

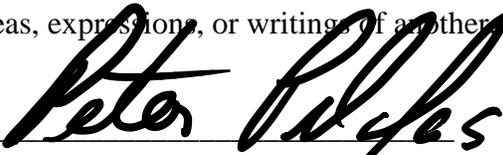
Diversity: Analysis of Oak Park Fire Department's Workforce

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**Certification Statement**

I hereby certify that my responses on this exam constitute my original product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate citation is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: 

Date: 12/25/17

### **Abstract**

The Oak Park Fire Department (OPFD) has struggled in creating a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves. The problem was that the OPFD does not have employment strategies to ensure a diverse workforce. The purpose of this research was to identify strategies to provide the OPFD with the ability to increase diversity. Descriptive methodology was used to guide the following research questions: (a) Which federal, state laws and statutes govern diversity in the workplace? (b) What human resource employment strategies are available to develop a diverse workforce? (c) What strategies do departments similar in size to OPFD use to create a diverse workforce? (d) What recruitment strategies do the members of the OPFD prefer to use to create a diverse workforce? (e) What affects the diversity in the OPFD workforce? The data sources for the quantitative aspect of this study included two surveys that were conducted with the participation of 84 fire chiefs in Chicagoland and Cook County, and six directors of paramedic programs in the area. The sources for the qualitative data included: (a) interviews with the village attorney, (b) the village director of human resources, and (c) a focus group with three fire department personnel. The results of both the quantitative data and the qualitative data showed that the OPFD workforce appeared to fail to reflect the diversity of the community, as the workforce generally consisted of Caucasian males. Further analysis also revealed the challenges in engaging the younger generation, women, and minority groups in applying for a career at the OPFD. The recommendations focused in developing recruitment strategies targeting specific groups of people.

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### **Diversity: Analysis of Oak Park Fire Department's Workforce**

The United States of America is a melting pot of one of the most culturally diverse populations in the world. Fire departments need to have a diverse workforce that represents their community in order to provide the best level of service. Recruiting a diverse labor workforce from this population has been a difficult task for many fire departments across this country. The fire service needs to embrace diversity as an ethical and social duty, in which they have a responsibility and commitment towards addressing the inequalities of woman and minorities in the workforce.

In 2016, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported a workforce of 252,000 firefighters comprising of 3.5% women, 6.8% African Americans, 1.4% Asians, and 7.7% Hispanics or Latinos (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017, p.4). The fire service workforce, compared to other protective service occupations, is the least diverse regarding the employment of women and African Americans. Many fire departments in the United States including the Oak Park Fire Department, struggle to hire a diverse workforce that will reflect the community it serves (McNeil, 2008).

The problem was that the OPFD does not have employment strategies to ensure a diverse workforce. The purpose of this research was to identify strategies that would provide the OPFD with the ability to increase diversity. Descriptive methodology was used to guide the following questions: (a) Which federal, state laws and statutes govern diversity in the workplace? (b) What human resource employment strategies are available to develop a diverse workforce? (c) What strategies do departments similar in size to OPFD use to create a diverse workforce? (d) What recruitment strategies do the members of the OPFD prefer to use to create a diverse workforce? (e) What affects the diversity in the OPFD workforce?

### **Background and Significance**

The Village of Oak Park represents an urban/suburban lifestyle, known for its rich history, great diversity and its ability to provide a high quality of services to the community. Oak Park is predominantly a residential community with 55% of the population living in owner-occupied properties and 45% living in rental units that are mostly multi-family occupancies (Oak Park Fire Department, 2015, p. 3). Single-family housing units command 67% of the land area, 9% is dedicated to commercial enterprise, 4.5% is utilized for public use and 24% is used by multi-family apartments, condominiums, and townhouses (Oak Park Fire Department, 2015, p. 4).

The Village is divided east to west by three commuter rails and two freight rail lines. Two of the rail services are located to the south of the Village, adjacent to the Eisenhower Expressway, which is a major thoroughfare into the city of Chicago; the other rail services are located in the middle of the community. The Village also has two hospitals, Rush Oak Park and West Suburban Hospital, with over 300 combined beds. There are eight primary schools, two middle schools and two high schools (public and private) within the community with over 4,000 students and faculty in attendance. In addition, there are approximately 58 places of worship throughout the village (Oak Park Fire Department, 2015, p. 5).

Through the years, the Village has continuously embraced change and has served as a leader and great example to other communities by initiating programs and services to foster a clean environment, and ensure safety to its citizens. The Village has also made a continuous effort to promote a fair and equitable society for all that choose to call Oak Park their home.

The Oak Park Fire Department (OPFD) is staffed with 63 career personnel and covers a response area of 4.5 square miles. There are five divisions within the department: (a)

administration, (b) operations, (c) emergency medical service, (d) fire prevention, and (e) training. The fire department operates out of three fire stations that are strategically located to provide optimal response times to emergencies within the Village Oak Park (Oak Park Fire Department, 2016). The department deploys three emergency fire apparatus, which include two engines and one ladder truck (all advanced life support capable); one shift commander and two advance life support ambulances each day. The OPFD deploys a comprehensive, full-service delivery system that includes: (a) fire suppression, (b) pre-hospital emergency medical care at the advanced life support level, (c) ambulance transport, (d) public education services, (e) fire investigation, (f) code enforcement and (g) special rescue.

In 2015, the United States Census Bureau (2015): American Community Survey for the Village of Oak Park, Illinois estimated the population to be around 52,080 (p.2). Table 1 represents the racial and gender composition of the estimated total population of the Village of Oak Park versus OPFD staffing in 2015 (Oak Park Fire Department, 2017).

Table 1

*Village of Oak Park Demographics vs. Oak Park Fire Department Demographics*

Gender and Race	Village Population Percentage	Fire Department Percentage
Male	46.8%	96.38%
Female	53.2%	3.17%
White-Caucasian	68.2%	93.65%
Black or African American	20.4%	4.76%
Hispanic or Latino	7.4%	3.17%
Asian	4.8%	0%
Some other Race	2.5%	1.59%

Two or more Races	4.0%	0%
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Table 1 shows that the OPFD's workforce does not reflect the community it serves. This would be true for most fire departments across the country, when compared to their total population. When evaluating the diversity within a workforce, one should not associate the whole population with the overall labor force but rather analyze one's labor force with the applicants in the relevant labor market (Walsh, 2016). This means that the OPFD's applicant pool should be associated to the composition of people who are qualified to be firefighters/paramedics.

The relevant labor markets for the OPFD include applicants currently in paramedic school and licensed paramedics in the private or public sector. The applicant pool must also be interested in becoming a firefighter according to OPFD's requirements. The testing process for the OPFD is another factor that could be affecting the diversity in the labor market.

Over the last twenty-five years the OPFD has seen a fluctuation in the number of women and minorities in the workforce. Diversity in the workforce has always been a challenge for the OPFD especially in the last fifteen years, when the department started to require all new recruits to be licensed paramedics at the time of employment.

In the 1990s, the OPFD workforce consisted of 100% males and the racial make-up was 90.59% Caucasians and 9.41% African Americans (Oak Park Fire Department 2017, p. 2). In 1996, the OPFD hired their first female firefighter, an African American. Between 2001 and 2012, the diversity in the fire department increased, with the addition of three Caucasian females and one Hispanic male. While the make-up of the fire department was still dominated by males who comprised 94.20% of the workforce and females comprised 5.80%, the racial make-up

changed slightly with 91.30% Caucasians, 7.25% African Americans and 1.45% Hispanics (Oak Park Fire Department, 2017, p. 5).

The OPFD currently comprises of 100% male firefighters. The racial breakdown is 93.65% Caucasians, 1.59% African Americans, 3.17% Hispanics and 1.59% Others (Oak Park Fire Department 2017, p. 9). Since 2015, the OPFD has been undergoing a transition of personnel due to retirement of an aging workforce. In the last two years, the OPFD hired 15 new firefighters; all 15 were male and the racial make-up was 14 Caucasians and 1 Hispanic (Oak Park Fire Department 2017, p. 10).

To provide some further background and significance to this research, statistical data from the OPFD’s 2010 and 2014 written exam portion of the entry-level firefighter testing process was obtained (Stanard and Associates, 2017). The researcher was also able to obtain a second data set from a local testing company within the state of Illinois, which contained a sample of over 16,000 entry-level applicants who tested for 75 Illinois fire departments between 2010 and 2017 (I/O Solutions, 2017).

Both data sets captured the gender and racial make-up of the applicants that participated in the written exam. Table 2 represents the applicant pool based on gender and race for the 2010 and 2014 OPFD written exam (Stanard and Associates, 2017). Table 3 presents the applicant pool based on gender and race for 75 Illinois fire departments entry-level firefighter written exam between 2010 and 2017 (I/O Solutions, 2017).

Table 2

*OPFD Entry-Level Firefighter Written Exam by Race and Gender 2010 and 2014*

Gender and Race	2010 Percentage of Applicants	2014 Percentage of Applicants
Males	97.87%	96.20%

Females	2.13%	3.80%
White-Caucasian	93.62%	87.34%
Black or African American	1.06%	0%
Hispanic or Latino	4.26%	7.59%
Asian	1.06%	1.27%
Two or more Races	0%	3.80%

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Note: Total 2010 (N=94) 2014 (N=79) \*Data Source (Stanard and Associates, 2017)

Table 3

*Illinois F.D. Entry-Level Firefighter Written Exam by Race and Gender 2010-2017*

Gender and Race	2010-2017 Percentage of Applicants
Males	97.49%
Females	2.51%
White-Caucasian	86.80%
Black or African American	1.96%
Hispanic or Latino	5.43%
Asian	0.31%
Two or more Races	4.19%

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Note Total (N=16677) \*Data Source (I/O Solutions, (2017)

The statistics presented in Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate the lack of women and minorities who participated in the hiring process for the OPFD and other Illinois fire departments. The data provides evidence of the inefficiency of current recruitment efforts for women and minorities in creating a diverse applicant pool for Illinois fire departments.

Having a diverse workforce that reflects the community has many benefits, such as: promoting group thinking, improving communication and identifying creative solutions to complex issues. According to J. Scott-Valdez (personnel communication, October 16, 2017), workforces that are dominated by one culture or gender can appear to be closed to certain groups of people, which may foster some suspicion or distrust; this might also limit the workforce's perspective in finding the solution to common issues. What may be acceptable or easily understood as a norm in one culture, may not necessarily be the norm in another. The lack of diversity in the workforce may inadvertently limit the OPFD's ability to find solutions.

The Village of Oak Park Board of Fire and Police Commission have raised concerns over the diversity in the fire department for many years. This research identified strategies that will provide the OPFD with the ability to increase diversity and address those concerns.

Assessing the OPFD's employment strategies to ensure a diverse workforce relates to the change management unit five in the Executive Development course. This unit explained that "every change effort should start with identification of a problem or condition that requires modification." (United States Fire Administration, 2016, pp. SM 5-4). This research explored the reasons for the lack of diversity within the OPFD workforce. The results from this research will assist the OPFD to improve their recruitment efforts to achieve a more diverse applicant pool.

This research supports the United States Fire Administration's (2014) first strategic goal of the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, "Goal 1: Reduce fire and life safety risk through preparedness, prevention and mitigation" (p. 9). Improving diversity in the workforce will strengthen the fire service by providing more ideas, promoting teamwork with others, enhancing communication with different cultures, and creating a better image to the community. Diversity in the workforce will result in a less intimidating process for minorities to join the ranks of a fire department and

serve as a catalyst in achieving a diverse entity. Creating a diverse workforce will also give the fire service the ability to mitigate complex problems through the utilization of different cultural perspectives. These attributes will be essential in reducing fires and life safety risks through education and prevention.

