



BLOUNT COUNTY (TN) SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**NARRATIVE OF INTERPRETATION –
UTILIZATION REPORT FOR EQUAL
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM**

**AWARD # 2017UMWX0022
OJP VENDOR # 626000495**

MAY 6, 2019



INTRODUCTION

The women and men of Blount County (TN) Sheriff's Office ("BCSO") understand and are fully committed to fulfilling the legal and moral obligations of Equal Employment Opportunity in all regards, including but not limited to recruitment, screening, selection, hiring, training, job assignment, compensation, benefits, promotional opportunity, transfers, layoffs, recall from layoffs, discipline and educational and social programs sponsored by BCSO, without regard to gender, race, creed, national origin, age, disability, and other categories protected by federal and state law.

The leadership in BCSO believes in equal employment opportunity and practices it consistently. We also recognize our under-representation in certain demographic areas, notably Females in the category of Sworn Officer – Patrol, and are committed to improving our utilization performance accordingly.

BACKGROUND

Blount County, Tennessee is a rural, somewhat non-densely populated county in East Tennessee located south of Knoxville and borders the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (as of May 4, 2019):

- The estimated population of Blount County as of July 1, 2018 was 131,349
- 40.1% of the population is <18 years old, or >64 years old (too young to apply, or too old for POST certification)
- 93.9% of the population is White alone
- 3.1% of the population is Black or African American alone
- 88.7% of the population aged 25 or older is a high school graduate (a HS diploma/GED is required for employment with BCSO as a Deputy Sheriff)
- 12.1% of the population is in poverty
- The median household income is \$51,172 (thanks largely to several large, relatively well-paying industries in the area). Yet, the annual starting salary for a BCSO Officer is only \$31,728.11.

While Blount County is a desirable place to live and work, these statistics offer some insight into the recruiting challenges BCSO faces. The pool of available, qualified applicants is limited compared to many other counties, especially in metropolitan areas. And as the numbers below indicate, recruiting female applicants is particularly challenging, and competing with local employers on salary is very difficult.

BCSO APPLICANT STATISTICS

The statistics below (from BCSO's applicant tracking system) are for the period JULY 1, 2017 through JUNE 30, 2018. These statistics demonstrate the disparity in the number of female vs. male applicants:

- 614 applications were received from 378 unique applicants during the above period for all positions.
- Federal law prohibits BCSO from requiring applicants to identify their race or gender at the time of application, but the applicant tracking system offered applicants the VOLUNTARY OPPORTUNITY to self-identify those two fields.
- For applications received by applicants who voluntarily provided their race and gender:
 - *FIVE TIMES AS MANY applications for PATROL were received **from males** compared to females (150 vs. 30)*
 - *THREE AND A HALF TIMES AS MANY applications for ADULT CORRECTIONS were received **from males** compared to females (119 vs. 34)*
 - *THREE TIMES AS MANY UNIQUE MALES APPLIED COMPARED TO UNIQUE FEMALES WHO APPLIED (221 VS. 73)*

RECRUITING STEPS BCSO HAS TAKEN TO IMPROVE ITS UTILIZATION PERFORMANCE

Notwithstanding the recruiting and hiring challenges noted above, BCSO is fully committed to improving its utilization performance, particularly with regard to FEMALE PATROL OFFICERS.

In the recent past, BCSO has:

- Attended several “job fairs” at high schools and community colleges in Blount, Knox, Anderson and Roane Counties to engage and interest potential applicants of all races and genders in employment with BCSO.
- Held a “job fair” at Maryville College to engage and interest potential applicants of all races and genders in employment with BCSO.
- Taught a criminal justice class at Maryville High School, Heritage High School and William Blount High Schools, targeting Senior High students (at least 18 years old) in the class for recruitment.
- Sponsored a “***Pretty in Pink, Fierce in Blue***” recruitment campaign to engage and invite potential applicants of all genders, especially FEMALES, to apply for employment with BCSO (this was during the National Women in Law Enforcement Day event, and an article appeared September 17, 2018 in ***The Daily Times***, Blount County’s newspaper of record).
- Expanded the invitation to test and AND enter the screening process (for PATROL) to include ALL patrol applicants, not just those whose applications present more apparent qualifications than other applicants.
- Identified qualified FEMALE and BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN applicants to ensure they were invited to enter the testing and screening process.
- Placed an ad for open Patrol positions on the “PoliceOne.com” website, which is nationally recognized as a premier recruiting site for law enforcement agencies, as well as the “National Minority Update website (www.nationalminorityupdate.com) a nationally recognized recruitment source for minorities.
- Recruited from two Tennessee Community Colleges who offer a POST Academy (Cleveland State CC and Walters State CC).

