25 officers or less) - a notoriously under-studied police agency demographic (Cordner & Cordner, 2011) - examining potential differences between agency sizes will hopefully add to the literature focused on smaller agencies.

Officers were asked a series of demographic questions that covered numerous personal traits that could influence an officer's career decisions. Of those who identified their gender, about 10% (n=77) were women, which is just under the current percentage of women officers in Oregon<sup>5</sup>. The average age for the entire sample was about 42 years old, and the average age of men respondents (42.74) was significantly older than women respondents (37.22).

---

<sup>5</sup> For additional research on women in policing, see the [30x30 Initiative's Research Guide](#)

The majority of respondents (81.5%) identified as white. DPSST does not reliably track race or ethnicity at the state level, so there is currently no way to compare the participant racial and ethnic make-up to the population of Oregon law enforcement. However, this is consistent with agencies' estimates that 20% of *applicants* are non-white (DPSST, 2024). Most respondents (65.8%) had no military experience. However, there was an expected difference between the rates of men and women with military experience.

Related to the national conversation around women, men, and how the role of caregiver may influence career decisions, respondents were asked about relationship status, as well as whether or not they were caregivers. There were significant differences between the rates of caregivers among men and women for two of these questions.

*Table 2 Personal demographics of current officer survey respondents*

	All (N=825)	Men (N=671)	Women (N=77)
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
<b>Age (Mean)</b>			
	42.2 (SD=9.4)	42.7 (SD=9.3)	37.2 (SD=9.3)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White or Caucasian	672 (81.5%)	599 (89.3%)	70 (90.9%)
Hispanic or Latino	36 (4.4%)	31 (4.6%)	4 (5.2%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	11 (1.3%)	10 (1.5%)	1 (1.3%)
Asian or Asian American	8 (1.0%)	8 (1.2%)	0 (0%)
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	7 (0.8%)	7 (1.0%)	0 (0%)
Black or African American	4 (0.5%)	3 (0.4%)	1 (1.3%)
Middle Eastern	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Other race/ethnicity not listed above	10 (1.2%)	8 (1.2%)	1 (1.2%)
No answer	77 (9.3%)	5 (0.7%)	0 (0%)

Table 2, continued

<b>Military Experience</b>				
Yes	213 (25.8%)	206 (30.7%)	7 (9.1%)	
No	539 (65.3%)	465 (69.3%)	70 (90.9%)	
No answer	73 (8.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	
<b>Relationship Status</b>				
Single, never married	34 (4.1%)	22 (3.3%)	12 (15.6%)	
Separated	6 (0.7%)	6 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	
Widowed	3 (0.4%)	3 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	
Prefer not to answer	8 (1.0%)	2 (0.3%)	4 (5.2%)	
No answer	71 (8.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	
<b>Caregiver for individual(s) under 18</b>				
Yes	465 (56.4%)	425 (63.3%)	36 (46.8%)	
No	286 (34.7%)	244 (36.4%)	41 (53.2%)	
No Answer	73 (8.8%)	2 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	
<b>Caregiver for individual(s) 18 or over</b>				
Yes	149 (18.1%)	135 (20.1%)	13 (16.9%)	
No	600 (72.7%)	532 (79.3%)	64 (83.1%)	
No Answer	76 (9.2%)	4 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)	

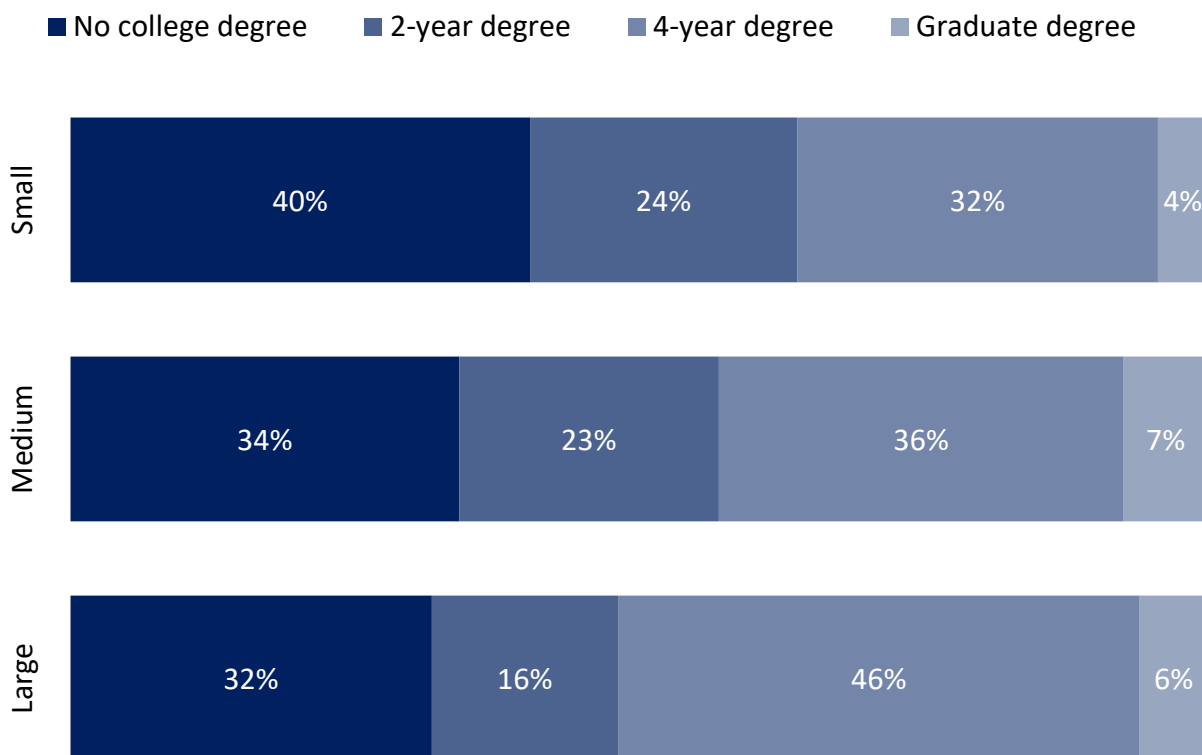
Significantly more men indicated that they were married, and significantly more women indicated they were single never married. Possibly related to this is the significant difference found in answers to being a caregiver for individuals under 18. The rate of men indicating that they were caregivers for children was significantly higher. These are notable findings that require further study, especially when considering the interaction of the traditional role of caregiver and policing. Are these keeping certain demographics of women out of policing in Oregon altogether?

Table 3 Professional demographics of current officer survey respondents

	All (N=825)	Men (N=671)	Women (N=77)
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
<b>Years of Experience (Mean)</b>			
	15.7 (SD=9.4)	16.3 (SD=9.4)	11.6 (SD=8.2)
<b>Eligible for retirement in two years (&gt;22 years of experience)</b>			
Yes	216 (26.2%)	199 (29.7%)	10 (13.0%)
No	565 (68.5%)	470 (70.0%)	67 (87.0%)
No Answer	44 (5.3%)	2 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Education</b>			
High school diploma or GED	47 (5.7%)	46 (6.9%)	1 (1.3%)
Some college, but no degree	215 (26.1%)	196 (29.2%)	16 (20.8%)
2-year college degree	156 (18.9%)	141 (21%)	14 (18.2%)
4-year college degree	288 (34.9%)	247 (36.8%)	40 (51.9%)
Graduate-level degree	46 (5.6%)	40 (6%)	6 (7.8%)
No answer	73 (8.8%)	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Highest Rank Achieved</b>			
Officer	457 (55.4%)	373 (55.6%)	61 (79.2%)
First-line Supervisor	171 (20.7%)	155 (23.1%)	8 (10.4%)
Middle Manager	105 (12.7%)	97 (14.5%)	6 (7.8%)
Agency Head	48 (5.8%)	45 (6.7%)	1 (1.3%)
No Answer	44 (5.3%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (1.3%)
<b>Current Agency Size</b>			
Small	190 (23.0%)	162 (24.1%)	20 (26.0%)
Medium	309 (37.5%)	266 (39.6%)	31 (40.3%)
Large	282 (34.2%)	241 (35.9%)	26 (33.8%)
No Answer	44 (5.3%)	2 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)

Professional demographics also revealed interesting trends among respondents (Table 3). The average years of experience for the whole sample was about 15. Consistent with the men's higher average years of experience (significant at  $p < .001$ ), more men were eligible for retirement in the next two years. Across the different agency sizes, officers in large agencies had significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more experience – an average of about 17 years - than those in small and medium agencies. Though not significant, the average age of officers also decreased as the size of the agency decreased.