### **Literature Review**

This literature review focused on: (a) providing background information about workforce diversity, (b) creation of a diverse workforce, as well as (c) employment strategies that ensure a diverse workforce. The review also intends on providing insights into the laws that govern diversity in the workforce, diversity strategies that are used by organizations for recruitment, and the factors that affect diversity in the fire service. To achieve this, the researcher summarized information about diversity in the workforce related to women and minorities from: (a) research studies, (b) reports, (c) court cases, (d) books, (e) journal articles, (f) fire service magazines, and (g) newspaper articles.

A group of researchers and activists who were concerned about changing the relationship between ethnicity, racism, and power established the critical race theory (CRT) in the 1960s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Initially, the CRT was related to legal studies but soon, other disciplines joined this interest group. The first basic principles of CRT were that racism is the usual way of conducting business and establishing relationships and is therefore hard to eradicate. Secondly, the traditional approach of Caucasian-over-African American serves specific purposes, such as advancing Caucasians financially. Race is a notion of social construct formation, and social inventions are employed when the social group finds inconvenient (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Another concept was that each race has its own unique history and voice through which it conveys ideas and principles dear to them. In its most extreme form,

majority races create assumptions about minority groups that they perceive as true and act on them. In terms of firefighting, the notion that African Americans or females are not interested in a lifelong career of firefighting is an example of such stereotypical assumptions.

The CRT serves as a guide in developing an appreciation for one's own ethnicity and that of others while developing a notion of social justice. The concept of social justice is important in emergency services, such as firefighting as it acts as a basis for decisive action and assists in the understanding of firefighters' roles in the community (Mills, & Miller, 2015). These notions of the CRT guide this study—first, the principle that racism is the usual way people act and is therefore hard to eradicate can be seen in the persistence of Caucasian male supremacy in the firefighting career. Second, racial divide serves a purpose both financially and socially; it can be found in the ways members of minority groups find it hard to gain entry into the firefighting occupation. Remaining in the fire service is perhaps even harder due to the discriminatory practices. Finally, racial and gender stereotypes serve to keep diversity at bay in the firefighting profession as recruitment and hiring practices in the past were structured along these stereotypes and necessitated lawsuits to address these practices (Hulett, Bendick Jr, Thomas & Moccio 2008; Johnson, 2016; Ruccicci, & Saldivar, 2014).

In an effort to determine the relationship between diversity practices of an organization and employee trust Downey, Werff, Thomas, and Plaut (2015) conducted a study in health services using 4,597 participants. The results revealed that a relationship exists between diversity practices, employee trust and engagement. It is important to note that the diversity practices-trust relationship was moderated by inclusion practices in the organization (Downey et al., 2015). Diversity practices in an organization include committing oneself to supporting all employees, as well as communicating the opportunities and challenges of diversity. When minority employees

perceive the diversity climate of an organization to be fair, their job performance and organizational commitment will in turn be positively impacted. This has consequences for employee wellness and engagement which is described as a, “positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Martínez, M. Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). The basic of a positive social exchange is trust, which is a “state of positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998, p. 395). Trust is a prerequisite for interpersonal interaction between employees especially in the presence of uncertainties such as diverse workplaces (Downey et al., 2015). According to Downey, Werff, Thomas, and Plaut (2015) research indicated that diversity practices do not make a strong impact on the trust relationship of employees, it is however moderated by the degree of inclusion experienced at the organization that in turn impact employee well-being, performance and commitment.

When organizations aim to develop a climate of inclusion and embrace diversity, it is important to note that employees react to the behavior of management and not their words (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Employee observations of how the management acts lead to their conclusions about the real priorities of the organization which in turn impacts organizational trust and employee’s commitment (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Perceptions of about the organization’s diversity climate develop in the same manner as the employee’s observation about the employer’s practices toward minority groups; when these practices are regarded as fair and inclusive, the employees’ perception of the diversity climate becomes more positive. Another element of diversity climate is the degree to which employees feel valued and whether the organization regards diversity as a competitive advantage or burden (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013).

Leadership at fire departments should take note of how organizational climate is developed and the role of management in establishing organizational climate. It is clear that the actions of leadership toward diversity and inclusion determine employee perceptions of the organization's diversity climate. When management behavior is congruent with the vision and mission statements pertaining to diversity, the employees will develop high levels of trust, organizational commitment and engagement, all of which are beneficial to the organization and inclusion of minority groups. The opposite is also true—when leadership's actions are not congruent with their words the diversity climate becomes negative and may result in harassment (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013).

Diversity is a term that is frequently used in today's society. According to the Webster Dictionary (2017) diversity is quality, state, fact, or instance of being diverse; difference or variety. The notion of diversity includes acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual has differences. These differences can be along the dimension of: (a) race, (b) ethnicity, (c) gender, (d) age, (e) physical abilities, (f) religious beliefs and (g) sexual orientation. According to Bucher (2015) it is important to understand each other and move beyond simple tolerance to embrace and celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

In a discussion about diversity and the need for a more diverse workforce, it is necessary to provide an overview of the different cultures represented in the United States and discuss the expected growth rates of the different racial groups. This perspective is needed to review the ethnic and gender inequalities present in the firefighter occupation. Projections of population growth between the years 2014 and 2060 indicate an increase from 319 million to over 400 million (417 million) by the year 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015, p. 2). Fertility rates are expected

to decline towards 2060 and therefore the population growth is expected to be slower. Colby and Ortman (2015) asserted that one-fifth of Americans are expected to be 65 years or older by the year 2030, and towards 2044 more than 50% Americans will belong to a minority group (apart from non-Hispanic White). Against these statistics, it becomes clear that times change significantly, therefore any occupation with a majority of Caucasian or any other ethnic group needs to change to reflect the ethnic environment.

The quick rise in certain ethnic group statistics becomes even more clear when studying different states or counties. In California the Hispanic population was expected to have increased significantly, outnumbering the Caucasian population by the end of 2013 (Byars-Winstona, Fouad, & Wen, 2015). It was also proposed that 60% of the Californian population will consist of Hispanics, Blacks, Asians, Pacific Islanders and American Indians. In contrast, the population in Illinois shows a negative growth rate. In Oak Park, Illinois, the Caucasians comprise 67% of the population, and the next most populace group, is the Black or African American at 21%. The other ethnic groups range from six percent for Hispanics to less than one percent for people with more than one race. Of the 51,878 citizens, 24,069 are male and 27,809 are female. In terms of the employment of 0% female firefighters, it is that there are slightly more females than males in Oak Park Village (Suburban stats, 2016-2017).

Even though diversity has been part of the U.S. society from the very beginning, equality in the workplace and social interaction remains difficult (Phillips, 2014). In a discussion of why diversity in the workplace is necessary, Phillips pointed out that according to several researchers, people are more creative and innovative in a diverse group. Diversity takes different forms: diversity in information and disciplines—different viewpoints of engineers working on the same project bring diversity that sparks creativity. Diversity in politics, gender, sexual orientation, and

racial diversity brings different challenges and opportunities to the group (Medin, Lee, & Bang, 2014). The opportunities lie in the differences in perspectives between the two genders, for instance, female biologists observed different behavior in animal sexual behavior that male biologists seemed to have overlooked for years (Medin et al., 2014). Phillips (2014) argued that racial diversity brings with it an expectation of differences that sensitizes the group and ignites discussions that would otherwise not have occurred in a monoculture group. “Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent and harder-working” (Phillips, 2014, p. 33). Racial and gender diversity together with other forms of diversity, such as information and political diversity, in the fire department environment are beneficial. It brings differences in opinion and perspective that are needed to solve problems in a more creative manner. The group becomes more sensitive and observant of differences; this leads to innovation and diversification in the fire department.

The U.S Department of Labor Chief Evaluation Officer issued a report describing the characteristics of career first responders based on the 2014 population survey of the U.S Census Bureau and the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The results provided the age ranges, gender and racial make-up of police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians. The report also provided future employment predictions for each occupation. Out of the 1.2 million workers in the first responder occupation categories, the majority are white, male and 25 to 54 years old. While the total population of male and female is almost equal, first responder occupations comprised of a significantly higher number of males (Schafer, Sutter and Gibbons, S. 2015, p.1). Approximately 75% of emergency medical technicians and paramedics are male, and 87% of the police officers are male. Firefighters have the highest number of males at 95%. (Schafer, et al., 2015, p. 3).

In 2008, there were 11,000 female firefighters in the U.S. which represented 3.7% of the total force (Hulett et al., 2008). The authors pointed out that the women firefighters were employed in a relatively small number of fire departments. At the time of writing the article Hulett et al. (2008) calculated that 17% of the firefighter workforce should be female, taking certain requirements into consideration, such as their educational qualification, fitness, etc. Based on the 2000 census this would mean that 50,577 females should be employed as firefighters of which 34% should be women from minority groups. A survey conducted by Hulett (2008) indicated that women experienced a significant number of discriminatory acts against them, ranging from ill-fitting equipment to discriminatory practices at work. The argument that women are not fit to be a firefighter or do not last long in the occupation does not hold true when studying fire departments that employ larger numbers of females. The authors concluded that fire departments need “changing the underlying workplace culture from one of exclusion to one of gender inclusiveness” (p. 205).

A survey of 35 occupational sectors between 1970 and 2010 revealed interesting trends pertaining to gender and cultural diversity in the labor markets (Byars-Winstona et al., 2015). White males represented the majority in the workforce but there was a steady decline in their number from 54% in 1970 to 37% in 2010. Whereas all cultural groups of both genders showed an increase in representation during the years studied, Black men did not enjoy the same proportional increase. Strikingly, Asian males and White females were shown to be more readily employed in professional occupations whereas Black, Hispanic and American Indian persons of both genders were more often appointed to occupations typically linked with low skill, wages, and status (Byars-Winstona et al., 2015). Despite the improvements in the appointment of a more diverse workforce this study revealed that there still exists inequality in terms of gender and

ethnicity in specific occupations. Upon further investigation it was found that females were appointed at a lower salary level and are not well represented in technical occupations and STEM fields (Byars-Winstona et al., 2015). This kind of selective integration can be found in several occupational sectors including firefighting.

The racial and ethnic diversity in the first responder's workforce varies by occupation. Blacks or African Americans represent a higher number of police officers than their proportion in the total employed population but are underrepresented among firefighters and emergency medical technicians. Hispanics as a proportion of first responders represent a lower share than their number of the overall employed. The projected future employment for first responders is promising; the BLS is projecting that firefighters and police officers are likely to increase by 6.6% and 5.9% between 2012 and 2022. The future for emergency medical technicians and paramedics is forecasted to have a much higher increase in employment between 2012 and 2022 at 23.1%. However, the growth for emergency medical technicians and paramedics in local government are lower at 6.8% (Schafer, et al, 2015).

With the fire departments lagging in the appointment of persons of color, several lawsuits against fire departments followed. Riccucci and Saldivar (2014) reported that women and persons of color were more often appointed for entry-level positions in federal government however, they were still lagging in term of promotion to higher positions. In the first responder's sector, police and firefighters specifically, the situation is somewhat different. Of interest is the fact that lawsuits against the fire departments are being filed by two sides—females and people of color due to discrimination; White males sue fire departments for reverse discrimination.

Both Chicago and New York City were sued for their discriminatory practices, against African Americans and Hispanics when appointing firefighters. The decision of the Supreme

Court in the case of *Ricci v DeStefano* (2009) renewed interest in governmental efforts to stop discriminatory practices in fire departments (Bowean, 2016; Ruccicci, & Saldivar, 2014). The case of *Ricci* brought to light the continued struggle of females and people of color to get promotion into more prestigious positions associated with higher salaries. This lawsuit serves to confirm that females and people of color continue to fight a (losing) battle against discriminatory practices both at entry-level and promotional positions (Ruccicci, & Saldivar, 2014).

The Equal Employment Act of 1972 extended the Title VII protection of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to state and local government employers (United States Legislation, 2015). Despite the regulations following this Act, police and fire departments employed more sophisticated ways to reserve entry positions for White men and bar women as well as people of color from promotional positions. These measures include weight as well as height specifications and assessments both written as well as physical agility, complicating entry into the profession. According to the 2011 statistics, females and persons of color were more readily integrated into to the police force compared to fire departments (Ruccicci, & Saldivar, 2014).