FEMALE AND BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN HIRING FOR PATROL & CORRECTIONS

BCSO’s recent recruitment efforts have increased the number of females and blacks/African Americans hired. For the period 7-1-2016 to Present:

- 29 FEMALES were hired (27 white, 2 black/African American)
- 5 BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICANS were hired (3 males, 2 females):
 - 2 BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES were hired into Patrol
 - 2 BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALES were hired into Adult Corrections

EEOP UTILIZATION ANALYSIS

The EEOP Utilization Analysis Chart indicates BCSO is underutilized as follows:

- WHITE FEMALES in Protective Services: Sworn – Patrol Officers – BCSO acknowledges this result.
- WHITE MALES in Administrative Support – BCSO believes it understands this result.
- WHITE MALES in Protective Services: Sworn Officials – BCSO needs some assistance understanding this result.

STEPS PLANNED TO IMPROVE BCSO'S FUTURE UTILIZATION PERFORMANCE

Notwithstanding some past success in improving BCSO's utilization performance, BCSO will take the following steps between now and June 30, 2020:

- Repeat the ***"Pretty in Pink, Fierce in Blue"*** recruitment campaign event in Blount County with vehicles containing a colorful banner with the slogan and the date of the event.
- Place recurring ads for Patrol Officers on PoliceOne.com website, and the Minority Update website, including our EEO non-discrimination statement.
- Place an ad in the Knoxville News Sentinel newspaper online (www.KnoxNews.com) for Patrol Officers, including our EEO non-discrimination statement.
- Place an ad in the Nashville Tennessean newspaper online (www.thetennessean.com) for Patrol Officers, including our EEO non-discrimination statement. Nashville is a large, metropolitan area with much greater racial diversity than Blount County.
- Attend "job fairs" at the following:
 - Maryville College, Pellissippi State Community College, Roane State Community College
 - Cleveland State Community College (which offers a POST training and certification curriculum)
 - Maryville High School, William Blount High School, and Heritage High School
- Ensure our EEO statement appears on/in:
 - Our website, www.BCSO.com
 - Blount County's website, www.BlountTN.org
 - All bulletin boards within BCSO
 - All job fair handout materials
- Notify applicants in writing that BCSO has developed an EEOP Report and that it is available on request for review.
- Post a notice on BCSO's public website that BCSO has developed an EEOP Report and that it is available for review upon request.
- Make copies of the Report available in the reading rooms of local public libraries.
- Ensure that all open positions in the "administrative support" category are posted online and not filled by word of mouth but rather from qualified applicants who submit an application online.

STEPS PLANNED TO DISSEMINATE THE EEO REPORT WITHIN BCSO

Blount County Sheriff's Office plans to disseminate its EEO Utilization Report within the organization as follows:

- Post a copy of the report on all bulletin boards in BCSO by June 1, 2019.
- Notify all BCSO Command Staff of the completion of the report and its availability on the shared document drive (intranet equivalent access).
- Place a copy of the report in all BCSO break rooms by June 1, 2019.
- Insert a copy of the report in BCSO's Human Resources manual as an Appendix.
- Provide a copy of the report to the Sheriff (elected), Chief Deputy, all 3 Deputy Chiefs, the Public Information Officer, and the Captain having responsibility for recruitment efforts.
- Provide a copy of the report to the Mayor of Blount County (elected), and to the Blount County Human Resources Director.

STEPS PLANNED TO DISSEMINATE THE EEO REPORT EXTERNALLY

- Provide a copy of the report to the Mayor of Blount County and to the Blount County Human Resources Director
- Notify applicants and BCSO vendors and contractors in writing that BCSO has received funds from the Office of Justice Programs to fund the hiring of Patrol Officers, and that BCSO has developed an EEOP Report which is available on request for review;
- Post a copy of the Report on www.BCSO.com, our public website; and
- Make copies of the Report available in the reading room of the Blount County Public Library.

CONCLUSION

The women and men of Blount County Sheriff's Office are committed to Equal Employment Opportunities and are aware of our underutilization in certain areas. We are also committed to taking the above steps to improve our utilization rates in the next 13 months.

We greatly appreciate the OJP grant for which this Narrative is submitted, and sincerely apologize for missing the original submission deadline.

Respectfully submitted this 6th day of May, 2019.

William L. Rahner
Human Resources
Blount County Sheriff's Office
940 East Lamar Alexander Parkway
Maryville, Tennessee 37801
865-273-5147