

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF ARIZONA'S
LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FIRE SERVICE PERSONNEL



Arizona Fire Service and
Law Enforcement Recruitment Survey



THE UNIVERSITY
OF ARIZONA

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Connie Tyler, Phoenix Police Department, Public Information Officer, Retired.

Key Findings

This report contains findings from a survey about recruitment in the public safety sector conducted by researchers at the University of Arizona (UArizona) and funded by the Arizona Board of Regents' Technology and Research Initiative Fund (ABOR TRIF). The survey was sent to samples of residents in six states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah), soliciting their opinions about working as a law enforcement officer (LEO) or as a firefighter as well as their likelihood of joining either profession. The key findings for this survey are summarized below.

The LEO and firefighter recruitment survey identified which factors are most influential in the recruitment of these public safety officials. The recruitment survey was distributed to an audience who were not employed as both an LEO and a firefighter, and who reside in the six states listed above. In total, 6,855 individuals participated in the survey: 2,149 from Arizona; 1,102 from California; 1,089 from Colorado; 550 from New Mexico; 1,084 from Nevada; and 881 from Utah.

Interest in both law enforcement and firefighting work is weak among those surveyed.

A plurality (48%) of respondents expressed no initial interest in a career as an LEO, whereas only 8% were initially very interested in a career as an LEO. (See "Initial Interest in a Law Enforcement Career" for further discussion.) When asked about firefighting work, 50% revealed no initial interest in working as a firefighter, and only around 5% were initially very interested in entering the firefighting workforce. (See "Initial Interest in a Firefighting Career" for further discussion.)

Roughly 30% of respondents reported being "somewhat" or "very likely" to accept a job in public safety when presented with hypothetical job offers.

Potential job offers were more attractive depending on the salary, housing stipend, and pension packages offered. Firefighting job offer profiles were, on average, preferred 55% of the time, while job offers for an LEO position were chosen only 45% of the time. Job offers with starting salaries of \$60,000 were chosen only 42% of the time compared to 48% for salaries of \$65,000 and 60% for salaries of \$70,000. (See "Conjoint Analysis to Determine Preferences for Job Characteristics" for further discussion.)

The results exhibit similar patterns across other dimensions. Offer profiles without a housing stipend were chosen only 36% of the time, whereas a \$5,000 and \$10,000 stipend offer were chosen 51% and 63% of the time, respectively. Differences related to pension characteristics were not as stark but still significant. Offers that included a service pension requirement of 20 years were chosen 55% of the time, but those with 25-year requirements were chosen only 45% of the time. The minimum retirement age had similar effects. Offers with a minimum retirement age of 50 were chosen 54% of the time, but the acceptance rate dropped to 45% when the minimum age was raised to 55. (See "Conjoint Analysis to Determine Preferences for Job Characteristics" for further discussion.)

The most positive and negative factors influencing one's desire to become an LEO or a firefighter were, respectively, the opportunity to help people and the high risk of danger.

About 44% (LEO) / 46% (firefighter) of respondents cited the public service element of the jobs as an advantage, and 63% (LEO) / 63% (firefighter) pointed to the likelihood of personal harm as a reason not to join either agency. Other factors that strongly correlated with increased interest in both roles were the

perception of good job pay, early retirement, and job security. Less attractive features of both jobs included the stressful nature of the job as well as long shifts and irregular work hours. Public disapproval makes law enforcement less appealing, as do the physical requirements of firefighting. (See “Initial Interest in a Law Enforcement Career” and “Initial Interest in a Firefighting Career” for further discussion.)

Respondents imagine they would be satisfied with all listed LEO and firefighter tasks.

Tasks perceived as being most satisfying for both LEOs and firefighters were high-priority calls, search and rescue, and community outreach, whereas administrative tasks were perceived as less satisfactory in both LEO and firefighter roles, suggesting that an emphasis on “front-line” work would be the most significant recruitment lever. Respondents shared positive sentiments about firefighters and LEOs and report comfort with performing firefighter- and LEO-specific tasks. (See “Initial Attitudes About Law Enforcement Officers” and “Initial Attitudes About Firefighters” for further discussion.)

A plurality of prospective LEOs and firefighters perceive that the public supports these jobs but that law enforcement work invites more negative scrutiny.

Respondents believed that high levels of LEO support (other than feelings of complete approval) was as low as 19% in the country and as high as about 37% in their own jurisdiction. (See “Perception of Public Support for Law Enforcement” for further discussion.) However, the perception of decided support for firefighters ranged between around 43% (jurisdiction) to 45% (nationwide). (See “Perception of Public Support for Firefighters” for further discussion.)

Potential recruits perceive both law enforcement and firefighting as respected fields but are not presently considering a career change into public safety. The aspects of both jobs that survey respondents viewed as beneficial or unattractive are intuitively sensible. Consistent with the retention survey findings, potential recruits to law enforcement positions are most drawn to the stable work and early retirement options but are wary of public censure and safety concerns.¹

Public Safety Officer Recruitment Survey Findings

The law enforcement officer and firefighter recruitment survey identified which factors are most influential in the recruitment of LEOs and firefighters. The recruitment survey was distributed to people residing in Arizona and five bordering states to people who are not currently LEOs and firefighters. In total, 6,855 participants completed the survey: 2,149 from Arizona; 1,102 from California; 1,089 from Colorado; 550 from New Mexico; 1,084 from Nevada; and 881 from Utah (Table 1).

Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics

Among the 6,885 participants, 97% have no current experience as an LEO and 95% have no former experience as an LEO, while 99% have no current experience as a firefighter and 97% have no former experience as a firefighter. Tables 1-8 provide additional information about the survey participants. Most of them resided in Arizona and women outnumbered men almost two to one.

The race and ethnicity of the sample is mostly white, but other groups are also represented, especially Native Americans. Just under 30% received a bachelor’s degree, and a non-negligible percentage hold a postgraduate degree. About 80% of this sample identified as straight.

On the employment front, almost two-thirds are currently working (both full- and part-time), but another 12% were unemployed and searching for jobs. The overwhelming majority had no prior military service experience. To maintain anonymity, response cells with fewer than 10 responses are replaced with an asterisk.

Table 1. Respondents' state of residence.

State	Count	Percent
Arizona	2,149	31.3%
California	1,102	16.1%
Colorado	1,089	15.9%
Nevada	1,084	15.8%
New Mexico	550	8.0%
Utah	881	12.9%
Total	6,855	100%

Table 2. Respondents' gender.

Gender	Count	Percent
Man	2,283	37.1%
Woman	3,730	60.7%
Non-Binary	71	1.2%
Transgender Man	28	0.5%
Transgender Woman	15	0.2%
Other (specify)	*	*
Prefer not to say	16	0.3%
Total	6,143	100

Table 3. Respondents' age.

Age	Count	Percent
Younger than 25	1,103	18.0%
25-30	811	13.2%
30-35	895	14.5%
35-40	866	14.1%
40-45	780	12.7%
45-50	626	10.2%
50-55	567	9.2%
55-60	128	2.1%
60-65	145	2.3%
Older than 65	223	3.6%
Prefer not to say	*	*
Total	6,150	100%
Mean: 38		

Table 4. Respondents' race/ethnicity.

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
White	3,807	61.9%
Hispanic/Latino	757	12.3%
Black	538	8.7%
Native American	208	3.4%
Asian	393	6.4%
Pacific Islander	88	1.4%
Other	263	4.3%
Prefer not to say	96	1.6%
Total	6,150	100%

Table 5. Respondents' education attainment.

Education Attainment	Count	Percent
High school diploma or GED	1,345	21.9%
Some college, no degree earned	1,564	25.4%
2-year college, degree earned	745	12.1%
4-year college, degree earned	1,711	27.8%
Postgraduate degree	673	11.0%
Prefer not to say	112	1.8%
Total	6,150	100%

Table 6. Respondents' sexual orientation/identity.

Sexual Orientation	Count	Percent
Straight	4,939	80.3%
Lesbian	90	1.5%
Gay	100	1.6%
Bisexual	429	7.0%
Asexual	205	3.3%
Other	35	0.6%
Prefer not to say	352	5.7%
Total	6,150	100%

Table 7. Respondents' employment status.

Employment Status	Count	Percent
Employed full-time	3,128	50.9%
Employed part-time	754	12.3%
Retired	328	5.4%
Student	352	5.7%
Unemployed and looking for work	735	12.0%
Unemployed and not looking for work	286	4.7%
Disabled (currently unable to work)	254	4.1%
Other	210	3.4%
Prefer not to say	93	1.5%
Total	6,140	100

Table 8. Respondents' veteran/military membership status.