*Figure 10 Respondent education by agency size*



About 40% of respondents hold 4-year degrees or higher (Table 3). At the agency level, about 36% of respondents from small agencies hold 4-year degrees or higher; 43% at medium agencies and 51.9% at large agencies (Figure 10). Substantially more women respondents hold 4-year degrees or higher; about 43% of men respondents hold a 4-year degree or higher, while 60% of women hold the same (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Respondent education by gender

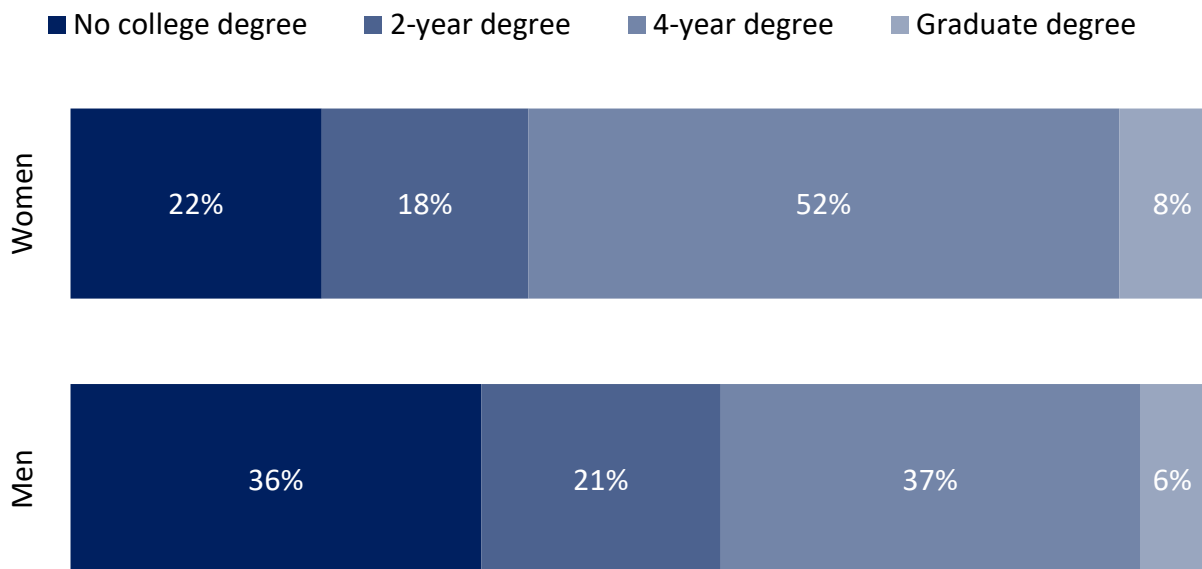
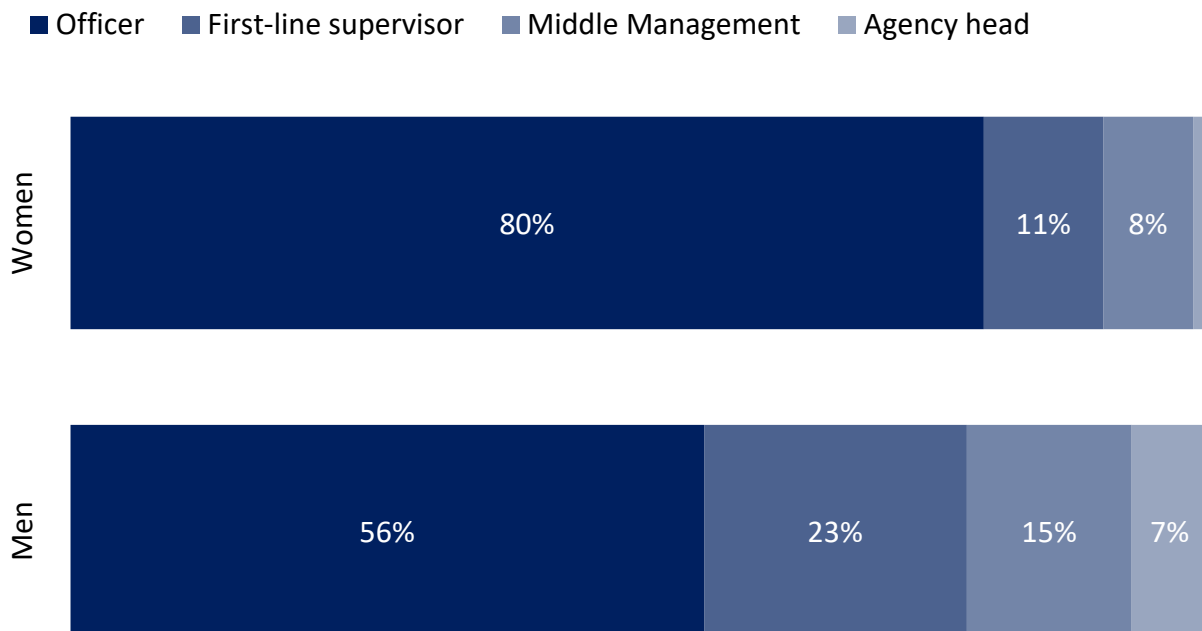


Figure 12 Respondent ranks by gender



A higher percentage of men respondents occupied ranks *above* officer. Almost 80% of women respondents held the rank of officer, compared to only 56% of men

(Figure 12). This is unsurprising, considering that only 27% of agencies have women in these higher ranks (Figure 8).

# Motivations & Concerns

## Differences Across Gender

### Motivators

Oregon officers' responses to the importance of various motivators mirrors results of previous studies (Castillo & Pickering, 2022; Clinkinbeard, et al., 2021; Foley, et al., 2008; Raganella & White, 2004).

*Figure 13 Top five career motivators by gender*



Current officers, regardless of gender, included “To help people in the community,” “desire to stop those who would do harm,” and “to fight crime” in their top five motivations for becoming a police officer (Figure 13 & Table 4). Even the one difference in top five responses was consistent with prior studies (Clinkinbeard et al., 2020; Foley et al., 2008; Raganella & White, 2004): men included “exciting work” in



their top five motivators and gave it significantly more importance (Table 5), while women included “opportunity to solve problems.”

While they did not make the top five, it is worth noting that other studies (White et al., 2010 as cited in Rossler & Scheer, 2025) have found job security, benefits, retirement, and compensation to be influential in choosing a career in policing.

*Table 4 Top five career motivators, by gender*

Women	M	SD	Men	M	SD
To help people in the community	4.44	.659	Desire to stop those who would do harm	4.51	.701
Desire to stop those who would do harm	4.38	.783	To help people in the community	4.38	.736
Variety and non-routine nature of work	4.22	.754	Exciting work	4.31*	.765
To fight crime	4.16	.779	To fight crime	4.26	.848
Opportunity to solve problems	4.10	.699	Variety and non-routine nature of work	4.26	.888

Shaded areas are factors that appear in only one gender’s top five

\* significant difference between genders at the  $p < 0.05$  level

When all 19 career motivation options are examined (Appendix A), only three showed a significant difference in level of importance between genders (Table 5). Of those, only one was from the top five. Men rated “exciting work,” “childhood dream,” and “friend is a police officer” as more significantly important factors in their decision to become a police officer.

*Table 5 Career motivators with significant differences between genders*

Motivator	Women	Rank	Men	Rank
Exciting Work ( $p < 0.05$ )	4.09	6 <sup>th</sup>	4.31	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Childhood dream ( $p < 0.05$ )	2.68	16 <sup>th</sup>	3.10	16 <sup>th</sup>
Friend is a police officer ( $p < 0.05$ )	2.11	17 <sup>th</sup>	2.56	17 <sup>th</sup>

## Concerns

Concerns also reflected prior results (Cambareri & Kuhns, 2018; Castaneda & Ridgeway, 2010; Castillo & Pickering, 2022; Clinkinbeard et al., 2021), but to a lesser

degree (Figure 14). For all respondents – both men and women - stress, threat of injury and/or death, and community attitudes toward police all rose into the top five.

*Figure 14 Concerns about policing by gender*



However, men cited insufficient salary and work schedule in their top five concerns about a career in policing. Women ranked impact on mental health and concerns about doing the job effectively in their top five.

Additionally, when considering applicant concerns with entering policing, Morrow et al (2021) and Todak (2017) found an increased reluctance among college-aged students to pursue policing. Additionally, women students in particular indicated a lower level of interest in policing due to a lower sense of potential personal fulfillment from the job, a lower level of perceived success, and the perception that women officers are subject to less respect from the community and fellow officers, reduced acceptance, and reduced advancement opportunities (Cambareri & Kuhns, 2018).