In New York City the mayor paid \$98 million in back wages and damages to minority firefighters and applicants as their careers were virtually stopped or delayed because of the Fire Department of New York's (FDNY) discriminatory practices in the years 1999 to 2007. Firefighters are appointed in 24-year cycles, and since World War II, the number of African American firefighters remained between 1-5% (Goldberg, 2017). After 2013, this was being rectified; an unprecedented number of African American firefighters were being appointed, but the number appointed in FDNY is still behind by 25%.

The Chief Information Officer of Baltimore Fire Department, Johnson, (2016) reported that an executive order signed by President Obama was aimed at promoting diversity in national

security, hoping that it would gain momentum and influence other agencies of law enforcement. According to Johnson (2016), firefighters were far behind the diversity figures needed to be equitable. Based on the 2008-2012 statistics released by the National Fire Protection Association, only 7.2% of the firefighters were Black, with 9.4% Hispanic/Latinos and a mere 3.8% were females (Johnson, 2016). These figures prompted African Americans to call for justice by reporting the situation at the Justice Department for further investigation. Johnson related that during an intake exam only 1,600 African Americans reported for the exam of which a mere 112 (2.2%) received top scores making them eligible to join the force. Upon hiring only 29 (1.3%), African American persons were hired out of the pool of eligible applicants. This is a strong indication why fire departments do not represent the demographics of the communities they serve (Johnson, 2016, p. 3).

Johnson (2016), together with other firefighters made some suggestions to increase the diversity at fire stations. Contemplating diversity in the fire station constitutes an administrative nightmare to some fire chiefs (McNeil, 2008). It is not only cultural, and gender differences that should be included but also religious, political, gender orientation and the like which could impact the running of a fire station where the firefighters work and live in such proximity. McNeil pointed out that lowering the intake standards is not a solution to the diversity problem; it might serve as a further complication since firefighters have to comply with rigorous requirements. McNeil (2008) argued that fire chiefs need to take a proactive approach towards diversity in the fire service and actions should begin at the leadership level. This might imply an attitude change in the leader who most probably grew up in a segregated environment and maintained that for most of his adult life as a firefighter. The attitude change should be real, and not just a pretend turn-around as the firefighters will sense it and not change either. Strong

leadership is needed to promote diversity in a previously staunchly White male only occupational sector (McNeil, 2008).

In a 2017 article Garrett Jr. (2017) reiterated the large number of changes that firefighters underwent in recent years. Their role changed from firefighting to being the community's first stop for protection and 911 advice. The high levels of responsibility that accompanies the role of a firefighter necessitates rigorous entry assessments since only the best will do—that includes diversity as all cultures and genders need to be represented when dealing with emotionally laden situations in public. Effective recruitment must be identified and used to ensure the recruitment of people with the right profile for the job. Outdated methods such as mailing cards, may be better than no recruitment strategy at all, but they are not enough; they do not keep track of modern developments and needs of the population.

One way of recruiting is similar to the snowball sampling technique where experienced firefighters are tasked with finding and recruiting possible candidates in their environment (McNeil, 2008). This method of recruitment is inexpensive and successful due to its directness and personal contact between the firefighter and recruit. This allows the recruited person to ask questions and observes the lifestyle of the firefighter, making the work opportunity more attractive and real. Similar recruiting methods are neighborhood networks and outreach programs where the firefighters provide information in their neighborhoods, thus becoming a resource for the programs. Through interpersonal contact with the neighborhood youth, the firefighter could identify persons who may be suitable for firefighters and recruit them. McNeil (2008) served at Kansas City where a pilot program was run for interested high school students. Through this program, the students learned more about the firefighting occupation and its challenges as well as triumphs. This increased familiarity with the occupation made decision-making easier, and the

recruit is more informed of what the job entails (McNeil, 2008).

Hatt (2017), the editor of *Fire Rescue One*, conducted a roundtable discussion centering on the topic of the need for diversity in the fire station. Six themes emerged from the discussion: (a) namely building relationships and stronger teams, (b) catering to the needs of the community as well as (c) earning their trust, and lastly to (d) adopt different points of view. On the issue of gaining diversity at the cost of high standards, the group emphasized that lowering standards was not an option since the responsibilities of firefighters are complex. That does not mean that entering standards should serve to demotivate potential firefighters. At the same time, diversity should not plainly be about fulfilling the quotas; it should come from a genuine desire to include minorities as part of true inclusivity (p.1).

The former fire chief, Robert Avsec (2017) contributed to the diversity discussion by publishing an article in *Fire Rescue One* on steps to follow in becoming an inclusive fire department. Avsec used Schein's principles to building a corporate culture to illuminate the steps towards fire department diversity. The following elements can be used to build the fire department's culture: (a) artifacts that are any visible reminder of the company—uniforms, badges—that the group should be proud of, (b) values of the groups as embodied by the mission statement, and (c) shared assumptions that function to focus and unite the group (Avsec, 2017, p. 2). It is the duty of the leader to unite members and establish a culture of inclusivity, openness, and mutual respect. Overly supporting the traditions of the group may serve to alienate the minority group that was not part of the previous era which could lead to exclusivity and not inclusivity (Avsec, 2017). With a department climate focused on inclusion and embracing differences the recruitment, hiring, training, and succession planning process should follow the same inclusivity values while promoting excellence and a passion for firefighting (Avsec, 2017).

An article containing guidelines for retaining a diverse staff came from the pen of Fire Chief Thill (2016) who has 27 years of service at a fire department. Being a female who was surrounded by firefighters all her life, Thill has intimate experience of having to survive the mostly male firefighter corps. Although she is a White female firefighter and wrote from that perspective, her insights can mostly be used for other diversity or minority groups as well.

The first issue Thill (2016) addressed was that of assumptions that, even experienced fire chiefs assumed that it would be different to work under a female fire chief. Thill's deputy chiefs were asked about their experiences. These deeply ingrained assumptions, that the nontraditional group members are significantly different and necessitate getting used to, complicate the collaboration between different groups. The same goes for members of the public who do not expect females in the role of fire chief or firefighter education in the form of increased visibility is needed. By including the minority group members and making them visible to the public, recruitment is done on another level—the public perceives that firefighters can be from other ethnic groups and gender. This changes their perceptions of firefighters, and the community becomes more open to the enrollment of their children into the profession. The same goes for the training situation—being trained in part by someone with the same demographics as the students (e.g., female, African American) strengthen the perception that diversity is welcomed and embraced. During training, specific differences between techniques used by other groups (females) could be demonstrated and embraced; being tolerant to differences in ethnicity, gender, and techniques enriches the group. Micro-aggressions towards persons different to the traditional firefighter might not be discernable to those traditional firefighters, but they are hurtful; therefore, it is not the way to maintain diversity in the fire department. It is important to get some of the traditional firefighters to recognize micro-aggressions and to speak up about them.

Traditional firefighters do not take note if a member of the minority group speaks out, but do take note if one of the accepted group members speaks out against the behavior. By developing an inclusive and tolerant culture at the fire station where everyone is given a fair chance, the diversity will be maintained, and minority firefighters will remain to serve the department and public well (Thill, 2016).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 [Public Law 88-352], (United States Legislation, 2015) amended through P.L. 114-95, and enacted December 10, 2015, deals with principles surrounding discriminatory practices in public places. Title VII of this Civil Rights Act—equal employment opportunity—holds implications for advertising or recruiting for jobs as it stipulates that discrimination on gender, race, color, religion, sex, or national origin is not permissible. Ward (2014) advocated compliance to this law when discussing the duties of the fire department chief. It is therefore essential that all relevant parties such as the county and municipality scrutinize all firefighter recruitment material and procedures in the light of the Civil Rights Law.

Diversity is both an opportunity and challenge in the workplace, including firefighting. Due to the proximity and long stressful work hours, diversity should be handled with utmost care in the fire department to avoid any harassment situations. To achieve this, fire department management should embrace diversity whole-heartedly and demonstrate their acceptance by demonstrating inclusive and fair practices always. According to the critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), people are prone to racism and it is hard to eradicate, especially in environments such as firefighting, where the status quo was embraced for many years. The Civil Rights Law (United States Legislation, 2015) spells out that discrimination on race, sexuality, or religion is inexcusable and contravening of the law. Fire departments should, therefore, develop recruitment strategies that include the stipulations of the law and reflect their endeavors to

develop a diverse staff complement. This review included suggestions of fire chiefs regarding recruitment practices and ways to maintain diversity at fire departments. A key message from other fire chiefs is that the change towards diversity should start with management which supports the notions of researchers such as Thill (2016).

### **Procedures**

Qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used for this research. The qualitative collection methods consisted of interviews and a focus group. The quantitative collection method used two surveys. The mixed method used in this research provided the necessary information needed to answer the research questions for this study.

Participants (Appendix A, B and C) for the qualitative research were selected by determining eligibility by using inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were based on the participant's years of experience as firefighter, promotional level, and occupation—either fire lieutenant, human resource director or lawyer practicing as a labor attorney.

An interview (P. Stephanides, personal communication, October 11, 2017) (Appendix A) was conducted with Mr. Stephanides who has been working with Oak Park for 4 years and 1 month, and has been practicing as an attorney for approximately 28 years, with experience in the Chicago Park District and the City of Naperville as the municipal attorney. Paul Stephanides was selected due to overall knowledge and experience of the federal and state laws pertaining to the workplace. The purpose of this interview was to collect information on federal, state laws and statutes that govern diversity in the workplace. The interview consisted of five questions (Appendix A) that focused on the federal, state laws and any local ordinances as well as resolutions the Village of Oak Park has that govern diversity in the workplace.

A second interview (J. Scott-Valdez, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

(Appendix B) was conducted with Mrs. Scott-Valdez Village of Oak Park Human Resource Director/Assistant Village Manager who has over 18 years of experience in managing Human Resources Departments for local governments. This human resource manager was selected due to her knowledge and experience with recruiting of women and minorities in the public sector. The interview consisted of ten questions (Appendix B) developed to get a perspective on diversity from a Human Resource professional. The questions centered on recruitment strategies, diversity in the workforce, and methods to increase diversity in the fire service. In addition, questions on the internal and external factors affecting the diversity in the OPFD workforce were also included.

One focus group (Appendix C) was utilized for this research to explore the views, experiences, and ideas of individuals in the OPFD related to the topic of diversity in the workforce. The focus group consisted of one firefighter/paramedic and two fire lieutenants. Participants volunteered to be involved in the focus group due to their interest in the topic. The researcher was the moderator and a semi structured discussion guide was used (Appendix C). The focus group addressed research questions of various aspects of workforce diversity at the OPFD, challenges recruiting women and minorities, factors affecting a diverse workforce and types of recruitment strategies that should be considered to increase a diverse workforce. Each participant was engaged in the discussion and provided interesting input related to each question. During the focus group discussion, participants had some dialogue that guided the researcher to conduct a second survey related to the racial and gender make-up of students that have graduated from local paramedic programs (Appendix E).

All the qualitative data was audio-recorded, and transcribed, word-per-word, in separate Microsoft Word files. The Word files were uploaded to NVivo 11 trial version, qualitative data

analysis software for data management, storage, and analysis. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis, in which patterns, across the data significant to the phenomenon under study, were examined to identify themes (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Thematic analysis yield themes through the process of coding. The coding processes in this study are described below.