Status	Count	Percent
Veteran	283	4.6%
Service member in the military	89	1.5%
No current or prior military service	5,679	92.5%
Prefer not to say	89	1.4%
Total	6,140	100

Tables 9-12 explore more about the recruitment survey sample's work experience and income. A plurality of the respondents appear to be at the beginning of their careers, but almost a quarter have at least 20 years of labor market experience. Although we intended to administer the recruitment survey only to individuals who are not currently LEOs or firefighters, a combined 3.9% indicated they were employed in one of those two positions.

Most of the sample earns \$40,000 or less, with 20% earning less than \$20,000. One explanation for this fact is that commercial survey respondents might be more inclined to participate in panels for the additional income. (Note the comparatively small percentages of respondents earning six-figure salaries.) Less than half of the sample is married, and most of them have only one household member earning an income.

Table 9. Respondents' work experience.

	Mean	0-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	20+ years
Years of Work Experience	12.30	30%	23%	13%	12%	22%
Current Law Enforcement Officer	3.1%					
Former Law Enforcement Officer	4.9%					
Current Firefighter	0.8%					
Former Firefighter	2.5%					

Table 10. Respondents' income.

Income	Count	Percent
Less than \$20,000	1,012	16.5%
\$20,000-\$30,000	601	9.8%
\$30,000-\$40,000	616	10.0%
\$40,000-\$50,000	592	9.6%
\$50,000-\$60,000	602	9.8%
\$60,000-\$70,000	460	7.5%
\$70,000-\$80,000	368	6.0%
\$80,000-\$90,000	294	4.8%
\$90,000-\$100,000	270	4.4%
\$100,000-\$110,000	266	4.3%
\$110,000-\$120,000	100	1.6%
\$120,000-\$130,000	103	1.7%
\$130,000-\$140,000	76	1.2%
\$140,000-\$150,000	114	1.9%
Over \$150,000	191	3.1%
Prefer not to say	475	7.8%
Total	6,140	100%

Table 11. Respondents' number of dependents.

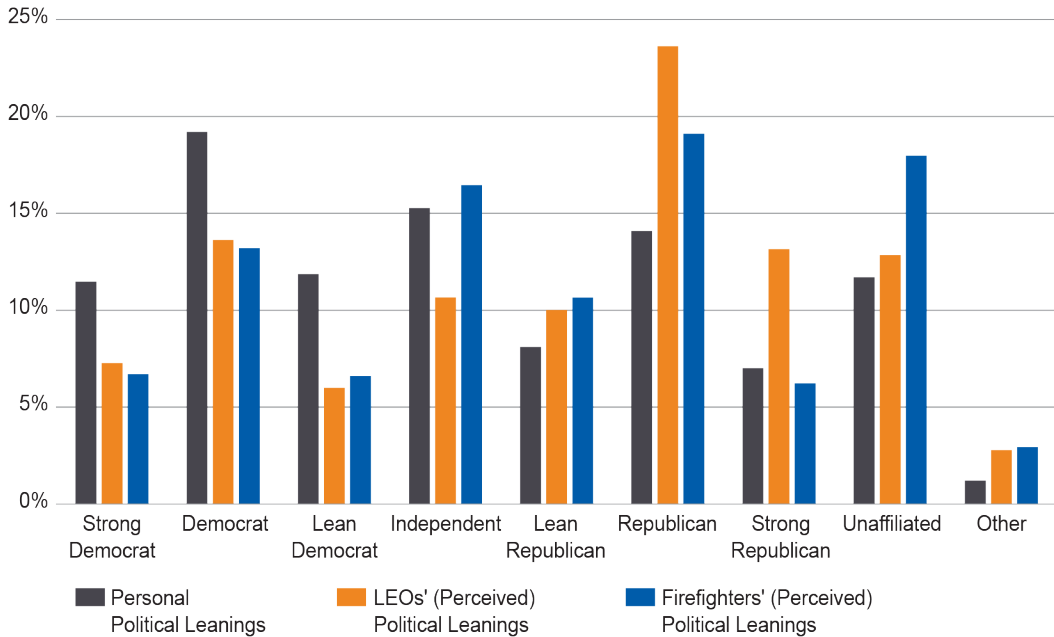
Dependents	Count	Percent
0	3,429	55.8%
1	1,140	18.6%
2	829	13.5%
3	376	6.1%
4	169	2.8%
5	64	1.1%
6	33	0.5%
7 or more	24	0.4%
Prefer not to say	76	1.2%
Total	6,140	100%

Table 12. Respondents' selected household economic details.

	Percent
Percent of respondents married	46.5%
Percent of respondents in a single-income household	64.7%

Figure 1 contains information about the recruitment survey sample’s political leaning and their perceptions of the political leanings of the public safety officers who serve them. Most respondents identify as Independents or Democrats, although some Republicans were included. Of note, these individuals believe their local LEOs are much more likely to affiliate with the Republican Party and for firefighters to be non-partisan.

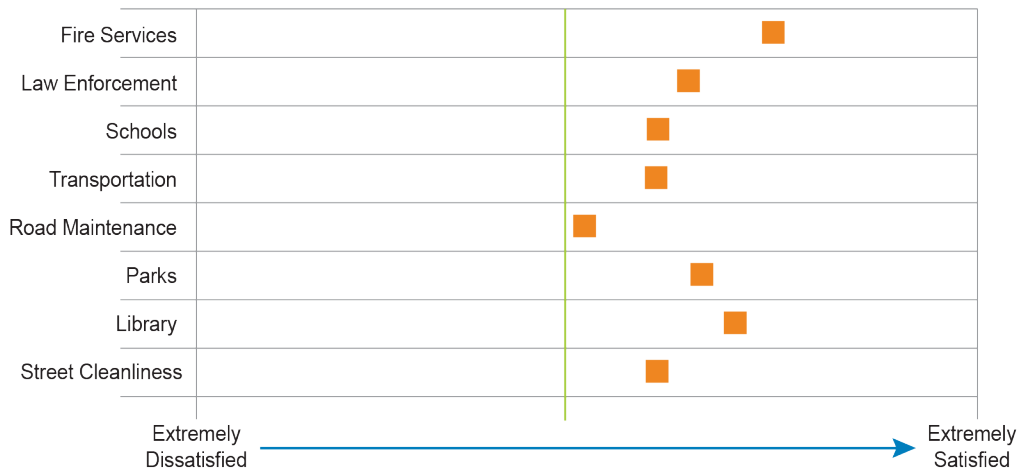
Figure 1. Recruitment survey respondents’ personal political leanings and their perceptions of the political leanings of their local public safety officers.



Baseline Sentiments About Public Service

Respondents consistently expressed positive attitudes about public service work, rating a variety of positions, on average, at 6 or 7 (on a scale of 1 to 10). Importantly, firefighting received the highest average score (nearly 8), followed by library work, law enforcement (just under 7), education, transportation, and parks (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Baseline sentiments about public service.



Interest in a Career as a Law Enforcement Officer

This section presents the main results from the recruitment survey with respect to work as an LEO. We begin with generalized interest in the position before investigating more specific intentions to pursue a law enforcement career.

Initial Interest in a Law Enforcement Career

On one hand, Figure 3 shows that a plurality of participants (48%) had no baseline interest in a career as an LEO, and 21% had very little interest. On the other hand, 23% were interested or had some interest in a career as an LEO. Only 8% were initially very interested in a career as an LEO.

Figure 4 demonstrates that men were twice as likely to express initial interest in a career as an LEO, and women were much more likely to have no interest at all in the job. Nevertheless, there was more gender parity among those who said they had “very little interest” or “some interest” in an LEO career. No discernible differences in interest levels existed between Arizona residents and those from neighboring states according to Figure 5.

Figure 3. Initial interest in a law enforcement career.