*Table 6 Top five career concerns, by gender*

Women	Mean	SD	Men	Mean	SD
Stressful nature of the job	2.83	1.21	Insufficient salary, retirement, and/or benefits	2.73*	1.302
Threat of injury and/or death	2.79	1.19	Attitude of community toward police	2.72	1.378
Attitude of community toward police	2.78	1.34	Work schedule	2.69	1.260
Impact on mental health	2.68	1.35	Stressful nature of the job	2.68	1.280
Concerns about ability to do the job effectively	2.64	1.36	Threat of injury and/or death	2.67	1.262

Shaded areas are factors that appear in only one gender's top five

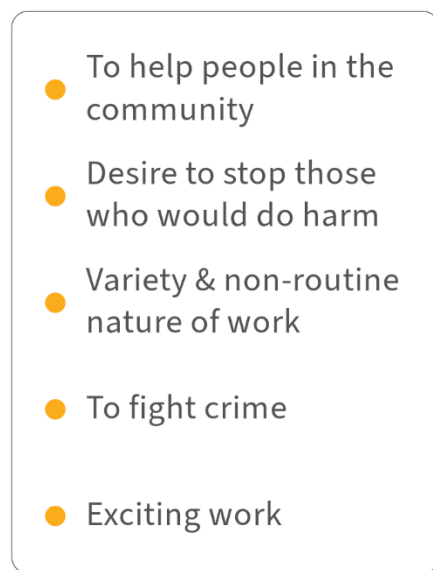
\* significant difference between genders at the  $p < 0.05$  level

## Differences Across Agency Size

### Motivators

An examination of the motivators across agency size (small, medium, large) revealed that the top five motivations were also steady across agency size. Officers get into policing to help others, stop those who would do harm, the variety of the work, to fight crime, and because they perceived it to be exciting work.

*Figure 15 Career motivators by agency size*

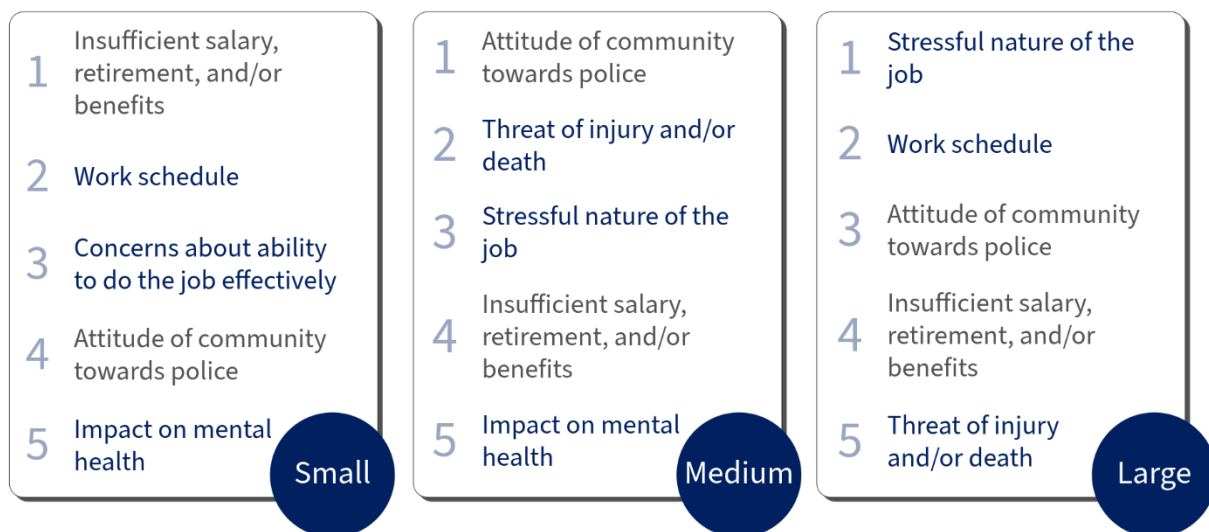


## Concerns

However, when concerns were examined by agency size, only two concerns appeared consistently in the top five across all three groups: “Insufficient salary, retirement, and/or benefits” and “Attitude of community toward police.”

Officers in small agencies uniquely ranked “concerns about ability to do the job effectively” in their top five. “Work schedule” concerns were shared by officers in small and large agencies and “impact on mental health” by those in small and medium agencies. Officers in medium and large agencies shared in “threat of injury and/or death” and “stressful nature of the job.”

*Figure 16 Career concerns by agency size*



While further analysis is needed and beyond the scope of this project, there is some information available regarding officer salaries. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024) estimates that the 2024 average annual wage for Oregon officers was \$88,260. Nationally, the 2024 average annual wage for officers was estimated at \$79,320. While this places Oregon above the national average, other factors such as agency size and cost of living – Oregon is currently ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> on most affordable states – come into play (U.S. News and World Report, 2025).

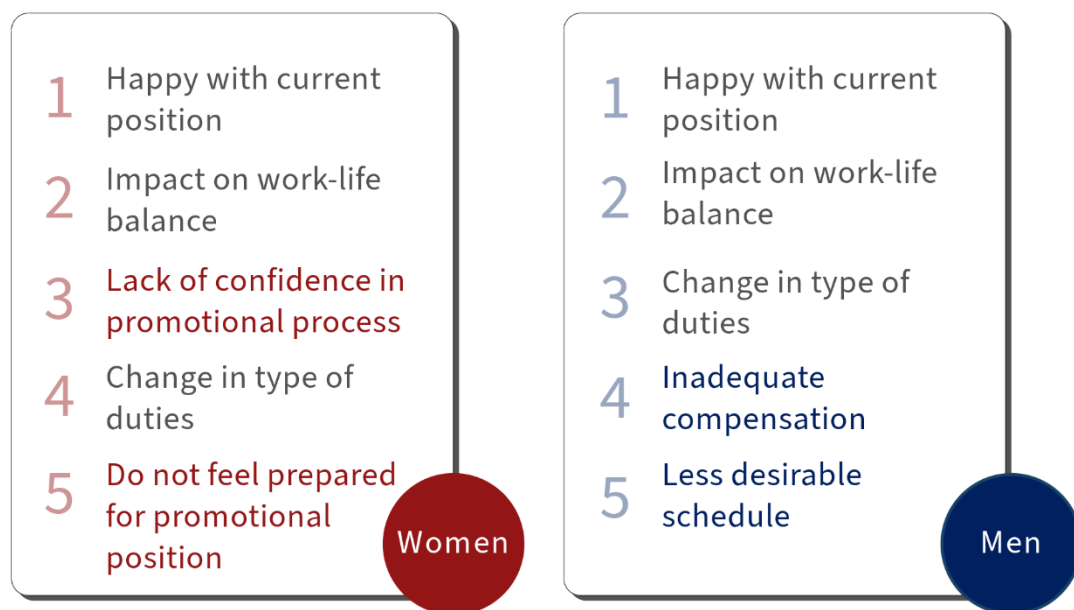
The recent agency-level staffing survey (DPSST,2024) broke this down further and provides information on starting salaries across hire type (entry-level vs. lateral), as

well as agency size. Small agencies have an average entry-level salary of \$59,540; medium have an average of \$70,950, and large agencies, an average of \$78,480. For lateral hires, the average are predictably higher; small agencies offering an average of \$66,500, medium offering \$82,470, and large offering \$89,620.

## Promotional Aspirations

Depending on their answers to the likelihood of seeking promotion, respondents were asked to rank a number of factors (Archbold et al., 2010; Drew & Saunders, 2019) in order of importance for reasons behind considering seeking promotion (“Likely” or “Very likely”) or conversely, reasons for not seeking promotion (“Unlikely” or “Very unlikely”)<sup>6</sup>. The majority of respondents (53.8%) indicated that they were “very unlikely” or “unlikely” to pursue promotion in the next two years, which is consistent with other findings (Archbold & Schulz, 2008). A slightly higher percentage of women (59.8% versus 53.0%) indicated they were unlikely to pursue promotion.

*Figure 17 Reasons not to promote by gender*



Because of a relationship between the importance of qualifying for retirement in two years and reasons to not seek promotion, as well as leaving policing and moving laterally, the sample was reduced slightly to officers with less than 23 years of

<sup>6</sup> Based on the “Other” category, future surveys should also in some way consider two additional factors in officers’ promotional inclinations – “do not yet qualify for promotion” and “cannot promote any higher.”

experience. This provides a potentially clearer picture of reasons that agencies may be more able to address, since police officers in Oregon can retire after 25 years on the job.

Across both genders, the most important reason for not pursuing promotion was simply that officers are “Happy with their current position” (Figure 17 and Table 7). Other reasons common across both top five were a promotion’s “impact on work-life balance” and the “change in types of duties” that come with promotion. Drawing from some of the answers in the “Other” category, “Change in duties” may include the shift to more administrative duties, as well as the loss of a position on a specialty team.

*Table 7 Top five reasons not to promote in next two years, by gender*

Women (n=41)	Mean	SD	Men (n=347)	Mean	SD
Happy with current position	3.49	1.247	Happy with current position	3.73	1.230
Impact on work-life balance	3.28	1.358	Impact on work-life balance	3.10	1.485
Lack of confidence in promotional process	3.26*	1.409	Change in types of duties	2.93	1.473
Change in types of duties	3.20	1.470	Inadequate compensation	2.92	1.491
Do not feel prepared for promotional position	3.15**	1.424	Less desirable schedule	2.88	1.574

Shaded areas are factors that appear in only one gender’s top five

\* significant difference between genders at the  $p < 0.05$  level

\*\* significant difference between genders at the  $p < 0.001$  level

Consistent with other research (Drew & Saunders, 2019; Starheim, 2019), women cited “lack of confidence in promotional process” and “do not feel prepared for promotional position” in their top five and significantly higher than men. The latter is significantly ( $p < .001$ ) correlated to age and experience, so its presence in women’s top five may be related to the younger sample of women officers. However, that should not detract from other research which has found that women officers may feel a higher need to prove their abilities in order to be promoted (Archbold & Schulz, 2008 and Haar & Morash, 2013 as cited in Drew & Saunders, 2019). Also similar to findings in the larger research sphere (Archbold & Schulz, 2008) is that men included “inadequate compensation” in their top five.

