



FACT SHEET | Center for Law & Justice

# ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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## LOWER POLICE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION RATES ARE HURTING OUR CITIES

Difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified police officers contribute to rising crime rates and social dysfunction in communities. Police departments and local communities must adopt policies that incentivize careers in law enforcement.

### TOPLINES

- In [2023](#), the New York City Police Department (NYPD) saw 2,931 officers resign or retire while only recruiting 2,345 new officers – a net deficit of nearly 600 officers.
- The number of uniformed [NYPD](#) officers declined in 2022 to under 34,000, far below its peak of over 40,000 officers in 2000.
- A [2019](#) survey of law enforcement executives found that 78% of responding agencies had difficulty recruiting qualified candidates.
- A 2022 workforce survey by [PERF](#) found that hiring within large-sized police departments had decreased by 5% from 2019 to 2021.
- [PERF](#) also found a 42.7% increase in resignations from 2019–2021.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO AID RECRUITMENT

- State and local policymakers should provide financial incentives to encourage qualified applicants to pursue a career in law enforcement.
- Local law enforcement entities should offer non-traditional benefits in addition to salary, like college tuition reimbursement.
- Federal policymakers should increase U.S. Department of Justice grant funding to assist state and local agencies in hiring new police officers.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO AID RETENTION

- State and local leaders must publicly and consistently reaffirm their commitment to the law enforcement community.
- Veteran law enforcement officers should provide new recruits with realistic expectations about the job and resources to help navigate the difficulties.
- Law enforcement leadership should create meaningful pathways to career development and professional growth within law enforcement careers.

**ADDRESS THE GROWING CONCERNS WITHIN LAW ENFORCEMENT  
COMMUNITIES TO HELP KEEP OUR STREETS SAFE.**

**[Read AFPI's Full Issue Brief Here.](#)**