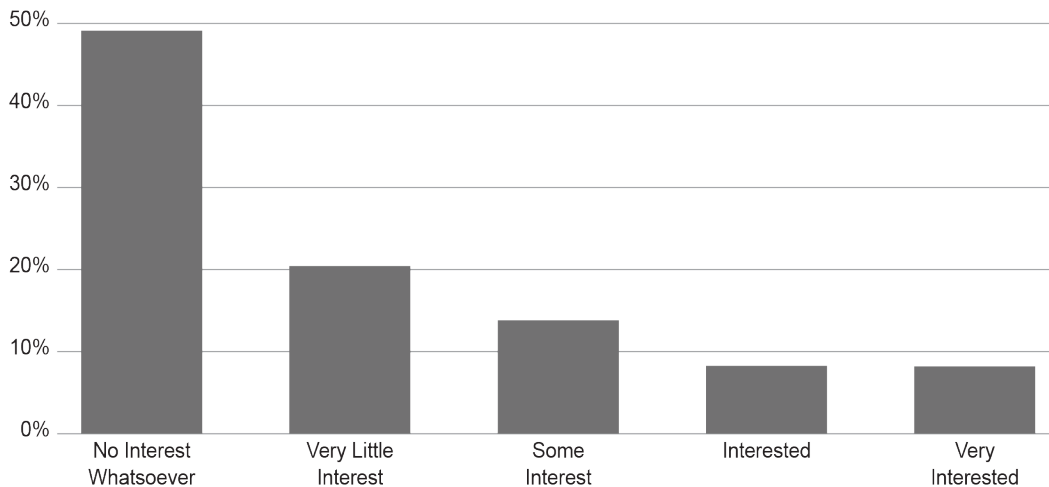


Figure 4. Initial interest in a law enforcement career by gender.

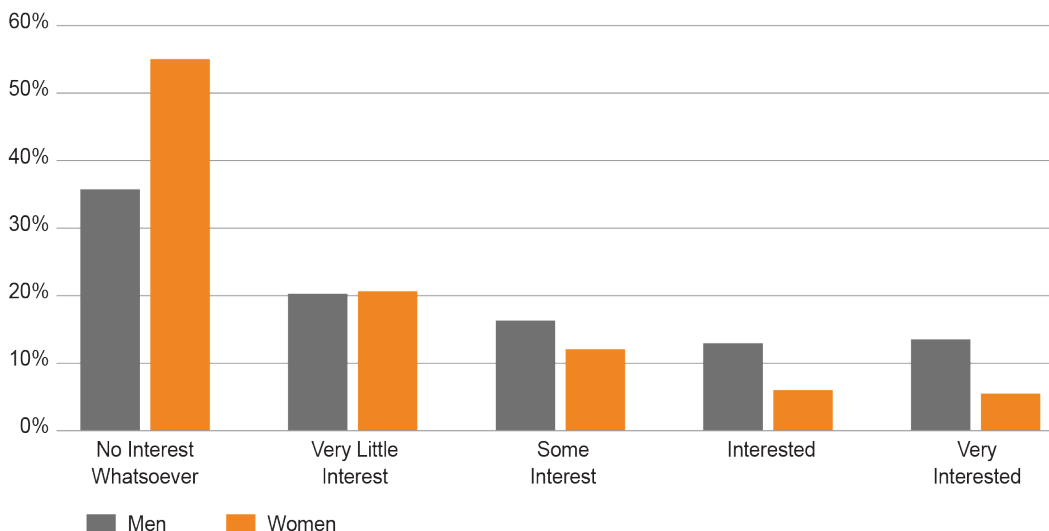
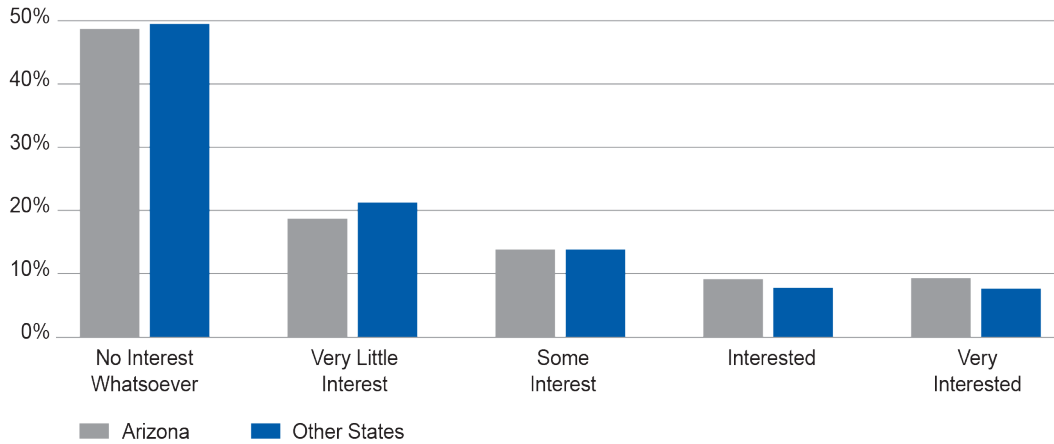


Figure 5. Initial interest in a law enforcement career by state.



Participants’ interest in a law enforcement career was predominantly motivated, as detailed in Table 13, by a combination of self-interest (e.g., compensation, job security) and altruism (e.g., opportunities to help others, opportunities to fight crime). On the other hand, participants’ interest in a law enforcement career was most negatively affected by personal welfare considerations, namely, the high risk of personal danger and the stressful nature of the job, followed by negative sentiments about the logistics of a law enforcement career (e.g., long shifts and irregular work hours) (Table 14). Additionally, respondents were somewhat concerned about lack of public support.

Table 13. Top ten factors increasing interest in a law enforcement career.

Factor	Percent
Multiple factors	70.0%
Opportunity to help people	44.1%
Job pays well	34.9%
Early retirement	34.3%
Job security	32.9%
Help others to live a better life	28.7%
Excitement of the work	24.2%
Opportunities for promotion	24.1%
Opportunities to solve problems	23.8%
Fighting crime	22.5%

Table 14. Top ten factors reducing interest in a law enforcement career.

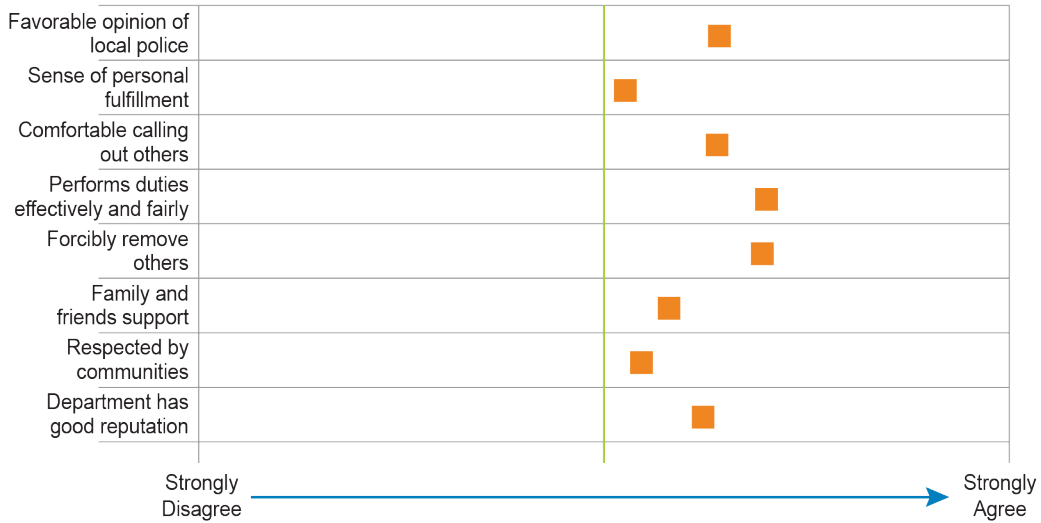
Factor	Percent
Multiple factors	80.1%
High risk of personal danger	63.3%
Stressful nature of the job	59.0%
Long shifts and irregular work hours	40.6%
Scrutiny from the public	39.5%
Military-style chain of command	34.3%
Physical requirements of the job	25.9%
Regular interactions with strangers	20.4%
Policies for tattoos, piercings, and facial hair	19.0%
Policies for marijuana and other drug use	16.2%

These results are indicative of the factors that might make LEO careers more attractive to potential recruits, especially the financial and retirement benefits and opportunities to serve the community. But recruitment initiatives might also need to address the personal risks and irregular work schedules. For example, increasing the employment of community service officers would provide sought-after financial and retirement benefits without the personal welfare risks and volatile work hours that dampen interest. This solution could, in turn, improve the LEO retention rate, where the retention survey revealed LEOs' desire for more community service officers to take over less desired tasks.²

Initial Attitudes About Law Enforcement Officers

Similar to their positive sentiment toward public service generally speaking, recruitment survey participants expressed mildly positive thoughts about their local law enforcement officers (Figure 6). Participants also agreed only somewhat that the local department has a good reputation and were even more tempered in their perception of community support.

Figure 6. Respondents' agreement with statements about the experience of a career in law enforcement.