*Table 8 Reasons not to promote with significant differences between genders*

Reason Not to Promote	Women	Rank	Men	Rank
Do not feel prepared for promotional position ( $p<.001$ )	3.15	5th	2.88	13th
Family obligations other than child/elder care ( $p<.05$ )	3.08	7th	2.57	9th
Concerns about tokenism ( $p<.001$ )	2.90	11th	1.85	14th
Caregiver responsibilities ( $p<.05$ )	2.67	12th	2.16	12th
Qualify for retirement in next two years ( $p<.05$ )	2.19	13th	2.77	8th

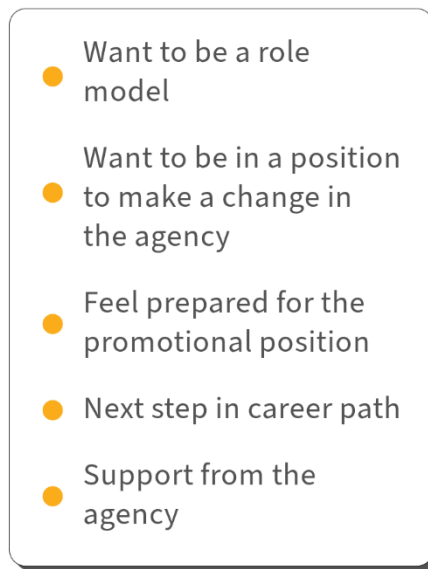
While family obligations and childcare did not make the top five for either gender, it is worth noting that other studies have found these reasons to be important in promotional decisions for both men and women (Drew & Saunders, 2019). While it was ranked low on the list, “concerns about tokensim” were, perhaps unsurprisingly, ranked as significantly more important by women officers (Table 8). A number of studies have found this to be a concern of women officers – being seen as having been promoted primarily due to their status as a minority group in policing – comprising 15% or less of the agency (Archbold et al., 2010; Archbold & Schulz, 2008).

*Table 9 Top five reasons to promote in next two years, by gender*

Women	Mean	SD	Men	Mean	SD
Want to be a role model	4.67	.488	Want to be a role model	4.34	.832
Want to be in a position to make a change in the agency	4.33	.870	Want to be in a position to make a change in the agency	4.26	.724
Feel prepared for the promotional position	4.21	.579	Next step in career path	4.13	.849
Next step in career path	4.13	1.060	Feel prepared for the promotional position	4.12	.881
Support from the agency	3.93	1.100	Support from the agency	3.81	1.063



*Figure 18 Reasons for promotion – both genders*

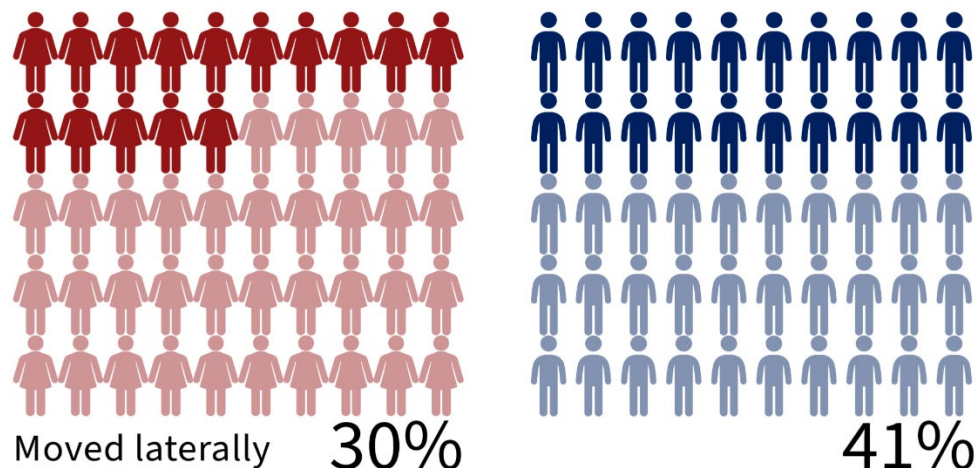


Among the officers who indicated that they were “likely” or “very likely” to seek promotion in the next two years, men and women officers had the same top five and no significant differences in their reasons to seek promotion (Figure 18 and Table 9). Officers who are interested in promotion, regardless of gender, view it as the logical next step and feel both prepared and supported. They also see promotion as an opportunity to be a role model and a way to make change at the agency.

## Moving Laterally

Whether officers leave policing altogether or simply move laterally between agencies, Oregon agency heads estimate that officers have an average of 5 years with the agency when they leave (DPSST, 2024). A 2024 national survey similarly found that officers were leaving within 5 years (IACP, 2024). Adams, et al, found that job data suggests voluntary resignations are the driving force behind the uptick in separations. There is also the thought that lateral transfers – officers moving from one agency to another – are a large part of those voluntary resignations (Maricus, 2022 as cited in Adams et al., 2023).

*Figure 19 Lateral officer movement by gender*



Statewide officer and survey data suggests that just over a third of new hires in Oregon are lateral hires (versus entry-level), with estimates ranging from about 20% to a recent quarterly high of 40% (DPSST, 2024, 2025). In a survey of either U.S. agencies, Scheer et al. (2022) found that 32.3% of officers had moved laterally at least once in their career; 2.7% had even worked for 3 or more agencies. Within this survey of Oregon officers, 38.5% of respondents indicated that they had moved laterally at least once during their career. By gender, 30% of women indicated a move and 41% of men indicated the same (Figure 19). About 32% of survey respondents indicated that they were either considering or unsure about a lateral move in the next year. There was little difference between men and women in this regard.