The coding process began with the familiarization of the data. In this process, the researcher began by listening to the audio recordings of the interviews and the focus group, and then transcribing the data. The transcribed data were read line-by-line repeatedly for the researcher to become more accustomed to it. Then, with the use of NVivo, the researcher began generating the initial codes. NVivo is a software program that categorizes and examines qualitative data. As the data were read line-by-line once again, the researcher began highlighting the key words/phrases/sentences in order to label the data using the terminology used by the participants. Using the terminology of the participants helped increase the dependability of the study, as their perceptions and experiences were represented in their own language. The initial codes were assigned through the node feature in NVivo. After initial coding, the research began searching for the themes. At this point, new codes may emerge, or identified codes may be omitted, as coding involved a cyclical rather than a linear process. As the codes were examined, patterns in the data emerged to form broad themes. Relationships among the codes helped form the themes. The related codes were grouped together using the node hierarchy feature in NVivo. In order to refine the broad themes into overarching themes, the researcher began to review the themes. The researcher reviewed the coded text in comparison with the patterns in the themes. Then, the researcher reviewed the relations between the themes in order to check whether they reflected the data set, accurately representing the participants' perceptions and experiences, and whether the themes helped address the research questions. The themes were then finalized, and a

final report in the form of a narrative was written. This report is presented in the results section.

The two surveys used for this research were Illinois Fire Department Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts (Appendix D) and Illinois Paramedic Programs Diversity Survey Student Profile (Appendix E). The researcher utilized Survey Monkey an online survey tool, to collect the quantitative data.

The Illinois Fire Department Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts consisted of 17 questions and was distributed through the assistance of the Director of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association of Illinois (Appendix D). The Director utilized the Association's email database to send the survey to over 200 Fire Chiefs within the Chicagoland Area. The researcher also used information from the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshall (OSFM) (Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal, 2017) directory for all fire departments in Cook County. The survey was sent to all Cook County fire departments electronically based on the information obtained from the OSFM's fire directory.

The Illinois Fire Department Diversity Survey Department Profile/Recruitment Efforts (Appendix D) was completed by 137 fire departments within the Chicagoland Area and in Cook County, Illinois. The researcher had to filter the results for completeness and any duplication. A total of 53 respondents were removed due to duplicates and incomplete answers. The total surveys completed were 84. The questions were designed to gather information about strategies that other departments similar in size to OPFD are using to create a diverse workforce. This survey also provided information on the gender and racial make-up of the fire department's workforce. Questions one through three were developed to gather basic information about the fire departments, such as name and location, type of fire department and population. Question four was designed to obtain information on whether the fire department was career, part-time,

combination or volunteer. Questions five through seven obtained the gender make-up from Questions four. Questions eight and nine were designed to provide information on the racial make-up of the overall department, along with whether the current workforce represents the community it serves. Questions 10 through 16 were created to obtain information on diversity priorities, and the challenges fire departments are facing when recruiting women and minorities. The questions also focused on diversity recruitment plans and strategies in recruiting a diverse workforce. Question 17 was designed to obtain information about elected officials and the fire administrations view on diversity and gender make-up in their workforce.

The population for the Illinois Fire Department Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts (Appendix D) was determined by the number of fire departments in Cook County, Illinois. This was accomplished using the directory from the OSFM. The population consisted of 100 mostly career fire departments and fire districts in Cook County, Illinois. The City of Chicago Fire Department was excluded from this research due to the size of the department. The best method of sampling for this research was determined to be random sampling of fire departments in Cook County, Illinois. Random sampling was preferred to ensure enough data was collected from fire departments within the population. To find the sample size of the 100 fire departments, a sample size calculator program by Macorr Research Solutions Online was used. According to the website (<http://www.macorr.com/sample-size-calculator.htm>) it recommended, a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5% provided a sample size of 80.

The researcher attempted to obtain the gender and racial make-up of Illinois licensed paramedics through the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) before conducting the second survey. IDPH is the state agency that regulates paramedic licenses for Illinois. A representative of IDPH advised the researcher that data on gender and race is not collected for

licensed paramedics within the State of Illinois.

The Illinois Paramedic Programs Diversity Survey Student Profile (Appendix E) was emailed directly from the researcher to each Director of an Illinois Paramedic Program. A total of 12 Paramedic programs received the survey in the State of Illinois. The researcher collected email addresses for the Illinois Paramedic programs that were in a 30-mile radius of the OPFD. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information on the gender and racial make-up of the student population. It also gathered information on recruitment efforts of the paramedic programs on women and minorities.

The Illinois Paramedic Programs Diversity Survey Student Profile (Appendix E) was an additional survey that was developed to obtain information on the gender and racial make-up of students that graduated from local paramedic programs. There were nine questions developed for the survey. Question one was general information on the paramedic program name and location. Questions two through six was designed to obtain information on the gender and race of the student population from 2010-2016. Question seven was specifically created for the directors of the paramedic program about the overall diversity and gender makeup of students that attended 2010-2016. Question eight was designed to obtain information on difficulties attracting women and minorities to their paramedic programs. Question nine was a follow-up to question eight about the challenges attracting women and minorities to their paramedic program.

There were numerous limitations to the research. First, the questions in the interviews and focus group heavily relied on opinions and personal experiences. Second, the interviews and focus group should have included external professionals to obtain a different point of view. Third, the surveys had questions with potential gender and racial bias. The distribution methods used in Illinois Fire Department Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts (Appendix D) was

redundant and potential errors could have happened when filtering out duplicate data. The researcher was concerned in not collecting enough data from the population to present significant results. Fourth limitation was with the respondents understanding of the questions about diversity and the validity of the data on the gender and racial make-up. Finally, the online survey provided a convenient method of distribution within the population, but different delivery methods might have increased the participation from the population.

### **Results**

Five research questions guided this study. The first research question asked: Which federal, state laws and statutes govern diversity in the workplace? Federal, state laws, and statutes helped govern the diversity in the workplace. This theme was derived mainly from the response of Mr. Stephanides (personal communication, October 11, 2017) (Appendix A). He emphasized that the existing laws were already helping to govern diversity in the workplace. Mr. Stephanides enumerated laws and court rulings, focusing mainly on federal laws, and referred to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for more information on the laws pertaining to a diverse workforce. He also shared the following laws: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Equal Pay Act, Pregnancy Discrimination Act, and Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. These federal laws helped protect people against gender and racial discrimination among the workforce. He also shared that the EEOC helped enforce these laws. Apart from the federal laws, the Illinois Constitution also contained state laws governing diversity in the workplace. Mr. Stephanides shared:

There is also the Illinois Human Rights Act that covers all public and private employers from discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color religion national origin and age. I know the Illinois Human Right Act encompass a more detail list, so you may want to

explore it further. Illinois has a Diversity Enrichment Program (DEP) that is administrated by the Illinois Department of Central Management Services. The DEP provides assistance to state agencies in developing programs to comply with affirmative action and equal employment opportunity goals (Appendix A).

Furthermore, Supreme Court rulings, ordinances and resolutions were also mentioned by the participant. The Supreme Court ruling of the case Ricci versus DeStefano in 2009 decided that, the case involved the ineligibility of Black candidates for a promotion due to discarding test results. The participant said, “The court held that the fire department in that case could not discard the exam results. The fire department was in New Haven, Connecticut.” In case of ordinances and resolutions, Mr. Stephanide (personal communication, October 11, 2017), revealed that Oak Park was generally an inclusive community, as governed by the Village of Oak Park Diversity Statement (Oak Park Diversity Statement, 2017), which reads:

The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life. Oak Park has committed itself to equality not only because it is legal, but because it is right; not only because equality is ethical, but because it is desirable for us and our children. Ours is a dynamic community that encourages the contributions of all citizens, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital and/or familial status, mental and/or physical impairment and/or disability, military status, economic class, political affiliation, or any of the other distinguishing characteristics that all too often divide people in society (p.1).

The Village code, in section 2-30-2 (Article 30 Citizens Police Oversight Committee, 2016). also included the formation of the Citizen Police Oversight Committee, which helped

monitor and evaluate the village's effort to increase diversity within the police workforce. The President and the Board of Trustees of Oak Park were believed to be actively involved in promoting diversity in the village. Finally, Mr. Stephanide (personal communication, October 11, 2017), shared that a resolution (Village of Oak Park Minority and Women Business Enterprise Policy, 2017), determined the woman and minority business enterprise participation policy.

The second research question asked: What human resources employment strategies are available to develop a diverse workforce? This theme was derived generally from the response by Mrs. Valdez (personal communication, October 16, 2017), (Appendix B). The human resource strategies to help increase diversity in the workforce, as revealed by Mrs. Valdez included: (a) campus and community recruitment, (b) leadership of village officials, (c) hiring a diversity specialist, (d) having an impartial screening process, and (e) online recruitment. Campus and community recruitment were believed to increase the candidate pool representing different cultural backgrounds, which has the potential to increase the diversity in the workforce. Mrs. Valdez shared that ideally, campus recruitment began with high school programs to encourage students to develop a career path curriculum. The human resource department targeted public high schools in the Rockford area, as well as "stealing" people from public high schools in Chicago. Mrs. Valdez (personal communication, October 16, 2017), explained "stealing" as:

We do want to try to get and start doing more direct recruitment, so show up at the local schools around town. You know, Oak Park High School, while we can go visit there, I don't think that's a big recruitment avenue for us. We might get a few still, but really where we would do better is in the Chicago public schools and we have to figure out how to start stealing their people. That's really kind of my plan, steal other people's recruits

(Appendix B).

Similar to the perception of Mr. Stephanides (personal communication, October 11, 2017) (Appendix A), Mrs. Valdez stated that the Village of Oak Park officials encouraged diversity. The officials will approve to hire a specialist in workplace diversity in the 2018 budget. Mrs. Valdez shared:

Well, I budgeted for 2018 some dollars to start working with somebody who specializes in this. A lot of times, just those consultants will have inroads to direct advertising, places you can go to recruit, people you can talk to, so that's kind of our high-level approach (Appendix B).

Mrs. Valdez, shared that the recruiters generally looked for the most qualified applicant, regardless of age, gender, race, and other factors. She referred to hiring as an impartial process in which her team has “done better at diversity hiring by not trying so hard to be better at diversity hiring.” Mrs. Valdez claimed:

We really developed some very impartial tools to view our candidates and, when we're looking at who we're picking for the best candidates, they're diverse. So, we've taken any kind of approach to ... we don't even meet a candidate until after we've made a choice to test them (Appendix B).

Finally, online recruitment helped increase the reach of the recruiters. Also, online recruitment was developed to attract younger candidates. Mrs. Valdez shared that her team was looking to into exploring more non-traditional recruitment strategies in order to attract a diverse candidate pool.

The third research question asked: What strategies do departments similar in size to OPFD use to create a diverse workforce? The Illinois Fire Department Diversity Survey:

Department Profile/Recruitment Efforts (Appendix D) provided answers to this research question. The total surveys completed were 84. Questions one through three indicated the fire departments name and location, type of fire department and population. Question four requested information on whether the fire department was career, part-time, combination or volunteer. 58% of the fire departments were career, followed by 28% career/part-time, 8% career/contract and 6% part-time/contract. Questions five through seven identified the gender make-up from Questions 4. Table 4 represents the responses to this question.

Table 4

*Illinois F.D. Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts Gender Make-up*

Type of Department	Career	Part-Time & Volunteer	Contract Service
Firefighter	97.96%	94.23%	93.75%
How many are female	2.04%	5.77%	6.25%
Paramedic	94.60%	90.57%	96.88%
How many are female	5.40%	9.43%	3.13%
Firefighter/Paramedic	97.05%	94.17%	97.52%
How many are female	2.95%	5.83%	2.48%

Question eight asked if their fire department currently has a workforce that represents the community it serve. This was a yes or no question, 44.05% responded that they do have a workforce that represents the community, while 55.95% indicated they do not have a workforce that reflects their community. Questions nine requested the racial makeup of the total number of personnel at their fire department. The majority of the personnel are Caucasian at 94.56% followed by 2.84% Hispanic, 2.03% African American, .055% Asian American and .02% other.

Question 10 asked if their fire department considers having a diverse workforce a priority. The results from this questions was 52.38% consider a diverse workforce a priority, while 47.61% indicated it is not a priority. Question 11 asked about difficulties attracting diversity (women and minorities) to their fire department. This was a yes or no question; there was an added section to provide comments. Over fifty percent indicated that they are having difficulties in attracting diversity to their fire department, while 35.71% of the response are having no problems. There was 9.52% that provided additional comments such as “ Application strictly geared towards qualified applicants.” Another respondent stated “ we are having problems attracting minorities only.”