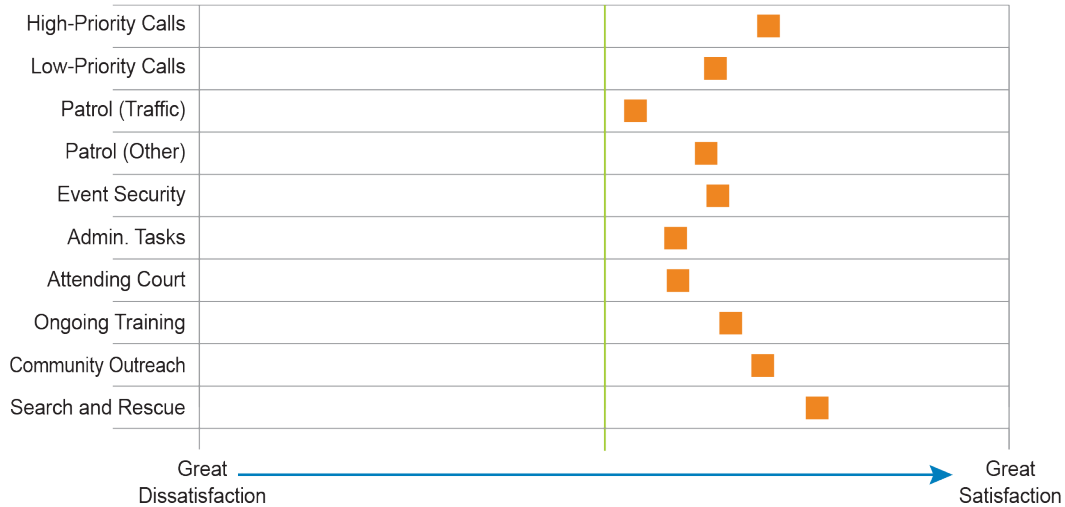
Potential recruits' largely neutral sentiments about law enforcement are echoed through several conclusions in both this survey and the retention survey and follows a trend in which perceived public disapproval has a chilling effect on LEO employment levels.³

Consistent with the recruitment survey sample's neutral attitudes about law enforcement, these respondents were either indifferent to or moderately satisfied with the prospect of performing several law enforcement tasks. Despite the deterrent effect of high risk of personal danger and the stressful nature of the job discussed above, high-priority calls and search and rescue were perceived as the most satisfying law enforcement tasks. This seemingly inconsistent result may reveal how potential recruits are uninformed about the realities of law enforcement roles, which in turn might reveal the need to share more and *more accurate* information about a career in law enforcement.

Low-priority calls, ongoing training, and community outreach were considered slightly less satisfying tasks. But, to the extent that such roles track those performed by community service officers, these results suggest

an avenue for boosting recruitment and retention through these positions. If more potential recruits were drawn to a community service officer position, currently employed LEOs might experience more satisfaction in their work.

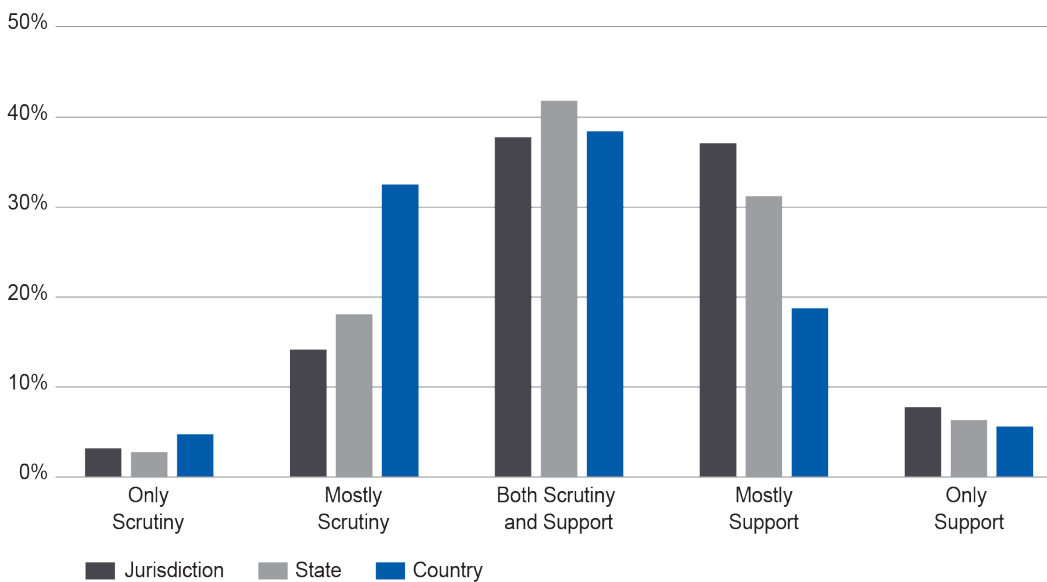
Figure 7. Respondents' perception of their satisfaction with certain day-to-day LEO tasks.



Perception of Public Support for Law Enforcement

Perception of the rest of the public's support for law enforcement among this sample is consistent with their own positive attitudes about public safety officials, as demonstrated in Figure 8. Most respondents perceived "only" or "mostly" public support within their jurisdictions. When the scope broadens to the state and national levels, respondents believed that the public viewed LEOs more disapprovingly. This pattern is similar to LEOs' own perception of public support, which emphasizes the need to anticipate and address the impact of public scrutiny on retention and recruitment.

Figure 8. Respondents' perception of public support for LEOs.



Interest in a Career as a Firefighter

This section presents the main results from the recruitment survey with respect to work as a firefighter. We begin with generalized interest in the position before investigating more specific intentions to pursue a firefighting career.

Initial Interest in a Firefighting Career

As Figure 9 makes clear, baseline levels of interest in a career as a firefighter are quite similar to the levels of interest in a career in law enforcement. Most participants (51%) had “no interest” in a career as a firefighter (48% for LEO), and about 20% had “very little interest” (same for LEO).

Figure 10 shows another familiar pattern in that men are much more likely to express interest in a firefighting career, and Figure 11 does not reveal any noticeable patterns by state of residence.

Figure 9. Respondents’ baseline interest in pursuing a career as a firefighter.

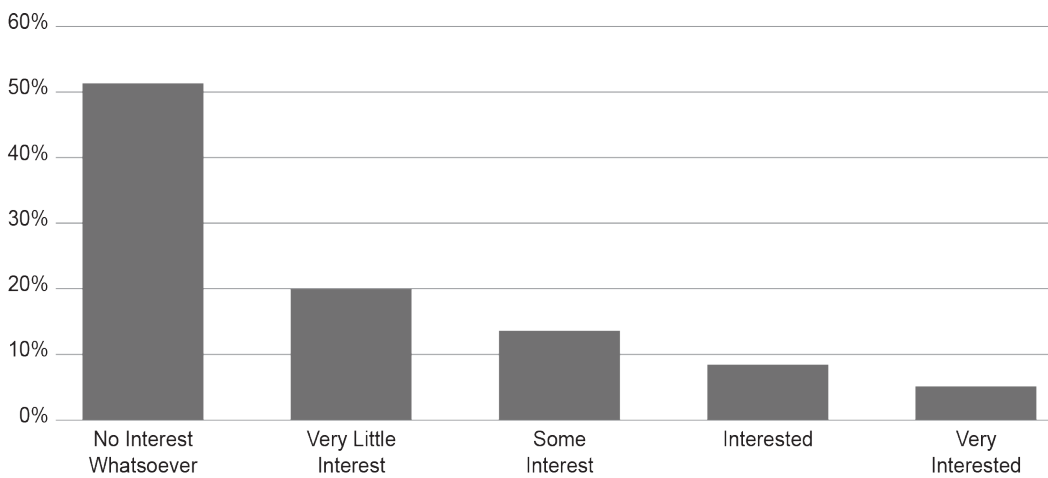


Figure 10. Respondents’ baseline interest in pursuing a career as a firefighter by gender.