Figure 20 Reasons to move laterally by gender

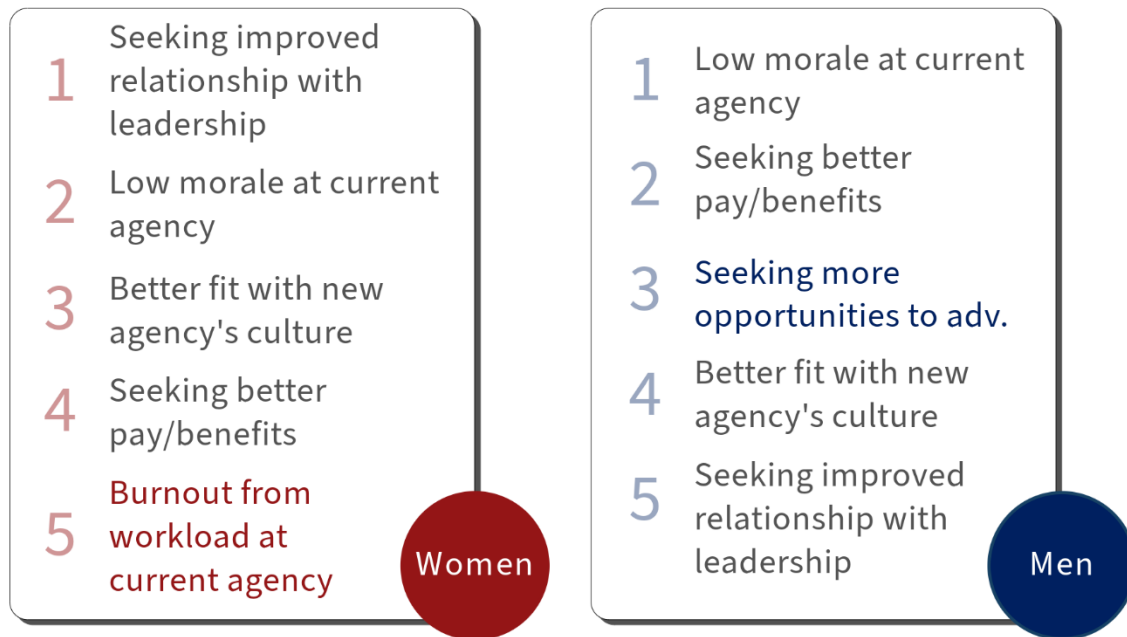


Table 10 Top five reasons to move laterally by gender

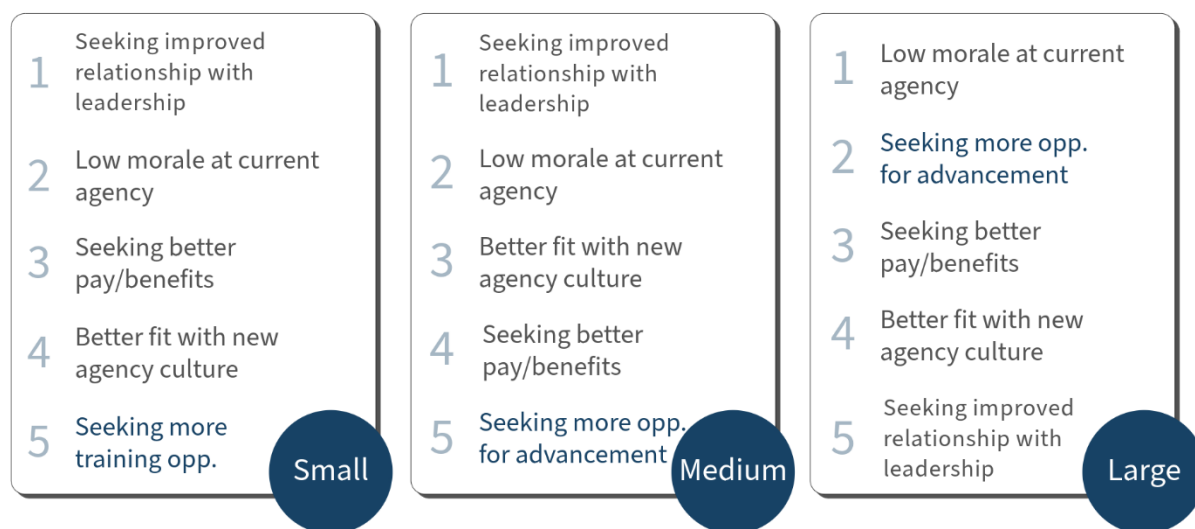
Women	Mean	SD	Men	Mean	SD
Seeking improved relationship between officers and agency leadership	4.09	1.35	Low morale at current agency	3.67	1.38
Low morale at current agency	3.96	1.46	Seeking better pay/benefits at new agency	3.61	1.37
Better fit with new agency culture	3.63	1.35	Seeking more opportunities for advancement	3.60	1.33
Seeking better pay/benefits at new agency	3.63	1.35	Better fit with new agency culture	3.59	1.30
Burnout from workload at current agency	3.61	1.27	Seeking improved relationship between officers and agency leadership	3.57	1.34

Shaded areas are factors that appear in only one gender's top five

Oregon officers with less than 23 years' experience (a dataset intended to reduce the influence of retirements) indicated that their top five reasons for moving laterally mirror those found at a national level (IACP 2024). Both men and women were seeking

better pay or benefits, better morale, a better fit with culture, or an improved relationship between leadership and officers (Figure 20 and Table 10). Women cited burnout from workload in the top five (for men it ranked 12<sup>th</sup>), and men ranked seeking more opportunities for advancement in their top five (women ranked it 11<sup>th</sup>)<sup>7</sup>.

*Figure 21 Reasons to move laterally by agency size*



In the 2024 Statewide Law Enforcement Staffing survey, agency heads were asked questions similar to the questions in the Choosing to Serve survey about their perceptions of lateral officer movement (Figure 22), as well as officers' motivations for leaving policing altogether. Both agency heads and officers cited "Seeking better pay/benefits" and "Seeking more opportunities to advance" as top five reasons. These are two points that have been repeatedly brought up in national conversation, including among chiefs of small and rural agencies (Bradley, 2020).

Agency heads felt that when officers moved laterally from their agencies, the reasons were more officer-centric than those identified by officers themselves – "Family reasons," "Seeking agency closer to residence," "Burnout from workload at current agency.". Officers' other top five reasons for moving laterally centered on agency

<sup>7</sup> Unlike other questions, the answer choices to considering a lateral move were "Yes," "No," and "Unsure" in order to be consistent with a previous survey. Only those who answered "Yes" moved on to the reasons list. Any future survey should use the 5-point Likert scale to measure likelihood.

relationships – “Low morale at current agency,” “seeking improved relationship with leadership,” “better fit with new agency culture.”

*Figure 22 Reasons for moving laterally, agency versus officer responses*



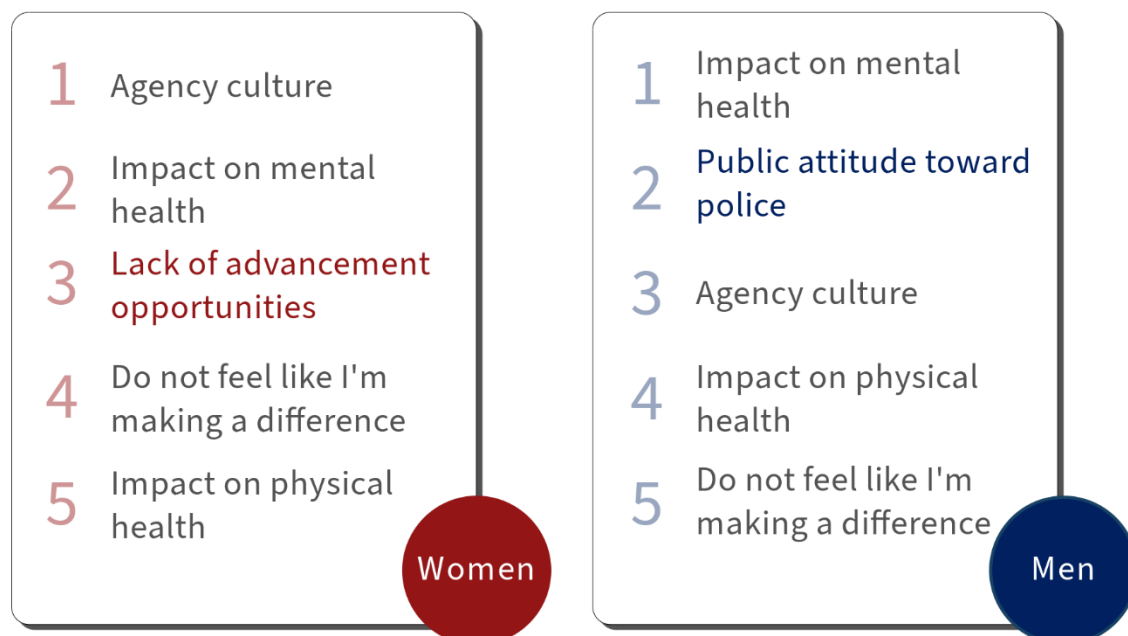
## Leaving Policing

If officers responded they were “Very likely” or “Likely” to leave policing in the next two years, they were then asked to indicate how important various reasons were to that decision. Of all current officers with less than 23 years’ experience, 15.8% indicated that they were “very likely” or “likely” to leave policing in the next two years. Men were slightly more likely to indicate they were leaving.

### Differences by Gender

Men and women officers all included “agency culture,” “impact on mental health,” “do not feel like I’m making a difference,” and “impact on physical health.” Contrary to the results for reasons to move laterally, it is women that ranked “lack of advancement opportunities” in their top five (ranked 7<sup>th</sup> for men). Men ranked “public attitude toward police” as their second highest reason (ranked 7<sup>th</sup> for women).

*Figure 23 Reasons to leave policing by gender*



These reasons, as well as those seen when agency size is examined, are consistent with Rossler and Scheer’s finding that these issues may contribute to increased stress and decreased job satisfaction, which in turn lead to a high intention to quit (2025).

Other issues that contributed include role clarity, increased workload, increased perception of workplace danger, and an unfair and/or unclear path to upward mobility. Other research (Rossler & Scheer, 2025; Tyson & Charman, 2023) also discusses impactful elements of organizational justice that should be included in the next survey, such as lack of recognition and “diminished voice.” As the one police chief noted, “feeling valued is a powerful motivator” (Bureau of Justice Assistance and Office Community Oriented Policing Services, 2023).

*Table 11 Top five reasons to leave policing in next two years by gender*

Women	Mean	SD	Men	Mean	SD
Agency culture	4.88	.35	Impact on MH	4.20	1.04
Impact on MH	4.50	.54	Public attitude toward police	4.11	1.04
Lack of advancement opportunities	4.50	.76	Agency Culture	4.01	1.26
Do not feel like I am making a difference	4.13	.84	Impact on PH	3.92	1.20
Impact on PH	4.00	1.41	Do not feel like I am making a difference	3.90	1.19