The next four questions focused on recruitment efforts and methods. Question 12 asked respondents to identify the biggest challenges that your fire department is facing when recruiting for a more diverse workforce (women and minorities). The respondents were able to select multiple factors based on the list. Table 5 represents the responses to this question.

Table 5

*Illinois F.D. Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts Recruitment Challenges for a More Diverse Workforce*

Factors	Percentage of Respondents
Job requirements (EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter)	49.40%
CPAT (Candidate Physical Ability Test)	21.59%
Education (Associates Degree)	2.41%
Support from the leader	1.20%
Funding	3.61%
Diversity planning/effective recruitment program	21.69%

Testing process standards	12.05%
Lack of interest from target audience	68.67%
Other	13.25%

Note: Selecting multiple factors was an option

Question 13 asked respondents a yes or no question about working towards increasing the diversity and gender makeup through an active recruitment plan. Sixty percent responded no, while 40.47% indicated yes towards increasing the diversity and gender makeup through an active recruitment plan. Question 14 was a follow up question about what best describes your recruitment plan. Table 6 represents the responses to this question.

Table 6

*Illinois F.D. Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts Recruitment Planning*

Recruiting Plans	Percentage of Respondents
Recruit more woman	22.45%
Recruit more minorities	26.53%
Focus on reaching target group	36.73%
Focus on having a fire department that represents the community	51.02%
Other	28.57%

Respondents of question fourteen could provide additional information about their recruitment plan. One of the common comments were fire departments don't have the resources to implement a recruitment plans. Question 15 asked respondents if they had any programs that recruit for a diverse workforce. Seventy-five percent of the respondents indicated that they have no programs that recruit for a diverse workforce, while 25% have programs that recruit for a

diverse workforce. Question 16 asked respondents to identify programs that their fire department would use if they were trying to recruit for diversity. Table 7 represents the responses to this question.

Table 7

*Illinois F.D. Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts Recruitment Programs*

Programs	Percentage of Respondents
Explorer program	42.11%
EMT basic & Paramedic programs	35.53%
Colleges	42.11%
High schools	48.68%
Public education	51.32%
Church and community groups	28.95%
Internship programs	34.21%
Other	10.53%

Note: Selecting multiple factors was an option

The results from this question showed that fire departments will use multiple programs to recruit for diversity. Over 50% of the respondents would use public education as a method to recruit diversity. The lowest number of respondents identified church and community groups for recruiting diversity. The respondents agreed that working with high schools, colleges, and local emergency medical technician’s programs will benefit their fire department in recruiting diversity. Question 17 was the final question of the survey, this question asked if their elected officials and fire administration were satisfied with the diversity and gender makeup of their workforce. Over 58% of the respondents indicated that their elected officials and fire

administration were satisfied with the diversity and gender makeup of the workforce, while 41% were not satisfied.

The fourth research question asked: What recruitment strategies do the members of the OPFD prefer to use to create a diverse workforce? The theme of modifying the EMT program emerged from the responses in the focus group (Appendix C). This theme answered the fourth research questions about the recruitment strategies the members of the OPFD prefer to use to create a diverse workforce. In doing so, the data revealed that the EMT program might have influences in restricting diversity in OPFD. The participants from the focus group revealed that firefighters in the OPFD were required to be licensed as a paramedic, which may have hindered the development of diversity in the department. However, the participants perceived that a paramedic license has advantages in firefighting; therefore, the participants perceived that modifying the current EMT program could have a positive impact on diversity. A fire department in California developed an EMT program that helped increase the number of participants from a diverse population. Participant two, a firefighter/paramedic, stated that:

I'll tell you what, they did this in California, in southern California actually, at a grassroots level, where they setup an EMT program to get a lot of the kids in that neighborhood, in that community, through EMT school, so that they could find a job, and it was all minority based. That was an interesting program that they setup (Appendix C).

The participants identified several recruitment strategies to increase diversity in OPFD, such as: (a) providing easier access to the EMT program, (b) hiring the most qualified individual, (c) campus recruitment, (d) reaching out to the community, and (e) opening an internship program. While hiring the most qualified individual, campus recruitment, and community recruitment were strategies which had already employed by the human resource department, as

shared by Mrs. Valdez, (personal communication, October 16, 2017). The participants of the focus group (Appendix C) believed that these strategies needed to be further developed. The participants suggested: (a) a local fire science program through the community college or high schools, (b) block parties in the community to engage with the locals such as boy and girl scouts, and (c) partnership with the park district, church, or community groups. Participant three, a lieutenant, suggested an internship program or developing an explorer program, saying:

Well, I was thinking maybe another idea is having an internship program that focuses on everybody as a whole, but through the application process is not so much target or discriminate, but develop kind of like an explorer program, but our explorer program will actually see them all the way through to medic school (Appendix C).

Finally, the participants focused on the development of the access to the EMT program, as stated in the modifying the EMT program. The participants believed that the paramedic license requirement maintained the standards of the OPFD. Therefore, despite being believed to be restricting the diversity in the workforce, the participants did not believe that removing the requirement would improve the department. Nonetheless, the participants suggested that allowing people, especially students, an easier access to the EMT program may increase their overall interest and desire to eventually forge a career in firefighting.

The fifth research question asked: What affects the diversity in the OPFD workforce?

The student profile survey (Appendix E) provided answers to the fifth research question. Since OPFD required an applicant to be a paramedic at the time of hire, it was important to understand the diversity in the target recruitment pool. Question one requested the name and location of the program. Questions two through six asked for the gender and race of the student population from 2010-2016. The researcher combined the collected data of questions 2-6, to provide an overall

gender and race profile. Table 8 represents the gender and racial makeup of the six paramedic programs.

Table 8

*Illinois Paramedic Programs Diversity Survey Student Profile Gender and Racial make-up*

Race	Percentage of Males	Percentage of Females
Caucasian	67.74%	13.85%
African American	.55%	.18%
Hispanic	1.5%	.37%
Asian	.18%	0%
Other	.18%	.09%

Note: Total student population 1054: Males: 869 Females 185

In question, seven directors were asked if they were satisfied with the diversity and gender makeup of the students who had attended their program in 2010 through 2016. Overall 66.67% were satisfied with the diversity and gender makeup of the student population, while 16.67% were not. Another 16.67% indicated that the female enrollment in their program was higher than the national average during this period. Question eight asked the directors, if they faced difficulties in attracting women and minorities to their paramedic program. Only 33.33% of the directors indicated having difficulties in attracting women and minorities, while 66.67% did not. Question nine was a follow-up to question eight; it asked the directors about the challenges which attracted women and minorities. Table 9 outlines the response to this question.

Table 9

*Illinois Paramedic Programs Diversity Survey Student Profile Challenges Attracting Woman and Minorities*

Factors	Percentage of Respondents
Reaching target audience	0%
Effective recruitment program	0%
Lack of interest from women and minorities	33.33%
Education requirements	33.33%
Other	66.67%

The directors provided additional comments about the challenges related to attracting women and minorities. One comment stressed that educational requirements might be a contributing factor for the lesser number of minorities. The diversity improved when the program created science prerequisite. For gender, it was reaching the target audience. Another director stated that we attracted more women, but lacked in the enrollment of minorities. We believe the problem is the lack of financial aid and knowledge that is associated with being a paramedic as a career.

The theme of the candidate pool (Appendix B and C) answers the fifth research question under the factors affecting diversity in the OPFD workforce. Generally, the lack of diversity in the candidate pool resulted in the lack of diversity in the workforce. The factors which may have affected the candidate pool included: (a) exposure to firefighting, (b) education, (c) accomplishing requirements, and (d) gender. According to Mrs. Valdez (personal communication, October 16, 2017) and the participants of the focus group, the candidates hired at the OPFD were from a pool within the local paramedic programs and from nearby fire

departments. Mrs. Valdez revealed that having parents who were paramedics or firefighters increased the child's exposure to first responders, which may have an influence on the child's decision to become a paramedic or firefighter. Furthermore, education, such as public safety courses offered in Chicago high schools, may also influence students to pursue such careers.

Mrs. Valdez claimed:

The choice to become a firefighter or paramedic is often generational. The training and the mindset start at a young age. Because of the intergenerational coaching which seems inherent in the fire services, successful applicants have the advantage as they understand the hiring and selection process at an earlier age. For example, the son or daughter of a firefighter is more likely to know that volunteering for a small department will help them in the selection process. The approach needs to start in the junior high level through more direct experiences and opportunities which allows the young person to make better choices in their career and education path (Appendix B).

Participants two and three shared that reaching out to the community may increase the diversity in the candidate pool. Advertising job opportunities in OPFD to certain groups was perceived to help develop an interest among those groups, and eventually develop diversity.

Participant three stated that:

I think, if we were to make a concerted effort to make this more of an appealing job for especially women, I just don't see this being a real appealing job for women. I come from a household of women and none of them have any interest in doing a job like this. I think that's part of it right there. Just finding a way to market this job, this position, to maybe a group of people who this is not really what they're looking for. That's with women (Appendix C).

The theme of representing the culture of the community answers the fifth research question. The participants perceived that representing the culture of the community may have had an influence on diversity in the OPFD workforce. Mrs. Valdez claimed that she has strived for diversity in order to represent the culture of the whole community, not just the culture of one gender, one race, or one specific group of people. Mrs. Valdez added that the lack of representation may lead to a feeling of suspicion among the general population of the village, which is diverse. Mrs. Valdez (personal communication, October 16, 2017) expressed:

Well, I think it shuts doors, quite frankly. And, I think that whether we intend to or not could create just kind of an atmosphere of feeling suspicious. So, if a workforce tends to be all one gender, all one race, people outside of that gender and race feel like they've been shut and they stop listening and stop participating, too (Appendix B).

Participants one and two felt that the workforce in OPFD was quite diverse in the socioeconomic sense, but not in the case of gender, race, and education. However, Participant three disagreed to this, and believed that OPFD was a “destination department” consisting of a diverse workforce. Participant three explained:

No, I'll take another angle. I think Oak Park is a place people try to get to. They're from all over the place. I think there are people who just grew up here. The fire department has people from all over northern Illinois who come. This is a destination department, people from all over northern Illinois. In our department, we do represent, in that regard, a wide range of people, backgrounds. I think Oak Park has that as well. People want to wind up here. Now, again, you could slice this six ways to Sunday, but, in that regard, I think we do match Oak Park. It's a destination community, it's a destination department (Appendix C).

For the quantitative aspect, two surveys (Appendix D and Appendix E) were distributed between the target samples. The Illinois Fire Department Diversity Survey Department Profile/Recruitment Efforts (Appendix D) ( $n=84$ ) was distributed electronically to over 200 Fire Chiefs within the Chicagoland Area and 100 Fire Chiefs in Cook County, Illinois. On the other hand, the student profile survey (Appendix E) ( $n=6$ ) was distributed to the Directors of 12 Paramedic Programs. For the qualitative aspect, an interview with the village attorney Mr. Stephanides (personal communication, October 11, 2017), the village director of human resources Mrs. Valdez (personal communication, October 16, 2017), and a focus group with two lieutenants and a firefighter/paramedic were conducted.

The findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data showed that the firefighters perceived that they did not have a workforce that reflected their community. Survey (Appendix D) results revealed that 55.95% believed that the workforce did not represent the diversity within the community. However, further exploration into the qualitative data revealed that the lack of diversity existed in the employment of people having different gender, race, and educational attainment. The OPFD workforce was perceived to be socioeconomically diverse. While the majority of the firefighters who responded in the survey were Caucasian (94.56%), the majority of the respondents believed that the department considered having a diverse workforce as a priority (52.38%). According to the interview with Mr. Stephanides (personal communication, October 11, 2017), the federal laws, state laws, ordinances, as well as the guiding philosophy of Oak Park prevented discrimination in hiring. In addition, Mrs. Valdez revealed that their hiring process tend to be impartial towards factors other than the qualifications in the job. The recruitment team also attempted hiring strategies which can attract different groups of people.