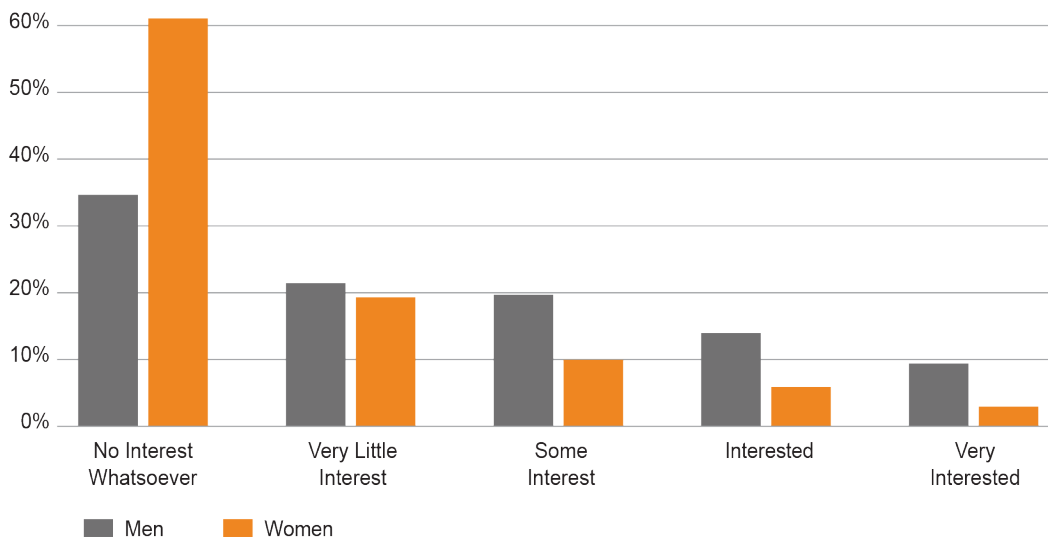
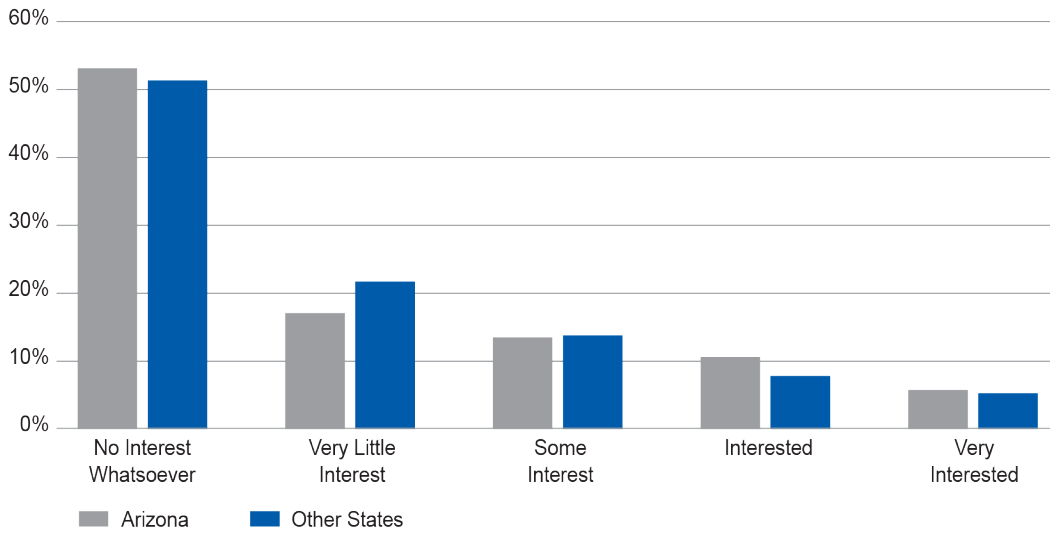


Figure 11. Respondents' baseline interest in pursuing a career by state.



Participants' interest in a firefighter career was again motivated by some combination of self-interest and the opportunity to serve others. Many of the same aspects of LEO work also reduce the interest that respondents have in firefighting (e.g., high risk of personal danger, the stressful nature of the job). Notably, however, perception of public scrutiny was not among the most commonly cited reasons not to pursue a firefighting career.

Table 15. Top ten factors increasing interest in a firefighting career.

Factor	Percent
Multiple factors	68.4%
Opportunity to help people	45.7%
Early retirement	34.5%
Job pays well	34.0%
Excitement of the work	32.3%
Job security	29.7%
Help others to live a better life	28.3%
Good companionship with coworkers	25.9%
Opportunities for promotion	23.7%
None of the factors	22.3%

Table 16. Top ten factors reducing interest in a firefighting career.

Factor	Percent
Multiple factors	80.1%
High risk of personal danger	63.3%
Stressful nature of the job	59.0%
Long shifts and irregular work hours	40.6%

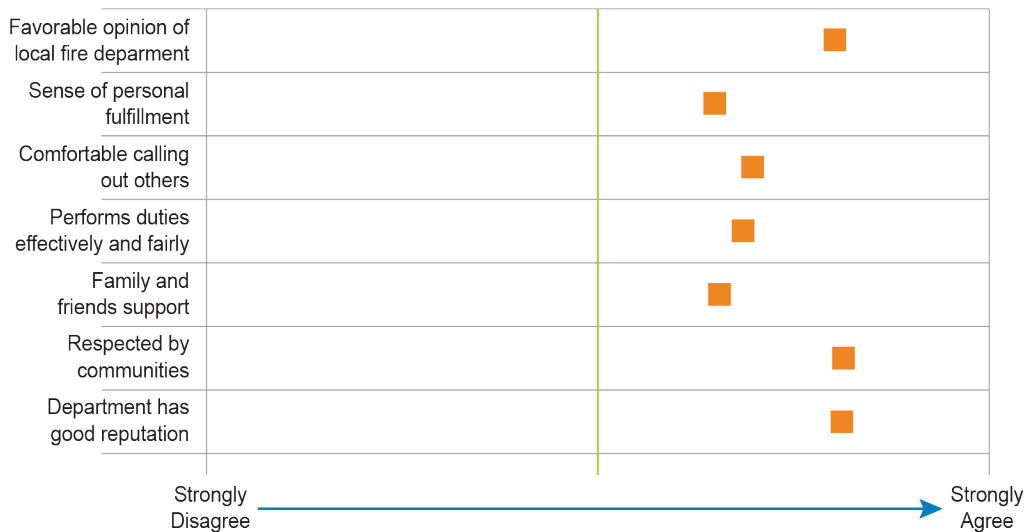
Physical requirements of the job	39.5%
Military-style chain of command	34.3%
Policies for tattoos, piercings, and facial hair	25.9%
None of the factors	20.4%
Requirement to be outdoors	19.0%
Regular interactions with strangers	16.2%

The fact that public support (or lack thereof) has a negative effect on potential recruits' interest in a law enforcement career, but not their interest in a firefighting career, likely tracks overall social awareness about LEO controversies over the last decade. With no corresponding, negative public attention to firefighters, it is not surprising that social attitudes about the job are not listed in Table 16.

Initial Attitudes About Firefighters

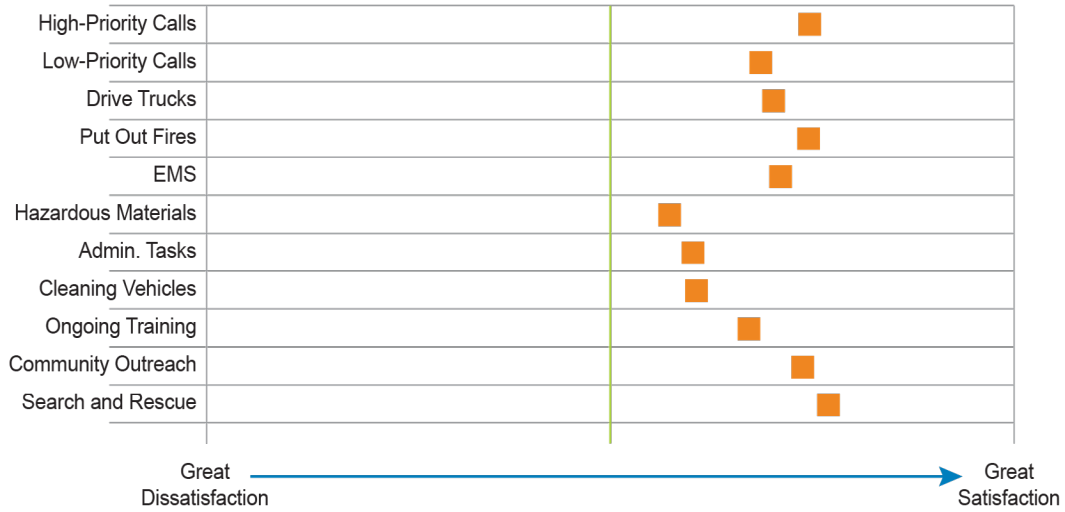
Unlike their perception of LEOs, recruitment survey participants expressed more positive sentiments about their local firefighters across the board, especially in terms of community respect and the department's good reputation. These results are consistent with the finding that firefighters are not as publicly scrutinized as LEOs.