Shaded areas are factors that appear in only one gender's top five

## Differences by Agency Size

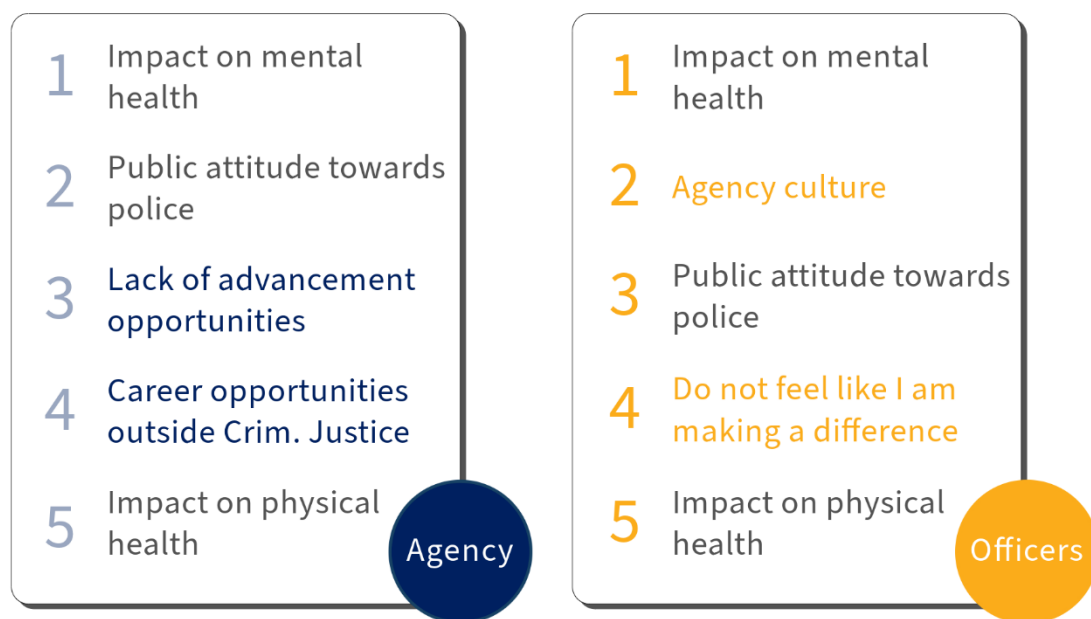
*Figure 24 Reasons to leave policing by agency size*



Officers from large agencies were more likely (19.3%) to indicate that they were considering leaving policing in the next two years. Officers from medium and small agencies were less likely at 14.8% and 12.9%, respectively. This is consistent with the earlier note that officers in larger agencies tend to have more years of experience. Officers from all agency sizes ranked impact on mental and physical health and public attitude in their top five. Small agency officers uniquely included “lack of advancement opportunities” and “dissatisfaction with job tasks” to round out their top five. Medium and large agency officers included “agency culture” and “do not feel like I’m making a difference.”

## Differences between Agencies and Officers

*Figure 25 Reasons to leave policing, agency versus officer responses*



Agency heads and officers were in slightly more agreement with reasons to leave policing than moving laterally. Both groups cited “impact on mental health,” “impact on physical health,” and public attitude as top five reasons for leaving policing. Differences arose with two of the top five, with agency heads ranking career-related reasons higher and officers ranking more personal and relational reasons like “agency culture” and feeling of making a difference higher.



## Probationary separations

Using the agency survey to further examine why officers leave provides some insight as to why agencies may lose officers during their probationary period, which commonly goes on for 18 months from the date of hire. In the year prior to the survey, 42% of agencies reported losing an employee during their probationary period. Using all agency responses, agencies estimated that they lost an average of 8.9% of their new hires to voluntary separation during the probationary period and another 8% to probationary discharges.

For the agencies that did have probationary separations, the top two reasons were “did not pass agency field training program” and that the new hire “changed their mind about being a police officer” (Figure 26).

*Figure 26 Reasons for probationary separations*



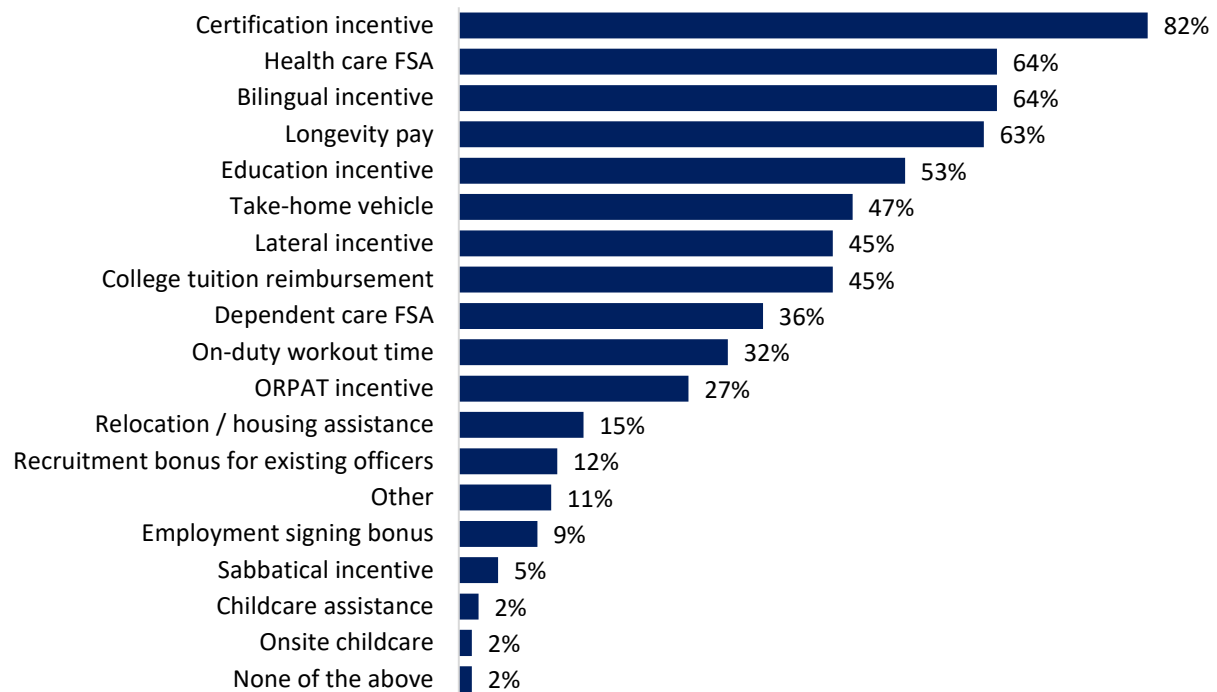
## Incentives

In the 2024 Law Enforcement survey, agencies were asked what incentive programs they currently use for recruitment and retention purposes (Figure 27). The options provided were based on current best practices and expanded on the responses from the 2023 agency survey. The most common incentive was for an officer to gain

additional certification. The most uncommon incentives were those to do with childcare – either assistance or on-site facilities.

Agency heads were also given an “Other” option, not included in the Figure 27. Descriptions of the other incentives included special assignment pay, a residency incentive, and wellness programs such as an on-site clinic and comprehensive medical screening.

*Figure 27 Incentives offered by agencies*



## Conclusion

---

There are a number of approaches to address recruitment and retention, but no matter what solutions agencies employ, this survey and the extant research all point to strategic plans that must be multi-faceted to tackle *both* recruitment and retention and do so in a data-driven and purposeful way. With these two areas being so intertwined, any growth will undoubtedly have a positive impact on recruitment.

Recruitment efforts should be reaching a broader audience. To that end, the National Institute of Justice suggests ensuring recruitment includes efforts focused on other “serving” occupations such as nursing, psychology, and education (Starheim, 2019). Structured and intentional internships and job shadow programs may also help increase qualified applicant pools (Gibbs, 2019). Agencies should also consider how they can lift the veil on what the daily life of a police officer actually looks like for both the potential applicant and their families (Scheer et al., 2022). Emphasizing the “helping” and aspects of the job that promote being a role model would align with why individuals look at a policing career in the first place. Agencies and DPSST should consider establishing partnerships to expand audience while decreasing workload on individual agencies.

Based on this survey, retention strategies should continue to focus on work-life balance, reduction of workload, substantive support for mental health, and innovative opportunities for professional development outside of an advancement structure with limited space. A suggestion for reducing workload in a time of reduced officer staffing is to reconsider and expand the roles of professional staff (PERF, 2023b). Another oft-suggested strategy is to conduct “stay interviews” in order to proactively ensure that agencies are meeting the needs of their staff (Tyson & Charman, 2023).

## Next Steps

This report paints the recruitment and retention trends in Oregon law enforcement with a very broad brush. It offers a high-level descriptive analysis as a jumping off point for more in-depth, qualitative research at the agency level. Police

officers and their agencies are just as varied as the communities they serve, so there is no one-size-fits-all strategy.

Research needs to continue expanding the knowledge about the people who could, but do not ultimately choose policing. This could include criminal justice students who instead pursue community corrections or law, for example. Instead of asking “why,” agencies should consider the “why not.” The study can also be expanded by an additional qualitative study, diving in to experiences of individual officers.

As suggested in several reports (Bradley, 2020; DPSST, 2023a, 2023b; Sun et al., 2022), agencies should consider using data to review hiring processes. If agencies are looking for a more diverse cadre of new hires, they must be drawing from a more diverse applicant pool – gender, race/ethnicity, background, education, etc. Analysis should be two-fold: an examination of who is applying and an examination of who is or is not successful and why. This has the potential to allow agencies to see if there are any steps of the hiring process, such as the physical test, at which they are unintentionally disqualifying otherwise successful candidates.