The participants of the focus group (Appendix C), as well as a majority of the survey

respondents, believed that their biggest challenge in recruitment was the lack of interest of the target audience, specifically women and the younger generation. The survey respondents also generally believed that job requirements posed a challenge in hiring. While the participants of the focus group also held similar beliefs, the participants expressed that retaining this requirement was preferable to maintain the standards of the service. The participants suggested that increasing interest among high school and college students to take on EMT programs, as well as reaching out to the community to provide an easier access to fulfilling the job requirements may be helpful in increasing the number of potential candidates for hiring.

### **Discussion**

While the quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that the OPFD workforce appeared to be lacking in gender and racial diversity, the population of Oak Park was considered to be diverse. The U.S. Census Bureau (2015) estimated that the majority of Oak Park population consisted of females and Caucasians. However, statistics of the OPFD population with a total number of 63 personnel indicated that the workforce consisted mainly of males and Caucasians. The survey respondents (Appendix D and E), as well as the focus group (Appendix C) and interview participants (Appendix A and B) held similar beliefs that the OPFD's workforce did not represent the diverse population of the village. However, measuring diversity in the workforce was not based on the population as a whole, but on the population of the applicant pool (Walsh, 2016). Mrs. Valdez, (personal communication, October 16, 2017), (Appendix B), the human resource director of Oak Park, revealed that the recruitment for the fire department encountered challenges in attracting women and people from minority groups as applicants. The majority of the survey respondents (Appendix D) and focus group (Appendix C) participants supported this claim.

The Village of Oak Park characterizes an urban/suburban lifestyle, with the majority of the area being residential homes. Mrs. Valdez claimed that expanding recruitment efforts into the Chicago public school system may increase diversity in the candidate pool. In the Village of Oak Park, there are eight primary schools, two middle schools and two high schools (public and private) within the community with over 4,000 students and faculty in attendance (Oak Park Fire Department, 2015, p. 5). The participants of the survey (Appendix D), interview (J. Scott-Valdez, personal communication, October 16, 2017), and focus group (Appendix C), generally believed that exposing the high school and college students to the EMT program, paramedic school, and to the firefighters may increase the general population's interest in a career in firefighting.

According to the critical race theory (CRT), it is considered stereotypical to assume that the minorities in firefighting, such as females, African Americans, and other races, are not interested in this career (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Females and other minority groups tend to be underrepresented in the OPFD mainly because of their lack of exposure to OPFD and the marketing of this career which targets certain groups of people. Furthermore, legal concerns such as laws and resolutions govern a non-racist recruitment process, which is also a part of the CRT (Hulett et al., 2008; Johnson, 2016; Ruccicci, & Saldivar, 2014).

Findings of this study may help the Village of Oak Park to develop strategies to increase diversity in the OPFD workforce. Generally, the problem in the lack of diversity stemmed from a lack of diversity in the candidate pool. This study included an examination of the existing or perceived recruitment strategies which are considered effective in attracting different applicants. Consequently, the qualitative aspect of the study helped present a naturalistic view of the reality in the context of workforce diversity as perceived by the village attorney, village director of

human resources, and three OPFD personnel. Therefore, implications of this study include application and proper implementation of the identified recruitment strategies to increase diversity in the workforce.

Based on the participants' perceptions, exposing the younger generation to an explorer programs, the EMT program, and firefighting in general, may help increase the interest among the general student population to pursue a career in OPFD. The participants generally perceived that engaging the local community groups may also increase the diversity of the applicants.

### **Recommendations**

The results from this research have identified numerous recruitment strategies for increasing the diversity of a workforce. The results also provided that one of the main contributing factors for the lack of diversity in the OPFD is the candidate pool.

The first recommendation was to develop strategies to initially increase the diversity of the candidate pool in order to increase the diversity of the workforce. The second recommendation was that the human resources department should focus on creating a targeted outreach and recruiting campaign for women and minorities in the local high schools as well as the community colleges. The third recommendation was that the OPFD should financially support the design, development, and implementation of a fire explorer/internship program with local partners such as the Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts. The fourth recommendation was that the OPFD needs to actively participate in career days at the local high schools, community colleges and local paramedic programs. The fifth recommendation was the Village of Oak Park's Board of Police and Fire Commissioners should reevaluate the job requirements for the OPFD.

Recommendations for future readers include exploration of the perceptions of females and minority groups in their communities regarding the development of a career in the fire service. Perceptions of students regarding the fire service may also be explored. Furthermore, a phenomenological study targeting the recruiters of the fire service may help identify their lived experiences in trying to encourage minority groups to apply.

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**Appendix A**

## Diversity Interview Transcripts-Paul Stephanides, Attorney

Interviewer: Deputy Fire Chief of Operation Peter J. Pilafas

Interviewee: Paul Stephanides Village of Oak Park Attorney

Interview Setting: Interview conducted in conference at the Central Fire Station. The interview was conducted at 1230 PM on Wednesday October 11, 2017

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer: Please state title, name and years of service with the Village of Oak Park.

Interviewee: Village Attorney for the Village of Oak Park, name Paul Stephanides, years of service with the Village of Oak Park 4 years and 1 month. I have been a municipal attorney since 1992, when I started with the City of Naperville, so that's 25 years prior to that with the Chicago Park District for a few years, so I have been practicing for approximately 28 years.

Interviewer: What are some of federal laws that govern diversity in the workplace?

Interviewee: First you have to start with the United States Constitution and as far as specific laws that have been passed by Congress. There are several laws addressing issues that arise with a diverse workforce. I will briefly discuss some of the important federal laws pertaining to your subject but most of this information is available through U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Let's start with one of the most important federal laws, Title VII of the Civil Rights act of 1964; this prohibits all public and private employers from discriminating in employment based on race, sex, color, religion or national origin. Title VII also created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce the law. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits all public and private employers from discriminating against qualified applicants on the grounds of having a disability. This act also requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation to the applicants with a disability, unless doing so would

create an undue hardship on the organization. Age Discrimination is one that an employer is prohibited from discriminating against an employee based on their age. Based on my memory it protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older. Equal Pay Act prohibits the difference in pay based on gender. In short, the equal pay act requires that male and female employees be paid equally if their job are substantially equal. Pregnancy Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination against women based on pregnancy, childbirth, or medical conditions related to pregnancy. Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act prohibits all employer from discriminating in employment based on genetic information of applicant, employee, or family members. In my opinion, there are many benefits to a diverse workforce but there are also several legal concerns to consider. I just cover some the most common federal laws that relate to diversity.

Interviewer: Thank you for covering the most common federal laws that govern a diverse workforce. Follow-up question: Does the federal government provide any resources for employers on promoting a diverse workforce?

Interviewee: I know the federal government offers some resources for employers that want to promote diversity and inclusion. The E-RACE initiative is a program that the EEOC has to help free the workplace from discrimination.

Interviewer: What Illinois laws govern diversity in the workplace?

Interviewee: Well we talked about the United States Constitution also there is the Illinois Constitution and of course the Illinois following all the federal laws pertained to diversity in the workforce. There is also the Illinois Human Rights Act that covers all public and private employers from discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color religion national origin and age. I know the Illinois Human Right Act encompass a more detail list, so you may want to explore it

further. Illinois has a Diversity Enrichment Program (DEP) that is administrated by the Illinois Department of Central Management Services. The DEP provides assistance to state agencies in developing programs to comply with affirmative action and equal employment opportunity goals.

Interviewer: What ordinances or resolutions does the Village of Oak Park have on diversity in the workplace?

Interviewee: The first one is the Oak Park Diversity Statement is adopted by the Village Board after each election. The Village of Oak Park Diversity Statement read as “The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life. Oak Park has committed itself to equality not only because it is legal, but because it is right; not only because equality is ethical, but because it is desirable for us and our children. Ours is a dynamic community that encourages the contributions of all citizens, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital and/or familial status, mental and/or physical impairment and/or disability, military status, economic class, political affiliation, or any of the other distinguishing characteristics that all too often divide people in society.

Oak Park’s proud tradition of citizen involvement and accessible local government challenge us to show others how such a community can embrace change while still respecting and preserving the best of the past. Creating a mutually respectful, multicultural environment does not happen on its own; it must be intentional. Our goal is for people of widely differing backgrounds to do more than live next to one another. Through interaction, we believe we can reconcile the apparent paradox of appreciating and even celebrating our differences while at the same time developing consensus on a shared vision for the future.

Oak Park recognizes that a free, open, and inclusive community is achieved through full and broad participation of all its citizenry. We believe the best decisions are made when everyone is represented in decision-making and power is shared collectively.

Oak Park is uniquely equipped to accomplish these objectives, because we affirm all people as members of the human family. We reject the notion of race as a barrier dividing us and we reject prejudicial behavior towards any group of people. We believe residence in this Village should be open to anyone interested in sharing our benefits and responsibilities.

To achieve our goals, the Village of Oak Park must continue to support the Board's fair housing philosophy that has allowed us to live side-by-side and actively seek to foster unity in our community. We believe that mutual understanding among individuals of diverse backgrounds can best be attained with an attitude of reciprocal good will and increased association. The Village of Oak Park commits itself to a future ensuring equal access, full participation in all of the Village's institutions and programs, and equality of opportunity in all Village operating policies. The success of this endeavor prepares us to live and work in the twenty-first century. It is our intention that such principles will be a basis for policy and decision making in Oak Park. The President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park reaffirm their dedication and commitment to these precepts."

The Village has in place a section of the Village code section 2-30-2 which pertains to the Citizen Police Oversight Committee and that provides that the committee monitor and evaluate Village effort regarding diversity in the Police Department. Final last year the Village adopted a woman and minority business enterprise participation policy pursuant to a resolution.

Interviewer: Is there anything else, you would like to share about laws governing workplace diversity?

As far laws regarding workplace diversity not necessary law but there are numerous cases that have been decided starting with United States Supreme Court there was the cases Ricci versus DeStefano that was decided in 2009. That case involved test results for a fire department promotion and what happen in that case the fire department throughout all the test results due to the fact that black candidates were not eligible for promotions under the result of the test and the court held that the fire department in that case could not discard the exam results the fire department was in New Haven, Connecticut. As far as cases in this circuit the federal which is the seventh circuit of appeals there was the cases of the Chicago Firefighter Local 2 versus City of Chicago this case challenged the banding of test results for a promotion in the Chicago Fire Department and the banding was done based on racial banding and the court held that banding is not in itself against federal law.

Interviewer: Thank you for the interview

(End of interview)

**Appendix B**

## Diversity Interview Transcripts-Julia Scott-Valdez, Human Resource

Interviewer: Deputy Fire Chief of Operation Peter J. Pilafas

Interviewee: Julia Scott-Valdez Village of Oak Park Human Resource Director/Assistant Village Manager

Interview Setting: Interview conducted in conference room 124 at the Village Hall. The interview was conducted at 100 PM on Monday October 16, 2017.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer: Please state title, name and years of service with the Village of Oak Park.

Interviewee: Village of Oak Park Director of Human Resources/ Assistant Village Manager, Julia Scott-Valdez, 15 months of service. Prior to Oak Park: City of Rockford for 18 years. Last 8 years as the Deputy City Administrator/Director of Human Resources

Interviewer: In your experience, what are the advantages of having a diverse workforce in the Fire Department?

Interviewee: You know, that's such a big question. I really kind of struggled to keep it intelligent because I can ramble on for a while, but, you know, especially when you look at firefighters and police officers, are really, the frontline, the folks that our citizens see first and, quite often, at a point in time in their lives when things are going really bad. So, you know, we always talk about how a government should reflect its citizens. I think specifically our first responders should because, if nothing else, for a level of comfort, people feel better sometimes when someone looks like them or speaks like them. They feel like they could be understood a little bit more, that their problems will be understood. So, and you know, then you just look at problem solving or communication, really the more diversity you have in a work group, the more likely you are to find better solutions.