Figure 12. Respondents' agreement with statements about the experience of a career in firefighting.



The respondents' perceived satisfaction with firefighter tasks mirrors the results for LEO tasks, with high-risk components understood to bring the most satisfaction—high priority calls, search and rescue, putting out fires, and EMS—followed by low-priority calls, community outreach, driving fire trucks, and ongoing training. While the patterns in perceived satisfaction for certain tasks are almost identical for firefighters and LEOs, each firefighter task was perceived as generating more satisfaction than its analogous LEO task.

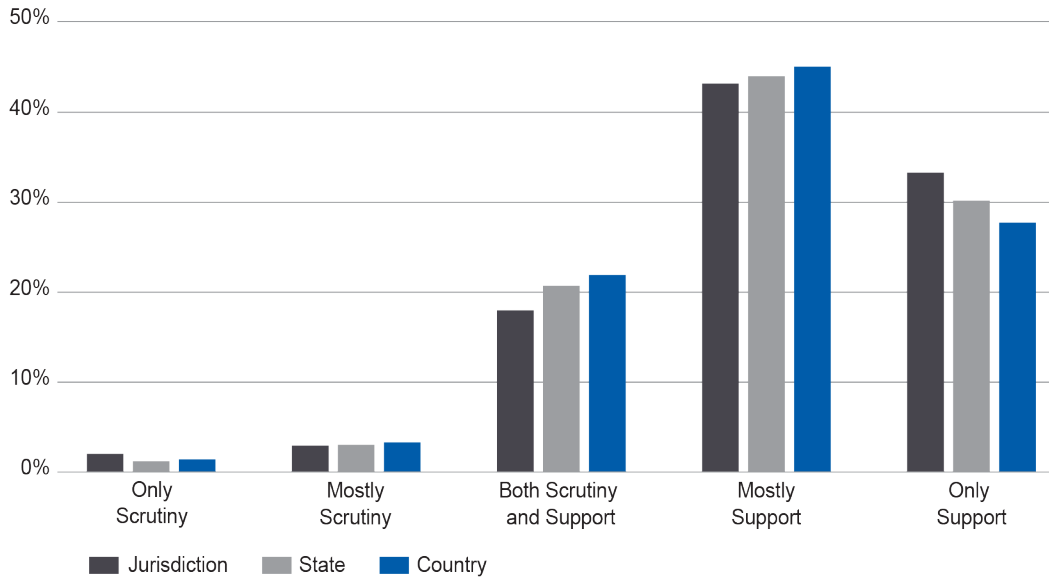
Figure 13. Participants' perception of their satisfaction with certain day-to-day firefighter tasks.



Perception of Public Support for Firefighters

A decided majority, over 70%, of recruitment survey participants perceived “only” or “mostly” public support toward firefighters within their jurisdiction (LEOs at 42%). That result holds when public support was considered at the state and national levels. There was no significant drop in support on the national level for firefighters.

Figure 14. Respondents' perception of support for firefighters.



Conjoint Analysis to Determine Preferences for Job Characteristics

Choosing to pursue a career in a given field is typically based on a variety of factors and potential trade-offs among them. To study this decision in the context of law enforcement and firefighting, this section uses a “conjoint” experiment. In the experiment, recruitment survey respondents received randomized information about hypothetical job offers (see Figure 15), and we used their answers to help estimate the role of starting salary, pension characteristics, and housing stipends on the perceived attractiveness of positions in law enforcement and firefighting.

Figure 15. Randomized variables in job offers used in conjoint analysis.

	Job Offer A	Job Offer B
Position:	(Randomized Position) Firefighter or Law Enforcement Officer	(Randomized Position) Firefighter or Law Enforcement Officer
Starting Salary:	(Randomized Value) \$60,000 or \$65,000 or \$70,000	(Randomized Value) \$60,000 or \$65,000 or \$70,000
Service Years for Pension:	(Randomized Years) 20 or 25 years	(Randomized Years) 20 or 25 years
Pension Age Minimum:	(Randomized Age) 50 or 53 or 55 years	(Randomized Age) 50 or 53 or 55 years
Housing Stipend:	(Randomized Value) None or \$5k or \$10k per year	(Randomized Value) None or \$5k or \$10k per year

The methodology is fairly detailed, and the interpretation can be complex at times.ⁱ Here, we generally describe the results most relevant for understanding how to enhance public safety officer recruitment. The results are framed in terms of how often the hypothetical job offers were accepted depending on the features of the job offer randomly shown to the respondent. For example, job offers involving firefighter positions were chosen more commonly than those with law enforcement positions (about 55% compared to 45%). Large differences also emerged when the offers had different starting salaries. Job offers with starting salaries of \$60,000 were chosen only 42% of the time compared to 48% for salaries of \$65,000 and 60% of the time for job offers with salaries of \$70,000.

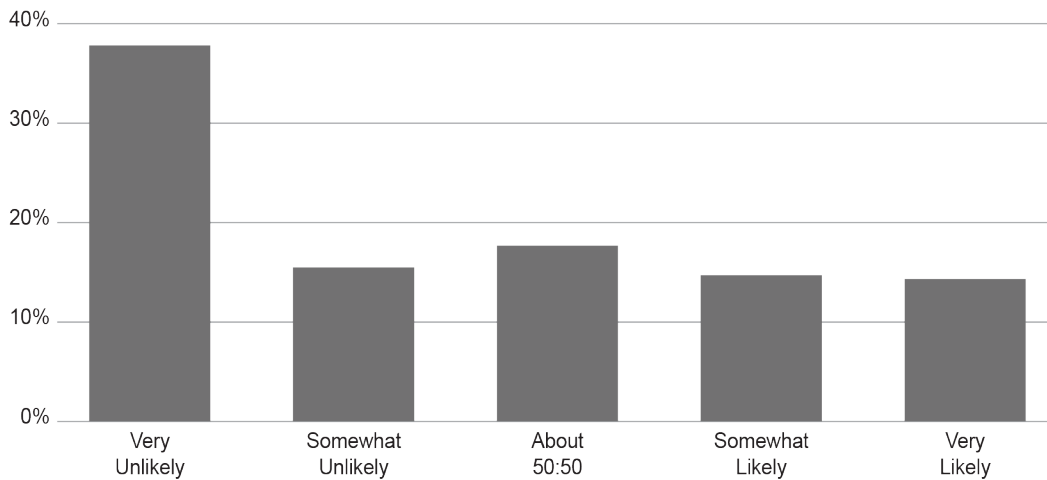
Changes to pension characteristics also led to detectable differences in the likelihood of accepting the hypothetical job offer. Those offers that required 20 years of service for a pension to vest were chosen roughly 55% of the time, compared to 45% when 25 years were required. Minimum retirement age also created a similar pattern. When the minimum age was 50, respondents chose the job 54% of the time, as opposed to 51% for age 53 and 45% for age 55. Finally, housing stipends produced large differences in responses. Respondents chose profiles without a stipend only 36% of the time, whereas a \$5,000 stipend offer was chosen 51% of the time, and a \$10,000 stipend was chosen at a much higher rate of 63%.

ⁱ The University of Arizona research team can provide details on the methods used and figures depicting the main results upon request.

These results remained mostly stable even when we analyzed different subsets of the sample (e.g., by demographic characteristics). The two minor exceptions were gender and age.

Finally, recruitment survey respondents were asked to compare each hypothetical job offer with their current job and respond with the likelihood that they would accept the offer. Although about 53% of respondents said they were “very” or “somewhat” unlikely to accept the offer, another 29% deemed the offer as “somewhat” or “very” likely acceptable. That group represents a meaningful proportion of the sample that could theoretically be recruited into a firefighting or LEO position. Taken together, as expected, increases to salary and housing stipends make these job offers significantly more attractive to respondents when comparing them to their current job, and increases to the minimum retirement age and years of service attributes make them less likely to be accepted.

Figure 16. Likelihood of accepting hypothetical job offers compared to current job.



Appendix I – Law Enforcement and Fire Service Recruitment Survey Protocol

This survey has been developed by researchers from the University of Arizona to understand which factors are the most influential in the recruitment of public safety officials, specifically law enforcement officers and firefighters.

Your participation in this survey is incredibly important, as your responses will help public safety agencies understand what matters most for the recruitment of committed and capable personnel.

In addition, there are two incentives associated with completing and submitting this survey:

1. When you complete this survey, you will receive the payment amount specified by the survey sampling service provider.
2. If you provide us with your email address, we will analyze your responses and provide you with a curated list of job postings for careers as a public safety official in your area.