## Resources

---

The strategies available to increase recruitment and retention are numerous. Individual agencies will need to determine what will work best for their communities, staff, and resources. Luckily, the staffing challenge has resulted in numerous open-source reports in recent years that dive deeper into various staffing insights and strategies. While not exhaustive, these reports and resource pages include:

- [30x30 What Works Resource Page](#)
- [Addressing police turnover: Challenges, strategies, and future research directions](#)
- [Best Practices for Optimizing Law Enforcement Job Descriptions to Recruit Diverse Candidates](#)
- [Best Practices Guide – Recruitment, Retention, and Turnover of Law Enforcement Personnel](#)
- [Blueprint for Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Principles of a Comprehensive Recruitment, Hiring, Promotion, and Retention Strategy](#)
- [Performance-based Approach to Police Staffing and Allocation](#)
- [Recruiting and Retaining Officers in Small and Rural Agencies](#)
- [Recruitment and Retention for the Modern Law Enforcement Agency](#)
- [Recruitment and Retention for Workforce Diversity Resource Guidebook 2021](#)
- [Responding to the Staffing Crisis: Innovations in Recruitment and Retention](#)
- [The State of Recruitment and Retention: A Continuing Crisis for Policing 2024 Survey Results](#)
- [Women in Police Leadership: 10 Action Items for Advancing Women and Strengthening Policing](#)
- [Women in Policing: Breaking Barrier and Blazing a Path](#)

## References

---

- Adams, I. T., Mourtgos, S., & Nix, J. (2023). Turnover in Large US Policing Agencies Following the George Floyd Protests. *Journal of Criminal Justice*(88). Retrieved from <https://www.crimrxiv.com/pub/smw9kp1d/download/pdf>
- Archbold, C. A., & Schulz, D. M. (2008, March). Making rank: the lingering effects of tokenism on female police officers' promotion aspirations. *Police Quarterly*, 11(1), 50-73. Retrieved from [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1098611107309628?casa\\_token=EodK46m6LesAAAAA:mzCfPTGs fhca1vjEp34L7lwU\\_xKaI2WCUGAGf-\\_vJKO-iYjs26OJDNiszYFdySrWox-6u-1fKRktJQ](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1098611107309628?casa_token=EodK46m6LesAAAAA:mzCfPTGs fhca1vjEp34L7lwU_xKaI2WCUGAGf-_vJKO-iYjs26OJDNiszYFdySrWox-6u-1fKRktJQ)
- Archbold, C. A., Hassell, K. D., & Stitchman, A. J. (2010). Comparing promotion aspirations among female and male police officers. *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 12(2), 1-17. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1350/ijps.2010.00.0.175>
- Bradley, K. D. (2020). *Recruiting and Retaining Officers in Small and Rural Agencies*. United State Department of Justice. Community Oriented Policing Services. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20240216000111/https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/content.ashx/cops-p426-pub.pdf>
- Brooks, C. (2022). *Sheriffs' offices personnel, 2020*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/sheriffs-offices-personnel-2020>
- Brooks, C. (2024). *Primary state law enforcement agencies: Personnel, 2020*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/primary-state-law-enforcement-agencies-personnel-2020>
- Bureau of Justice Assistance and Office Community Oriented Policing Services. (2023). *Recruitment and Retention for the Modern Law Enforcement Agency*.

- California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. (2006). *Recruitment and Retention Best Practices Update*. Sacramento, CA: POST Media Distribution Desk. Retrieved from [http://annex.ipacweb.org/library/conf/08/ca\\_post.pdf](http://annex.ipacweb.org/library/conf/08/ca_post.pdf)
- Cambareri, J. F., & Kuhns, J. B. (2018). Perceptions and perceived challenges associated with a hypothetical career in law enforcement: differences among male and female college students. *Police Quarterly*, 21(3), 335-357.  
doi:10.1177/1098611118760862
- Castaneda, L. W., & Ridgeway, G. (2010). *Today's police and sheriff recruits*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved May 22, 2018, from <https://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-w0592-pub.pdf>
- Castillo, T., & Pickering, J. (2022). Recruitment crisis? Assessing students' career interests and police recruitment strategies in the Central Valley. *American Society of Criminology*. Philadelphia.
- Clinkinbeard, S. S., Solomon, S. J., & Rief, R. M. (2020). Who dreams of badges? Gendered self-concept and policing career aspirations. *Feminist Criminology*, 15(5), 567-592. Retrieved from [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1557085120937799?casa\\_token=IuKRiJpkYoEAAAAA:fcOinc5UeTxT9YYSciHzBJbs8iOvoeNuBCpApc7LHB7GY71x3SYpHlDagI7GihR61slC1rohMC2Qg](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1557085120937799?casa_token=IuKRiJpkYoEAAAAA:fcOinc5UeTxT9YYSciHzBJbs8iOvoeNuBCpApc7LHB7GY71x3SYpHlDagI7GihR61slC1rohMC2Qg)
- Clinkinbeard, S. S., Solomon, S. J., & Rief, R. M. (2021). Why did you become a police officer? Entry-related motives and concerns of women and men in policing. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 48(6), 715-733. Retrieved from [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0093854821993508?casa\\_token=N8Qe54LtSTMAAAAA:9eVjuTIC4N1dVUDQ7N4jL2LjVR3oSWIQekbEy7b7PSN8bQ8S-iCn3Jei3rLB9URSHCf8oZvwuRNzZQ](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0093854821993508?casa_token=N8Qe54LtSTMAAAAA:9eVjuTIC4N1dVUDQ7N4jL2LjVR3oSWIQekbEy7b7PSN8bQ8S-iCn3Jei3rLB9URSHCf8oZvwuRNzZQ)
- Cordner, G., & Cordner, A. (2011). Stuck on a plateau? Obstacles to recruitment, selection, and retention of women police. *Police Quarterly*, 14(3), 207-226.  
doi:10.1177/1098611111413990

- Drew, J. M., & Saunders, J. (2019). Navigating the police promotion system: a comparison by gender of moving up the ranks. *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, 476-490. Retrieved from <https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstreams/e90ca3c6-4eb7-4c90-9503-34b7b58d495c/download>
- Foley, P. F., Guarneri, C., & Kelly, M. E. (2008). Reasons for choosing a police career: Changes over two decades. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 10(1), 2-8. Retrieved from [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1350/ijps.2008.10.1.2?casa\\_token=eHjwRlZiOgAAAAAA:KbzPV1UsETx1ybM8xtv8l6liqvFVtV4O5yjdotFSibr3YOOK\\_sf e8QXDHTSwwOdGVqFtECg7Loj5HQ](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1350/ijps.2008.10.1.2?casa_token=eHjwRlZiOgAAAAAA:KbzPV1UsETx1ybM8xtv8l6liqvFVtV4O5yjdotFSibr3YOOK_sf e8QXDHTSwwOdGVqFtECg7Loj5HQ)
- Gibbs, J. C. (2019). Diversifying the police applicant pool: Motivations of women and minority candidate seeking police employment. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 32(3), 207-221.
- Goodison, S. E. (2022). *Local police departments personnel, 2020*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/lpdp20.pdf>
- Haarr, R. N. (2005). Factors affecting the decision fo police recruits to "drop out" of police work. *Police Quarterly*, 8(4), 431-453. Retrieved from [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1098611103261821?casa\\_token=-ChhWEpywvoAAAAA:CnPpIK4i49mxwc6yCtqx-k6UHJktwA92pyMyACLcHrTaQE7nXoeo\\_oqJy04f5jcJ8j-KObgR7yg3zg](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1098611103261821?casa_token=-ChhWEpywvoAAAAA:CnPpIK4i49mxwc6yCtqx-k6UHJktwA92pyMyACLcHrTaQE7nXoeo_oqJy04f5jcJ8j-KObgR7yg3zg)
- International Association of Chiefs of Police. (2024). *The state of recruitment and retention: A continuing crisis for policing, 2024 survey results*. Retrieved from [https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/IACP\\_Recruitment\\_Report\\_Survey.pdf](https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/IACP_Recruitment_Report_Survey.pdf)
- Krimmel, J. T., & Tartaro, C. (1999). Career choices and characteristics of criminal justice undergraduates. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 10(2), 277-289.



