

**STATEMENT OF BENJAMIN B. TUCKER  
FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2017**

Good Morning Chair Gibson and Members of the Council. I am First Deputy Commissioner Benjamin B. Tucker of the New York City Police Department (NYPD). I am joined here today by Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce and Deputy Chief Frank Vega of the Patrol Services Bureau. On behalf of Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill, I wish to thank the City Council for the opportunity to speak with you today about the NYPD's recruitment and commitment to diversity in all of our ranks.

When the public believes their Police Department is there to serve them, understands them, and responds to them, it inevitably deepens trust between police and community and it instills public confidence. Consequently, ensuring a diverse police department is central to the NYPD's commitment to providing a safer and fairer city for all communities we are privileged to serve. Simply put, we are a stronger NYPD when we reflect the diversity of our city. To that end, we have spent the last three years striving to meet this goal.

Let me begin by summarizing where we are as a Department. Today, the Department's uniformed force is more diverse than at any time in its history across its ranks. The steady movement towards greater diversity has been reflected in our entry level recruit training since the start of this administration.

Whether the measure we use is gender, race, ethnicity, or city residency, we have witnessed marked improvement in our ability to recruit and hire from these historically underrepresented populations. For example, in 2013, 43% of police officer hires were minority candidates, 18% of these candidates were female and 52% were city residents. Contrast that with our January 2017 and October 2016 academy classes where minority candidates accounted for almost 60% of each class, over 20% of each class was female, over 20% of each class was born outside the United States, over 30% of each class spoke a second language, and New York City residents represented almost 64% of each class.

Under this administration, the Department has significantly reformed its recruitment philosophy and hiring process. I do not believe it is a secret that our hiring process has been historically challenging. If you were to ask any police officer or civilian, regardless of race or gender, he or she would tell you that the hiring process of the past was too long and too impersonal. The process sometimes extended for as many as four years from the time a prospective candidate took the NYPD civil service exam to when he or she was ultimately hired. This process was unacceptable. We have sought to modernize the hiring process by allowing better tracking of candidates, providing more frequent contact with candidates and delivering better overall communication about the multiple steps in the hiring process.

Our previous recruitment strategies focused heavily on career events at four-year colleges, corporate-sponsored job fairs, and out-of-state military hiring events. Our recruitment advertising generally appeared in traditional print media and was heard on news and sports-centric radio and television programming. This antiquated strategy only reached and appealed to certain demographics and only modestly promoted the Police Department as a viable career path to the many who reside in our city's most diverse communities.

Under this administration, the Department has committed to engaging in a much different, strategic and productive recruitment plan of action to promote the NYPD as a premier choice of employment, with a primary focus on community outreach.

This strategy is a “boots-on-the-ground,” grassroots approach. Not only are recruitment personnel deployed to geographic areas where predominantly underrepresented groups reside, but we believe the Department’s recruitment efforts will be bolstered, through its new neighborhood policing model and numerous outreach efforts. It is a strategy that seeks engagement from city residents, community leaders, chambers of commerce, clergy, and faith-based organizations to build and form partnerships; while also exploring new avenues to reach potential candidates in their communities. It is a significant departure from previous recruitment efforts.

Consistent with this change in philosophy, one of the more significant developments occurred last year with the opening of the new Candidate Assessment Center, located in the former Police Academy at 235 East 20<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan. In reviewing surveys submitted by past applicants, those that discontinued the process cited barriers such as the length of the process, the lack of support for applicants, and the lack of transparency in how the process works. Moreover, prior to the Center’s opening, candidates had to travel to several locations throughout the city to complete the various stages of the hiring process. The Center now houses the entire screening and assessment process for new candidates for the Police Department. It will streamline this process by concentrating all of the subsections of the Candidate Assessment Division in one place, including the Recruitment, Character, Medical, and Psychological Assessment Sections, as well as the Job Standards Test Unit. The new Center features a fully staffed candidate-service hotline, to field any applicant questions that may arise.

At the same time, our recruiters are broadening their engagement with the city’s youth by working with members of our School Safety Division. In 2016, Recruiters attended over 400 recruitment events, including community events, street fairs, career fairs, and participated in presentations in schools to discuss Department programs such as NYPD Explorers and Explorer Cubs, Cadet Corps, and the Youth Police Academy. These programs are a pipeline for talented youth to eventually enter the ranks of the Department.

Recruiters also work with youth groups to schedule recruitment opportunities in various locations throughout the five boroughs. The impact of such efforts cannot be overstated. When I returned to the Department in 2014, the headcount for our Cadet Corps Program had dropped to 107, from a previous high of 637. Through funding provided by the Council, the Department has been able to re-establish the Cadet Corps program with a current headcount of 635 and we are proud that currently 78% of our Cadets represent New York City’s minority communities.

Mentoring and training is something that applicants who come from families with NYPD backgrounds have as a matter of course, because their fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, or siblings, as current or former members of the Department, know the process and its potential pitfalls. Other applicants do not have these advantages, and so the Department is working to build a support system for them. All NYPD recruiters and mentors have been issued tutorials to best prepare candidates for the police officer exam and study materials are made available to candidates. Our plan is to have mentoring continue after an applicant takes the police exam. This will entail tours of the Police Academy conducted by Recruitment and Training personnel, as well as guidance through various stages of the pre-employment process with

the goal of minimizing the number of applicants who fail to complete these stages and thereby discontinue the hiring process.

We have also enlisted the NYPD's ethnic and religious fraternal organizations to provide mentorship for candidates from each of these groups. Organizations such as the NYPD Guardians Association, an NYPD African-American fraternal society, have committed to having their members mentor applicants through the hiring process, keeping them engaged and helping them understand the necessary steps to achieving appointment.

It is too soon to gauge the effectiveness of this approach, however, we will continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our recruiting and hiring strategies.

Our commitment to diversity does not end with effective recruitment and hiring of police officers. It is essential that we encourage and support our officers to move up through our supervisory and police management ranks.

To this end we have endeavored to, have our management ranks reflective of those individuals they supervise. Although the decision to become a Sergeant, Lieutenant and Captain are voluntary choices requiring individuals to pass a promotional examination for each of these ranks, we have nevertheless focused our efforts on promoting the benefits of such a career path, by not simply enabling entry level supervisors to be free and creative thinkers in addressing issues they face every day, but also establishing greater responsibilities and benefits for when they reach the rank of Captain that will allow them to stand out and reach the senior executive ranks within the Department.

Here too, we have made great strides. Under this administration, more than 30% of our discretionary promotions to deputy inspector and above have been minority and/or female members of the service. As the Department continues to recruit individuals of all communities to reflect the diversity of our city, we expect this percentage to steadily increase over time.

As a result of all these efforts, the face of the NYPD has changed, but our commitment to a safer and fairer New York City will not.

Before concluding my remarks, I should say that our elected officials are some of our best resources because they often are the eyes and ears of their districts and the communities they serve. If you know of service-oriented individuals who are living in your district looking for a rewarding career, please encourage them to seek out an NYPD recruiter.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, and I am pleased to answer your questions.

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Name: First Deputy Commissioner Benjamin

Address: 1 Police Plaza Tucker

I represent: NYPD

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Name: Chief Frank Vega

Address: 1 Police Plaza

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Name: Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce

Address: 1 Police Plaza

I represent: NYPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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