Do you consent to participating in this study?

Yes No

By selecting “No” to the previous question, you have indicated that you do not want to complete this survey. Is that correct?

- Yes - I DO NOT want to complete the survey.
 No - I DO WANT to complete the survey, and I do consent to participating in the study.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The survey is comprised of three different sections.

Here, in the first section of the survey, you will be asked several different questions about how interested you currently are in pursuing a career as a law enforcement officer and your general satisfaction with the public services provided by your local government. If you prefer not to answer a particular question, please select the option “Prefer not to say.”

Are you currently employed as a law enforcement officer?

Yes No Prefer not to say

Have you ever worked as a law enforcement officer before?

Yes No Prefer not to say

In which state do you live?

Arizona California Colorado Nevada New Mexico Utah

Which of the following options best describes your current level of interest in pursuing a career as a law enforcement officer?

- No interest whatsoever. I am sure I do not want to work as a law enforcement officer.
 Very little interest. I am pretty sure I do not want to work as a law enforcement officer, but I'm open to learning more about the job.
 Some interest. I might want to work as a law enforcement officer, but I need additional information about what the job is like.
 Interested. I am pretty sure I want to work as a law enforcement officer, but there are other careers that interest me just as much.
 Very interested. I am sure I want to work as a law enforcement officer, as it is the career that interests me the most.
 Prefer not to say

Below is a list of factors that might make a career as a law enforcement officer an attractive career choice. Please indicate which of these factors increase your interest in pursuing a career as a law enforcement officer.

(Select all that apply.)

- Opportunities for promotion
 Military style chain of command
 Early retirement
 Excitement of the work
 Opportunity to help people
 Job security

- To fight crime
- Profession has prestige
- Work on my own/have a lot of autonomy
- To enforce the laws of society
- Job pays well
- Good companionship with coworkers
- Friends/relatives are police officers
- Job carries power and authority
- Lack of other job alternatives
- To have a challenging career
- Opportunity to solve problems
- Help others live a better life
- Role model for others like me
- Show that people like me make good officers
- Lifelong dream
- Make others proud
- Admiration for police officers
- A chance to work outdoors
- A stepping stone to another profession
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to say
- None of these factors increase my interest

Below is a list of factors that might make a career as a law enforcement officer an unattractive career choice. Please indicate which of these factors decrease your interest in pursuing a career as a law enforcement officer.

(Select all that apply.)

- Stressful nature of the job
- Military style chain of command
- Regular interactions with strangers
- High risk of personal danger
- Long shifts and irregular work hours (e.g., night shifts)
- Scrutiny from the public
- Physical requirements of the job
- Policies against certain tattoos, piercings, and facial hair
- Often need to work on one's own
- Policies against marijuana and other drug use
- Concerns about the diversity of one's coworkers
- Opportunities for other job alternatives
- Requirement to make quick decisions
- Requirement to be outdoors, even in bad weather
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to say
- None of these factors decrease my interest

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to say
I have a favorable opinion of my local police department/sheriff's office.						
I would feel a sense of personal fulfillment if I became a law enforcement officer.						
As a law enforcement officer, I would feel comfortable calling out fellow officers if they did not adhere to protocol.						
I would be able to perform duties effectively and fairly as a law enforcement officer.						
As a law enforcement officer, I would forcibly remove a fellow officer from a situation if their behavior violated policy (e.g., using excessive force.)						
My family and friends would support my decision to become a law enforcement officer.						
Law enforcement officers are respected by their communities.						
Overall, my local police department/sheriff's office has a good reputation.						

Imagine you started working as a law enforcement officer in the area in which you currently live. How much satisfaction/dissatisfaction do you think you would receive from doing the following tasks?

	Great dissatisfaction	Some dissatisfaction	Neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction	Some satisfaction	Great satisfaction	Prefer not to say
Responding to higher-priority emergency calls						
Responding to lower-priority calls						
Patrolling with a focus on traffic violations						
Patrolling with a focus other than traffic violations						
Providing security at events						
Administrative tasks (e.g., completing reports)						
Attending court for your cases						
Ongoing training programs						
Community policing or community outreach events						
Search and rescue						

Please consider all your experiences in the past 12 months with the services provided by your local government. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your local government?

Use the 10-point scale below, where 1 means “Extremely Dissatisfied” and 10 means “Extremely Satisfied.”

	Extremely dissatisfied (1)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely satisfied (10)	Prefer not to say
Fire services											
Law enforcement											
Schools											
Transportation											
Road maintenance											
Parks											
Library											
Street cleanliness											

Before moving onto the next set of questions, please complete the following attention-check question.

This question is meant to ensure that humans, not automated programs or “bots,” are completing the survey. What vegetable is in this picture?



- Carrot Broccoli Potato Pepper

Consider how you feel about the public’s perception of law enforcement.

How much support/scrutiny do you feel law enforcement officers receive from the following groups of people?

	Only scrutiny	Mostly scrutiny	Equal scrutiny and support	Mostly support	Only support	Prefer not to say
Citizens in the city/town in which you live						
Citizens in your state (but outside the city/town in which you live)						
Citizens in the United States (but outside your state)						

To what extent do you currently have a desire to pursue a career as a law enforcement officer?

- No desire Slight desire Moderate desire High desire Very high desire Prefer not to say

Based on your responses to the questions in this section, we can send you a curated list of law enforcement officer job postings in your area.

If you would like to receive information about these job postings, please provide your email address in the box below.

[open-ended text]

Thank you for completing the first section of the survey.

In the second section of the survey, you will be asked several different questions about how interested you currently are in pursuing a career as a firefighter.

Are you currently employed as a firefighter?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Have you ever worked as a firefighter before?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Which of the following options best describes your current level of interest in pursuing a career as a firefighter?

- No interest whatsoever. I am sure I do not want to work as a firefighter.
- Very little interest. I am pretty sure I do not want to work as a firefighter, but I'm open to learning more about the job.
- Some interest. I might want to work as a firefighter, but I need additional information about what the job is like.
- Interested. I am pretty sure I want to work as a firefighter, but there are other careers that interest me just as much.
- Very interested. I am sure I want to work as a firefighter, as it is the career that interests me the most.
- Prefer not to say

Below is a list of factors that might make a career as a firefighter an attractive career choice.

Please indicate which of these factors increase your interest in pursuing a career as a firefighter. (Select all that apply.)

- Opportunities for promotion
- Military style chain of command
- Early retirement
- Excitement of the work
- Opportunity to help people
- Job security
- Profession has prestige
- Job pays well
- Good companionship with coworkers
- Friends/relatives are firefighters
- Job carries power and authority
- Lack of other job alternatives
- Opportunity to solve problems
- Help others live a better life
- Role model for others like me
- Show that people like me make good firefighters
- Lifelong dream
- Make others proud
- Admiration for firefighters
- A chance to work outdoors
- A stepping stone to another profession
- A unique work schedule that allows for quality time with family (which workers with 9 – 5 schedules do not experience)
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to say
- None of these increase my interest

Below is a list of factors that might make a career as a firefighter an unattractive career choice.

Please indicate which of these factors decrease your interest in pursuing a career as a firefighter. (Select all that apply.)

- Stressful nature of the job
- Military style chain of command
- Regular interactions with strangers
- High risk of personal danger
- Long shifts and irregular work hours (e.g., night shifts)
- Scrutiny from the public
- Physical requirements of the job
- Policies against certain tattoos, piercings, and facial hair
- Often need to work on one's own

- Policies against marijuana and other drug use
- Concerns about the diversity of one's coworkers
- Opportunities for other job alternatives
- Requirement to make quick decisions
- Requirement to be outdoors, even in bad weather
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to say
- None of these factors decrease my interest

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Prefer not to say
I have a favorable opinion of my local fire department.						
I would feel a sense of personal fulfillment if I became a firefighter.						
As a firefighter, I would feel comfortable calling out fellow firefighters if they did not adhere to protocol.						
I would be able to perform duties effectively and fairly as a firefighter.						
My family and friends would support my decision to become a firefighter.						
Firefighters are respected by their communities.						
Overall, my local fire department has a good reputation.						

Imagine you started working as a firefighter in the area in which you currently live.

How much satisfaction/dissatisfaction do you think you would receive from doing the following tasks?