- Kringen, A. L., & Novich, M. (2018). Is it 'just hair' or is it 'everything'? Embodiment and gender repression in policing. *Gender, Work, and Organization*, 25(2), 195-213. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anne-Kringen/publication/320623944\\_Is\\_it\\_'just\\_hair'\\_or\\_is\\_it\\_'everything'\\_Embodiment\\_and\\_gender\\_repression\\_in\\_policing/links/59f202b3458515bfd081c9c6/Is-it-just-hair-or-is-it-everything-Embodiment-and-gender-repressio](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anne-Kringen/publication/320623944_Is_it_'just_hair'_or_is_it_'everything'_Embodiment_and_gender_repression_in_policing/links/59f202b3458515bfd081c9c6/Is-it-just-hair-or-is-it-everything-Embodiment-and-gender-repressio)
- Morrow, W. J., Vickovic, S. G., & Shjarback, J. A. (2021). Motivation to enter the police profession in the post-Ferguson era: an exploratory analysis of procedural justice. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 34(2), 135-155.
- Mourtgos, S. M., Adams, I. T., & Nix, J. (2022). Elevated police turnover following the summer of George Floyd protests: A synthetic control study. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 21(1), 9-33. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Scott-Mourtgos/publication/354172594\\_Elevated\\_Police\\_Turnover\\_following\\_the\\_Summer\\_of\\_George\\_Floyd\\_Protests\\_A\\_Synthetic\\_Control\\_Study/links/612944e92b40ec7d8bca2e8e/Elevated-Police-Turnover-following-the-Summer-of-Geor](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Scott-Mourtgos/publication/354172594_Elevated_Police_Turnover_following_the_Summer_of_George_Floyd_Protests_A_Synthetic_Control_Study/links/612944e92b40ec7d8bca2e8e/Elevated-Police-Turnover-following-the-Summer-of-Geor)
- Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. (2023, August). Oregon Physical Abilities Test (ORPAT) Agency Survey. Retrieved from [https://www.oregon.gov/dpsst/CPE/Documents/2024\\_ORPAT\\_Evaluation\\_and\\_Recommendations\\_FINAL050724.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/dpsst/CPE/Documents/2024_ORPAT_Evaluation_and_Recommendations_FINAL050724.pdf)
- Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. (2024). Oregon Statewide Law Enforcement Staffing Survey.
- Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. (2025). *Annual Forecast and Hiring Report*. Salem, OR. Retrieved from [https://www.oregon.gov/dpsst/CPE/Documents/2024-25\\_Annual\\_Forecasting\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_01272025.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/dpsst/CPE/Documents/2024-25_Annual_Forecasting_Report_FINAL_01272025.pdf)
- Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. (2025). DPSST 2025-27 Budget Presentation.

- Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. (2025). *Quarterly enrollment report: Academy enrollment and forecasting snapshot*.
- Orrick, W. D. (2008). *Recruitment, retention, and turnover of police personnel : reliable, practical, and effective solutions*. Charles C Thomas Publisher.
- Police Executive Research Forum. (2018). *Workforce Survey Preliminary Results*. Washington, D.C.: PERF.
- Police Executive Research Forum. (2023a). *Responding to the Staffing Crisis: Innovations in Recruitment and Retention*. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/RecruitmentRetention.pdf>
- Police Executive Research Forum. (2023b). *Women in Policing Leadership: 10 action items for advancing women and strengthening policing*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/WomenPoliceLeadership.pdf>
- Policing Project. (2022, October). Retrieved from 30x30 Initiative: <https://30x30initiative.org/>
- Portland State University Population Research Center. (2011). *Intercensal Estimates*. Retrieved 05 09, 2025, from Portland State University Population Research Center: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g1ckFE8eSrLakztbeqcA9GlEadKsYo43/view?usp=sharing>
- Portland State University Population Research Center. (2024). *Population Estimate Reports*. Retrieved 05 09, 2025, from Portland State University Population Research Center: <https://drive.google.com/uc?export=download&id=1O8zUaqUwBCHDtm03R4aqDgQvOfSh1m7s>
- Raganella, A. J., & White, M. B. (2004). Race, gender, and motivation for becoming a police officer: Implications for building a representative police department. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 32, 501-513. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2004.08.009

- Rossler, M. T., & Scheer, C. (2025). Explaining police officer intentions to leave their career field. *Journal of Crime and Justice*. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0735648X.2025.2475182>
- Scheer, C., Rossler, M., Peters, J., Melynck, W., & Hayer, J. (2022). *Police Retention and Career Perceptions: Findings from an Eight-City Survey*. Retrieved from <https://www.usm.edu/criminal-justice-forensic-science-security/retentiontechreport522.pdf>
- Silver, K. (2019). *The status of the research on women in policing*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice.
- Starheim, R. P. (2019). Women in Policing: Breaking barriers and blazing a path. Wahsington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. Retrieved from <https://openlab.bmcc.cuny.edu/crj-201-policing-professor-ostrowe/wp-content/uploads/sites/326/2020/03/Women-in-Policing-2019-1.pdf>
- Sun, C., Dockstader, J., Coldren, J. J., Saizow, H., & Patterson, Q. (2022). *Blueprint for Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention in the 21st Century: Principles of a Comprehensive Recruitment, Hiring, Promotion, and Retention Strategy*. Bureau of Justice Assistance, Smart Policing Initiative. Retrieved from <https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/blueprint-law-enforcement-recruitment-and-retention-21st-century>
- Todak, N. (2017). The decision to become a police officer in a legitimacy crisis. *Women and Criminal Justice*, 27(4), 250-270.
- Tyson, J., & Charman, S. (2023). Leaving the table: Organisational (in) justice and the relationship with police officer retention. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 1-17. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/17488958231191648>
- U.S. News and World Report. (2025). *Cost of Living*. Retrieved May 22, 2025, from <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/opportunity/affordability/cost-living?sort=rank-desc>

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). *Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics*. Retrieved May 22, 2025, from Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics Query System:

<https://data.bls.gov/oes/#/occGeo/One%20occupation%20for%20multiple%20geographical%20areas>

White, M. D., & Escobar, G. (2008). Making good cops in the twenty-first century: Emerging issues for the effective recruitment, selection and training of police in the United States and abroad. *International Review of law, computers & technology*, 22(1-2), 119-134. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/download/66450030/Making\\_good\\_cops\\_in\\_the\\_twentys-first\\_cen20210421-9158-zfy831.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/download/66450030/Making_good_cops_in_the_twentys-first_cen20210421-9158-zfy831.pdf)

## Appendix : Factor Options

---

All lists were set to randomize for every respondent, except for “Other, not listed,” which was always listed last. They are presented here in order of importance as ranked by all current officers.

### Leaving Policing

1. Impact on mental health
2. Agency culture
3. Public attitude toward police
4. Do not feel like I am making a difference
5. Impact on physical health
6. Dissatisfaction with job tasks
7. Lack of advancement opportunities
8. Career opportunities OUTSIDE Criminal Justice
9. Family obligations other than child/elder care
10. Pressure from family/friends
11. Career opportunities WITHIN Criminal Justice
12. Caregiver responsibilities
13. Qualify for retirement within 2 years

### Reasons not to pursue promotion

1. Happy with current position
2. Impact on work-life balance
3. Change in types of duties (e.g. increase in administrative and supervisory duties)
4. Inadequate compensation
5. Less desirable schedule in promotion position
6. Lack of confidence in promotional process
7. Lack of agency support

8. Family obligations other than child/elder care
9. Lack of advancement opportunities at current agency
10. Do not feel prepared for promotional position
11. Caregiver responsibilities
12. Loss of opportunities for overtime
13. Concerns about tokenism (i.e. being promoted or the perception of being promoted solely based on protected class status, such as gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity)
14. Qualify for retirement within 2 years

### **Reasons to pursue promotion**

1. Want to be a role model
2. Want to be in a position to make change in the agency
3. Next step on career path
4. Feel prepared for the promotional position
5. Support from agency
6. Better compensation
7. Change in types of duties (e.g. increase in administrative and supervisory duties)
8. Positive impact on work-life balance
9. Positive impact on ability to meet family obligations (other than child / elder care)
10. More desirable schedule in promotional position
11. Positive impact on ability to meet caregiver obligations (e.g. child care, elder care)
12. Unhappy with current position

### **Reasons for a Lateral Transfer**

1. Low morale at current agency
2. Seeking better pay/benefits at new agency

3. Seeking improved relationship between officers and agency leadership
4. Better fit with new agency culture
5. Seeking more opportunities for advancement
6. Want to work with agency with a different policing approach
7. Seeking more training opportunities
8. Reasons related to the location
9. Seeking more desirable or flexible shift system
10. Burnout from workload at current agency
11. Unfair treatment by agency
12. Seeking improved relationship between police and community
13. Family reasons unrelated to agency
14. Conflict with supervisor
15. Seeking agency closer to residence

## **Motivators for a Career in Policing**

1. Desire to stop those who would do harm
2. To help people in the community
3. Exciting work
4. To fight crime
5. Variety and non-routine nature of work
6. Opportunity to solve problems
7. Challenging career
8. Camaraderie with co-workers
9. Good salary, retirement, and/or benefits
10. Job security
11. Good deal of autonomy
12. Role model for others like me
13. Show that people like me make good officers
14. Opportunities for advancement
15. Childhood dream to become police officer
16. Friend(s) is a police officer

17. Family member(s) is a police officer

## **Concerns About a Career in Policing**

1. Attitude of community toward police
2. Stressful nature of the job
3. Insufficient salary, retirement, and/or benefits
4. Work schedule
5. Threat of injury and/or death
6. Impact on mental health
7. Concerns about ability to do the job effectively
8. Impact on physical health
9. Negative portrayal of LE in media
10. Difficulty meeting family obligations
11. Attitude of police toward the community
12. Physical nature of the job
13. Difficult meeting caregiver responsibilities
14. Not being accepted by co-workers
15. Personal perception of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers
16. Personal perception of discrimination within law enforcement agencies





CENTER FOR  
**POLICING EXCELLENCE**  
RESEARCH · EDUCATION · LEGITIMACY · INNOVATION