As our first responders, firefighters and paramedics meet are truly the hands-on, forward face to our community. As such, they should reflect the citizens we serve. This reflection is not just for the sake of appearance; rather it is to provide increased understanding in communication, problem-solving and cultural norms.

Interviewer: What are the disadvantages of not having a diverse (women and minorities) workforce in the Fire Department?

Interviewee: Well, I think it shuts doors, quite frankly. And, I think that whether we intend to or not could create just kind of an atmosphere of feeling suspicious. So, if a workforce tends to be all one gender, all one race, people outside of that gender and race feel like they've been shut and they stop listening and stop participating, too. So, it's things like how you're messaging public safety issues can get lost in the translation because you're not trusted, and I think trust is essential in this line of work, right?

Interviewer: What is affecting the diversity in the Oak Park Fire Department workforce?

Interviewee: The choice to become a firefighter or paramedic is often generational. The training and the mindset start at a young age. Because of the intergenerational coaching which seems inherent in the fire services, successful applicants have the advantage as they understand the hiring and selection process at an earlier age. For example, the son or daughter of a firefighter is more likely to know that volunteering for a small department will them in the selection process. Education also becomes a challenge. Chicago high school now have a career path for public safety which allows them to move from their High school classes to a Junior College but those opportunities are not always present or encouraged in minority neighborhoods. The approach needs to start in the junior high level through more direct experiences and opportunities which

allows the young person to make better choices in their career and education path.

Interviewer Follow up question: Do you think the Oak Park Fire Department licensed paramedic requirement at the time of hire is affecting the diverse of the workforce:

Interviewee: Maybe, but it's not a requirement I would want to do away with, but I could see where it could be difficult because we're not surrounded with nursing schools or anything like that that we can pull directly from. We're going to have to make an effort to go to those schools. I think that it's something. I think it's an important requirement to have, but we've got to think outside the box to figure out how we get young people into that. So, do we start our own courses? You know, I know you teach, right, at some of the junior colleges around. How do we get those started in high school? To get those classes to be a paramedic, what do we need to do? We've talked a little bit about some of the scouting programs that could be out there, but that's labor intensive. Anything we do is going to cost time and money, but maybe it's just an investment we need to make.

Interviewer: The paramedic requirement might be a barrier, if the programs don't have a diverse student population. Do you think that has an impact on our diversity in our fire department?

Interviewee: Right. Certainly, if the pool we're drawing from is predominantly one gender and one race then it's going to make it more difficult for us to meet that. We just become kind of caught in this continuous loop of pulling from the same well and the well isn't very rich. I think that we're just going to have think outside of the box on what to do, quite frankly, because, unless we decide that we are not going to require paramedics, and we say we'll bring you in as a firefighter or we'll bring you in as a paramedic. My last experience was you were a firefighter ... I think you had to be a firefighter for 18 months and then you could become a paramedic, but then, we also saw challenges with getting people to school. So, we had people who should have

been in that program five years before they actually got into because it becomes a staffing issue. It becomes issues with they tend to be young and out for 12 weeks when their wife has a child or they have a child, so I think there's not a better way to do it.

It's not ... eliminating that requirement won't give us the paramedics we need, so it becomes that balance of providing the service we need to the community and, as you know, we need more paramedics than firefighters probably, or providing the diversity that we need. I think that we're just going to have to think of a better way to do it. You know, at the end of the day, we can steal all we want from Chicago because a lot of people join Chicago's firefighters and don't, or as paramedics rather, and don't get on as firefighters, too. I think you could say that definitely it's a roadblock, but, I guess, my perspective has always been anything that's the roadblock. You figure out how to get around it.

Interviewer: How do the elected officials and department heads view the diversity (woman and minorities) make-up in the Village of Oak Park?

Interviewee: I can't answer for everyone but I can state that the Village of Oak Park views diversity as a necessity but they do not want to limit diversity by definition. In other words, the Village encourages diversity on every level.

Interviewer: What challenges do you feel that occur in recruiting women and minorities in the fire service?

Interviewee: Well, I talked about education and I talk a little bit, too, when I wrote out my answers is, recruitment in many minorities is very relationship based and we have not taken that approach here from what I can tell. We found success, Rockford really struggled with this issue too, although you don't have to be a paramedic first, we still struggled with the diversity issue. So, we did a few things differently and one of them was we began to give points to people that

went to Rockford public high schools. I think you could get one point, which isn't a lot, but sometimes it is a make or break. We also established programs in the high schools, we got directly involved with the high schools who were developing a career path curriculum. So, we got directly involved with that. But then, we did something really, really unique and that is we just started going to all the churches. We started talking to grandparents, we started talking to parents' groups, and I think the most interesting thing we did, Jeff Clowhite was our recruiter, he would just go out and go into the African American neighborhoods where the barber shops, kind of that cultural social gathering place, he would just go out and sit down and buy ice cream for everybody at the shop, or tea or whatever, and hang out and talk. Not to recruit, just to hang out and talk and, you know, built relationships in those groups that they would say, "Hey, you should go apply, you should become a firefighter."

Interviewer: What are human resource employment strategies for developing a diverse workforce in the Fire Department?

Interviewee: Well, I budgeted for 2018 some dollars to start working with somebody who specializes in this. A lot of times, just those consultants will have end roads to direct advertising, places you can go to recruit, people you can talk to, so that's kind of our high-level approach. We do want to try to get and start doing more direct recruitment, so show up at the colleges around town. You know, Oak Park High School, while we can go visit there, I don't think that's a big recruitment avenue for us. We might get a few still, but really where we would do better is in the Chicago public schools and we have to figure out how to start stealing their people. That's really kind of my plan, steal other people's recruits.

Interviewer: What recruitment methods have been developed and implemented to increase diversity throughout the Village of Oak Park?

Interviewee: Throughout the Village as a whole is we ... it's kind of interesting that we've actually done better at diversity hiring by not trying so hard to be better at diversity hiring, if that makes any sense. We really developed some very impartial tools to view our candidates and, when we're looking at who we're picking for the best candidates, they're diverse. So, we've taken any kind of approach to ... we don't even meet a candidate until after we've made a choice to test them. But we're also reaching out more ... it's more generational too, so we're doing more of our recruitment online. So, we're just getting out to more people, just looked for some nontraditional recruitment avenues too and that seems to have worked.

Interviewer: Why is creating a diverse workforce a priority for the Village of Oak Park?

Interviewee: Well, it certainly is for me, and Cara and I talked about it quite a bit, but I think it really gets down to ... my answer that I wrote was pretty simple, the Village deserves it, the residents deserve it. I think it's just you bring so much more to the table when you have a diverse work group. And when you walk into Village Hall as a resident, you should feel comfortable. No matter what group you belong to, you should feel comfortable walking the entire Village Hall and feel that you are going to be treated with respect and, sometimes, we make mistakes.

You know, there are certain cultural norms that we might not understand, For example, I remember learning that older African American gentlemen wearing hats, you were to call them "mister" until the moment they give you permission not to. You might not understand that if you didn't grow up in that neighborhood or that culture. I just think it allows us to build better solutions for our citizens if we can understand and have truly been a part of that culture.

Interviewer: Is there anything else, you would like to share regarding strategies for developing a diverse workforce?

Interviewee: It's not easy. There's really no true definition of a diverse work culture and I have seen a lot of arguing about what diversity means and even what numbers you should use. For example, you should only have to use the argument put forward as I should only have to use, rather than saying our village is 50 percent Latino. Well, only 20 percent of them are of employment age, so I should only have to worry about getting my number at 20 percent. So, you just hear so much argument about it.

It's still, I think, a very contentious area for most people that they don't truly understand. And I've certainly had employees come to me to say, you know, "You've made choices because that employee was White and I'm black." And I've had to say, "But tell me if a White employee's married to an African American gentleman, don't you think they understand diversity?" You know, so sometimes you really have to work with people too because everyone has their own definition of what diversity is.

Interviewer: Do you believe that the Village of Oak Park has a workforce that represents the community that they serve?

Interviewee: I think if I were to do just the general raw numbers, I could probably argue that maybe yes, I do. But then I'd have to look at what positions those are in and I would say, at the frontline entry level, yes, we do. If I were to look beyond that at the middle management level and the upper management level, I would say no, we don't.

Interviewer: Thank you for the interview.

(End of interview)

### Appendix C

Oak Park Fire Department Diversity Focus Group Transcripts

Interviewer: Deputy Fire Chief of Operation Peter J. Pilafas

Participants: Oak Park Fire Department Members: Participant one: Lieutenant, Participant two: Firefighter/Paramedic & Participant three: Lieutenant

Interview Setting: Interview conducted in Deputy Chief Office at the Central Fire Station. The interview was conducted at 3 PM on Monday October 2, 2017.

(Start of Interview)

Before we begin the focus group interview, I would like to confirm that you understand that your names will not be published for this research. You understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that you may refuse to answer any of the questions.

Participant one: Yes, I understand my involvement in your research

Participant two: Yes, I also understand.

Participant three: Yes.

Interviewer Question one: Do you feel the Oak Park Fire Department workforce represent the community it serves? Please explain your answer?

Participant one: I do, because I feel that we are middle to upper level community, and I feel the department represents that in our workforce and just how we operate day in and day out, and the employees we hire are of a high caliber to match the community that we have.

Participant two: My question to you is: In what regard? Socioeconomic? Racial?

Interviewer: Do you feel that Oak Park fire department workforce represents the community it serves? The community they serve is the population of Oak Park.

Participant two: Oak Park is a diverse community, and I think that it does not match the community that it serves, based on the population numbers when it comes to the different racial

groups, if you're looking at it from that perspective. Socioeconomically? Yes, absolutely.

Education? Again, I don't know if that's something that you're considering or not. It probably wouldn't match it there, either, but, as a whole, I think we're about 75% there.

Participant three: No, I'll take another angle. I think Oak Park is a place people try to get to. They're from all over the place. I think there are people who just grew up here. The fire department has people from all over northern Illinois who come. This is a destination department, people from all over northern Illinois. In our department, we do represent, in that regard, a wide range of people, backgrounds. I think Oak Park has that as well. People want to wind up here. Now, again, you could slice this six ways to Sunday, but, in that regard, I think we do match Oak Park. It's a destination community, it's a destination department.

Interviewer: Question two: What challenges do you feel occur in recruiting women and minorities in the Oak Park Fire Department?

Participant one: I mean, at a base level, ignoring financial issues, the requirements by their nature filter out maybe more of a diverse workforce, and reasons outside probably all of our control.

Also, locally, there's no one spot where ... It's not like we have a school or a feeder system in the community that we can recruit from. We're not recruiting from Oak Park. We're recruiting from all around. Maybe there's room to improve in where we advertise, or look at our feeder programs, maybe. Locally, we have issues.

Participant two: Oak Park is an affluent community and, as such, I think it's gonna be very difficult to try to recruit from within the community. We have to reach out beyond the community for that. Unfortunately, because, as you said earlier, the requirements, especially the job requirements, the prerequisites that we have for employment here, limits the labor pool. We don't have a huge amount of minority applicants, female, African-American, Hispanic, or

otherwise. I think Chicago picks up a lot of them because of their application process, completely different than ours. Me, personally, I applied here because it was a diverse community. That's what I was looking forward to, working in a diverse community, so my choices were limited, really. In my day, it was Oak Park, Chicago and Evanston, which have completely different prerequisites and application processes, but ultimately, it boils down to just reaching out and trying to hire or recruit, maybe, more interest in our fire department through marketing and advertising to try to find people that fit with us.

Participant three: This time, I actually agree whole-heartedly with what [Participant two] just said. I think, if we were to make a concerted effort to make this more of an appealing job for especially women, I just don't see this being a real appealing job for women. I come from a household of women and none of them have any interest in doing a job like this. I think that's part of it right there. Just finding a way to market this job, this position, to maybe a group of people who this is not really what they're looking for. That's with women. With African-Americans, I think we do. We just got to find a way to get out into the communities and, you know, with being the paramedic being a requirement here, that is another big challenge we have, I think, in that community as well.