	Great dissatisfaction	Some dissatisfaction	Neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction	Some satisfaction	Great satisfaction	Prefer not to say
Responding to higher-priority emergency calls						
Responding to lower-priority calls						
Driving firetrucks and other emergency vehicles						
Putting out fires using water hoses, fire extinguishers, and water pumps						
Performing trauma or emergency medical services for civilians						
Cleaning up hazardous materials						
Administrative tasks (e.g., completing reports)						
Checking and maintain equipment						

Ongoing training programs						
Community outreach events						
Search and rescue, and other technical rescue efforts						

Consider how you feel about the public’s perception of firefighters.

How much support/scrutiny do you feel firefighters receive from the following groups of people?

	Only scrutiny	Mostly scrutiny	Equal scrutiny and support	Mostly support	Only support	Prefer not to say
Citizens in the city/town in which you live						
Citizens in your state (but outside the city/town in which you live)						
Citizens in the United States (but outside your state)						

To what extent do you currently have a desire to pursue a career as a firefighter?

- No desire Slight desire Moderate desire High desire Very high desire Prefer not to say

Based on your responses to the questions in this section, we can send you a curated list of firefighter job postings in your area.

If you would like to receive information about these job postings, please provide your email address in the box below.

[open-ended text]

The compensation packages of law enforcement officers and firefighters generally include highly attractive pension and benefits options.

Pensions provide law enforcement officers and firefighters with monthly income after retirement, so long as they have satisfied the minimum number of service years and the age requirements necessary for their pension benefits. The state pays pensions as a way of guaranteeing that retired public safety officers still receive payment for their service after they are done working.

Housing stipends are common benefits. Through stipends, public safety officers receive extra money to help them make mortgage or rent payments each month. These additional funds can help officers afford housing if their salaries are not enough in high-cost locations.

You will see two possible job offers below, which differ based on the type of position, salary, pension, and housing stipend provided. Which job offer would you be more likely to choose?

In thinking about your answer, assume that you have to choose between these two jobs because no other jobs are available.ⁱⁱ

	Job Offer A	Job Offer B
Position:	Firefighter	Firefighter
Starting Salary:	\$60,000	\$70,000
Service Years for Pension:	25 years	20 years
Pension Age Minimum:	55 years	50 years
Housing Stipend:	None	None

Which of these two job offers would you prefer? Even if you are not sure, make your best guess.

- Job offer A Job offer B

ⁱⁱ Job offers in this protocol are examples of randomization; for full list of variables that were randomized, see Figure 15.

Now, please think about choosing between staying in your current job position or pursuing the career in Job Offer A.

How likely would you be to choose Job Offer A?

- Very unlikely to choose job offer A Somewhat unlikely to choose job offer A About 50/50 to choose job offer A
 Somewhat likely to choose job offer A Very likely to choose job offer A

Now, please think about choosing between staying in your current job position or pursuing the career in Job Offer B.

How likely would you be to choose Job Offer B?

- Very unlikely to choose job offer B Somewhat unlikely to choose job offer B About 50/50 to choose job offer B
 Somewhat likely to choose job offer B Very likely to choose job offer B

[Note that this question requires you to spend a minimum amount of time on this screen until the question can be submitted and the next question is shown.]

Now, please consider the two new job offers below. While they may look similar to those you saw previously, there should be differences. Assume again that no form of alternative work is available to you, so you have to choose between these two jobs.

Which would you be more likely to choose?

	Job Offer A	Job Offer B
Position:	Firefighter	Firefighter
Starting Salary:	\$65,000	\$70,000
Service Years for Pension:	25 years	20 years
Pension Age Minimum:	55 years	50 years
Housing Stipend:	5k per year	5k per year

Which of these two job offers would you prefer? Even if you are not sure, make your best guess.

- Job offer A Job offer B

Now, please think about choosing between staying in your current job position or pursuing the career in Job Offer A.

How likely would you be to choose Job Offer A?

- Very unlikely to choose job offer A Somewhat unlikely to choose job offer A About 50/50 to choose job offer A
 Somewhat likely to choose job offer A Very likely to choose job offer A

Now, please think about choosing between staying in your current job position or pursuing the career in Job Offer B.

How likely would you be to choose Job Offer B?

- Very unlikely to choose job offer B Somewhat unlikely to choose job offer B About 50/50 to choose job offer B
 Somewhat likely to choose job offer B Very likely to choose job offer B

[Note that this question requires you to spend a minimum amount of time on this screen until the question can be submitted and the next question is shown.]

Thank you for completing the second section of the survey.

In the third, and final, section of the survey, you will be asked several different questions about your work experience and demographic characteristics.

What is your age?

Respondents chose from a drop-down box from 18 to 100, followed by an option of over 100.

What is your gender?

- Man Woman Transgender Man Transgender Woman Non-binary
 Other (please specify): Prefer not to say

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin Yes, Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano Yes, Puerto Rican
 Yes, Cuban Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin (please specify): Prefer not to say

What is your race? (Select all that apply.)

- White Black or African American American Indian or Alaska Native Asian
 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Other (please specify): Prefer not to say

Which of the following options best describes your sexual identity/sexual orientation?

- Straight Lesbian Gay Bisexual Asexual Other Prefer not to say

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High school diploma or GED Some college, no degree 2-year college degree 4-year college degree
 Post-graduate degree Prefer not to say

What is your marital/partnership status? (Select all that apply.)

- Married Divorced Separated Widowed Partnered (not single) Single
 Live with spouse/partner Prefer not to say

Do you live with individuals that you care for as a parent or guardian (e.g., children, adults with special needs, elderly individuals)? If so, how many?

[open-ended]

Are you the sole source of income for your household (i.e., are you in a single-income household)?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

In which zip code do you live? This information will help us curate a list of relevant job postings in your area.

(If you prefer not to say, you can leave the entry box blank.)

[open-ended]

Which of the following best describes your employment status?

- Employed full-time Employed part-time Unemployed and looking for work Unemployed and not looking for work
 Retired Student Disabled Other (please specify): Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes the type of building you live in?

- Single-family house Condominium/townhouse Apartment Manufactured/mobile home
 Other (please specify): Prefer not to say

Are you a veteran or currently a member of the military?

- I am a veteran I am currently a member of the military No Prefer not to say

Which of the following options best describes the sector/industry in which you currently work (or most recently worked, if you're currently unemployed or retired)?

- Business, consultancy, or management
 Accountancy, banking, or finance
 Charity and voluntary work
 Creative arts or design
 Energy and utilities
 Engineering or manufacturing
 Healthcare
 Hospitality or events
 Computing or IT
 Law
 Law enforcement and security

- Leisure, sports, or tourism
- Marketing, advertising, or PR
- Media or digital
- Property or construction
- Public services or administration
- Recruitment or HR
- Retail
- Sales
- Science or pharmaceuticals
- Social care
- Teacher training or education
- Transport or logistics
- Other
- Prefer not to say

How many years of experience do you have?

[open-ended]

What is your approximate gross (pre-tax) annual income (including all overtime pay, bonuses, tips, etc.?)

[open-ended]

Generally speaking, how do you identify politically?

- Strong Democrat
- Democrat
- Independent leaning to Democrat
- Independent
- Independent leaning to Republican
- Republican
- Strong Republican
- Unaffiliated
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to say

Generally speaking, how do you perceive the political orientation of the police department in the jurisdiction in which you live?

- Strong Democrat
- Democrat
- Independent leaning to Democrat
- Independent
- Independent leaning to Republican
- Republican
- Strong Republican
- Unaffiliated
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to say

Generally speaking, how do you perceive the political orientation of the fire department in the jurisdiction in which you live?

- Strong Democrat
- Democrat
- Independent leaning to Democrat
- Independent
- Independent leaning to Republican
- Republican
- Strong Republican
- Unaffiliated
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to say

Please provide us with any other details regarding your interest in pursuing a career as either a law enforcement officer or firefighter. (Leave this answer blank if you prefer not to say.)

[open-ended]

End Notes

- 1 Jason Sandvik, Christopher L. Griffin, Jr., Seung-Ho An, David Dow, Laura McCann, and Samantha Barrera, “Arizona Law Enforcement Retention Survey”, University of Arizona, 2023.
- 2 Jason Sandvik, Christopher L. Griffin, Jr., Seung-Ho An, David Dow, Laura McCann, and Samantha Barrera, “Arizona Law Enforcement Retention Survey”, University of Arizona, 2023.
- 3 Jason Sandvik, Christopher L. Griffin, Jr., Seung-Ho An, David Dow, Laura McCann, and Samantha Barrera, “Arizona Law Enforcement Retention Survey”, University of Arizona, 2023.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF ARIZONA'S
LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FIRE SERVICE PERSONNEL

Arizona Fire Service and
Law Enforcement Recruitment Survey



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