Interviewer: Question three What is affecting the diversity in the Oak Park Fire Department workforce?

Participant one: I guess I would have to say, I don't think, internally, we have any major issues with any of our [crosstalk 06:06].

Participant three: We're very objective, basically.

Participant one: Yeah. I think, if anything, it just comes back to the previous question. We're given people from whoever tests on the list and whatever prerequisites the village sets for those

people, and I think once they're in the door, I don't know that we have any direct challenges. I think we certainly would with the females over the last few years. At least in my time here, I think there was a very welcoming ...

Interviewer: Adding to Questions three: Do you believe the Oak Park Fire Department manages diversity well?

Participant three: I think, like what Participant 1 said, once they're in the door, absolutely. We have very welcoming personnel, workforce, labor staff, here. I mean, I think we open the doors to everybody. It's getting them in the door.

Participant two: Yeah, I think the bottom line is that it can't go on back to job requirements or prerequisites. Diversity was affected through retirements. A lot of the African-Americans that we had working here, they're retired, but, again ... the job requirements have changed since then, and that happened through attrition. Now, ultimately again, it goes back to labor pool. It's trying to get more minorities to get the education to be paramedics, to want to be firefighters, and just reaching out to the community and trying to get them involved from an early age. Like what Jake was saying earlier, just trying to get them while they're young. Trying to develop that interest while they're young, and seeing what happens. It's going to be a long-term commitment to try to increase women and minorities, at large. It's going to take time.

Interviewer: Question four: What type of recruitment strategies can the Oak Park Fire Department use to create a diverse (women and minorities) workforce?

Participant one: I mean, what type of approach does the military take? Ultimately, we want the most qualified individuals, regardless.

Participant three: I would say going to college campuses and paramedic programs would be a great strategy to recruit for diversity.

Participant two: Do you think getting rid of the paramedic will help with creating a diverse workforce?

Participant one: No, I don't think so.

Participant three: No.

Participant one: I think that we need the paramedic requirement. I think we need the requirements to maintain the quality of service.

Participant two: Well, removing the paramedic requirement could open the doors to a more diverse group.

Participant three: Yeah.

Participant one: But I'm talking about qualified people. Are we going to help them become qualified by sending them to paramedic school?

Participant three: Or do we change the standards to make them qualified?

Participant one: In that regard, I would say no. Don't change the standards.

Participant two: How will they affect the community?

Participant one: Well, if the village chooses to accept the financial cost of bringing them into, that's a different story, because they may be qualified and just not trained, which is a completely different discussion.

Participant two: I mean, the police does a lot of recruiting. A lot of veterans apply for police jobs, you know?

Participant three: I think wasn't it Madison, Wisconsin that did that? To increase their female applicants, they went out and recruited women from different sports teams at the University of Wisconsin, and they had tremendous success to bringing women in.

Participant one: But the same problem comes down, because you would have to modify, here, our entrance protocol to drop the paramedic requirement, or at least, at a minimum, make it an EMT requirement, but that would be across the board, then. Is the village willing to make that financial commitment to allow those qualified people in the door, and then train them up to the level that we need them to be?

Participant two: Now, another thing we could consider is, I'll tell you for a fact, I had a friend whose fiancée applied here, Jane Smith, she did not want to be on the fire side. She wanted to just be on the ambulance. She, ultimately, just held out for Chicago. She was on the list to be hired here, she just took her name off the list because of that. She just didn't want to do the fire side. So, again, maybe looking at it that way, do we want to keep certain people that just want to do para-medicine? On the ambulance, throughout their career. That, I think, would increase the opportunities.

Participant three: Just to give you a little background on EMTs as gender and racial makeup ... I know the gender one, because this one sticks in my head ... over 30% of the workforce for paramedics is female.

Participant two: Right, that's why I brought that up, because, if we broke it up that way and we made a commitment to them, that they'd only be on the ambulance, then they apply.

Participant one: But would we be segregating our department just by medics and firefighters?

Participant two: I don't think so. No. We would still train together. We would still need to drill together. High rise ops. It'd be specific tasks. I don't think so.

Participant one: The pay would be different.

Participant two: Would it?

Participant one: Well, you're not doing two jobs. You're only doing one.

Participant two: But the guys that are doing the firefighting, that are going to be on the apparatus, aren't going to be on the ambulance as much, but we would all be paramedics. That's not to say that they wouldn't be trained as firefighters.

Participant three: But they're not going to be firefighters.

Participant two: Again, I'm just throwing that out there. They could get the firefighter training.

Interviewer: Just to recap. What Types of recruitment strategies do you feel can help Oak park Fire Department create a more diverse workforce?

Participant one: Well, maybe we should look at talking to the local boy scouts and girl scouts.

Another idea we should partner up with the park district, church or community groups.

Participant two: We should look at local fire science program through the community college or high schools.

Participant one: We should go down that medical road. It is interesting, kind of a [inaudible 13:36] that we're thinking about it. You go to, like, maybe not a nursing program, because they kinda got their mind set. Like, more of the CNA programs, what is generally a low-paying job, work is always not the best. You know, you end up in a nursing home or some odd thing. Those people are usually still looking to move up in the world. They might go to a medic school on their own for a year, as opposed to a two to four-year nursing thing [crosstalk 14:02].

Participant three: Well, I was thinking maybe another idea is having an internship program that focuses on everybody as a whole, but through the application process is not so much target or discriminate, but develop kind of like an explorer program, but our explorer program will actually see them all the way through to medic school. [crosstalk 14:28]

Participant two: We talked about recruiting at colleges. What about paramedic programs?

Participant one: What about EMT programs? Are they more diverse, perhaps?

Participant two: I'll tell you what, they did this in California, in southern California actually, at a grassroots level, where they setup an EMT program to get a lot of the kids in that neighborhood, in that community, through EMT school, so that they could find a job, and it was all minority based. That was an interesting program that they setup.

Participant one: Another recruitment idea is block parties. I mean, we get the questions all the time. "How many female firefighters do you have?" It's just interesting.

Interviewer: Question five: Is there any other information you would like to provide regarding recruitment and diversity in the Oak Park Fire Department?

Participant two: I guess is diversity a priority at the Oak Park Fire Department? I don't think suburban departments get as scrutinized when it comes to diversity, because it usually is the big city departments that this is where I see the problem from. I've seen Chicago, New York, Seattle, and LA country face diversity issues but it's the bigger, metropolitan areas that really have to deal with this problem. Even though we're a smaller community, and we only have 63 members, we're small. We're basically small fish in a big pool.

Participant three: Great point but we must still embrace diversity in our workforce.

Participant one: It really comes down to the marketable labor workforce to create diversity.

Participant two: Well, again, I mentioned that community out in California, because that's what they did. They took these kids that would not have thought about getting into school, and got them through it. They paid for the program, they did all of this, but they created that job market, they created that, because [crosstalk 17:53] they catered to that community, I guess. I don't know how else to put it.

Participant three: Well, they created their own labor pool.

Participant one: Yes

Participant three: I mean, I think in my paramedic program, maybe there was one or two minorities. As far as, I'm talking about black or Hispanic. There was definitely a lot more women than I would have thought, but, ultimately, like I said, a lot of the women don't want to be firefighters.

Participant three: Do you think ... and I guess I love to just hear it ... I know we mentioned the testing process, the hiring process, that it has some impact on getting to a diverse applicant pool. I mean, especially, even though we have barriers just based on requirements that you need for education, but we also have the physical part of it, too. Do you think the CPAT throws up any barriers for any [crosstalk 19:14]?

Participant two: Well, I guess that, because of the nature of this job, if it has to, I think it's an effective tool to vet a group for us, a pool for us, to choose from, who are at least minimally ...

Participant three: They have a minimum requirement, at least, that's going to meet the requirement system, right?

Participant one: Yeah. I mean, I guess I kinda agree with that, but then, I mean, it's unofficial without doing studies, but I look at, like, Lockport Fire Department. I just know them. You know, they're a little bit bigger than us, they got about 100 people, but they got at least seven or eight women on the job there.

Participant two: I mean, well, in a sense, yes, I think certainly the physical aspect, but I don't know that any more so than ... I mean, you hear about guys wash out of that CPAT all the time.

Participant three: Sure, absolutely.

Participant two: I personally think it's not a barrier, it's just a hurdle.

Participant one: It weeds out the ones that really want it versus the ones who don't.

Participant two: I don't think it's anymore of a challenge for us here than it is for any other community, when it comes to diversity.

Participant two: I'll tell you what, man. When I was down at IFSI years ago through fire college, the class that I took, we were moving two and a half inch, and it was with a Beloit female firefighter. She was awesome. I had absolutely no problems with her. She could handle a job just fine. It was just interesting. It was one of my first times working with a female firefighter and I was very impressed by her. Again, it's not a barrier for me, so long as we're all qualified and can do the job.

Participant three: That's where I think you said it right there. It's actually that you're a qualified candidate. That's what the Illinois municipal code is basically the Illinois firefighter hiring act. It has, basically, provided guidelines of a process that you have to meet, basically, to become a firefighter on the department. Now, some places can pick different things that they want, but most of the fire departments, at least here in the state of Illinois, have adopted the CPAT as their standard, but some of them require different requirements. Not out of high school, but a college associate degree. Some require you to live in the town where you work.

I don't think, as long as we just don't discriminate, which we don't, that we're on the right track. There are slight improvements that we need to make to maybe increase the diversity within our workforce, but I'm not saying that we're terrible.

Participant one: It's my opinion it comes down to what is the village willing to accept, and I say the village, the trustees and the village manager and, by proxy, the community, what it costs in expenses the community realistically willing to accept for a diverse workforce. Like, if it's a priority on the village's list and on the board's list, then you're going to, you know, "All right, now, drop the medic, EMT only," and is the village and the community willing to shoulder the

burden or the cost to meet the ... you know. To me, that's where it comes down to. That's where the lynch pin is in all this. Yes, we can advertise all day long. Not going to change the fact that there's just not a lot of female, African-American, Hispanic paramedics out there. That has nothing to do with us. To me, that's where this comes down to. At a community level, is the community willing to accept the burden of cost for diversity, and that sounds bad in a sense, but I don't mean it in a bad way. To me, that's where this is...

Interviewer: Thanking for taking the time to be involved in this focus group. Before we end is there any other comments you would like to share?

Participant one: No, good luck on your research.

Participant two: No, thank you.

Participant three: No, excellent topic.

(End of Interview)

## Appendix D

### Illinois Fire Department Diversity Survey Profile/Recruitment Efforts

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey which supports research being conducted for a National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program paper. The purpose of this research is to identify strategies that will assist the Oak Park Fire Department with the ability to increase diversity within the workforce. The survey is collecting department names and locations so that data can be separated geographically. No identifying information of any respondent will be used in the research paper, only the data. If you have any questions regarding the survey or this research project in general, please contact Deputy Fire Chief Peter Pilafas at [ppilafas@oak-park.us](mailto:ppilafas@oak-park.us). By completing and submitting this survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in the study. Your participation is appreciated. Please complete survey by October 2, 2017

Thank you, your feedback is very important.

1. Fire Department Name, City and State

2. What type of fire department do you work in?

- Municipality
- Fire Protection District
- Volunteer
- Other (please specify)

3. What is the population of permanent residents your fire department serves?

4. What best describes your department:

- Career (Please answer Q6 only)
- Career/Contract (Please answer Q6 & Q8 only)
- Volunteer (Please answer Q7 only)
- Career/Part-time (Please answer Q6 & Q7 only)
- Part-time/Contract (Please answer Q7 & Q8 only)
- Contract (Please answer Q8 only)
- Other (please specify)

5. Career Department Personnel:

Number of full-time (career) firefighters:

How many are female?

Number of full-time (career) paramedics:

How many are female?

Number of full-time (career) firefighter/paramedics:

How many are female?

6. Part-time & Volunteer Personnel:

Number of part-time firefighters:

How many are female?

Number of part-time paramedics:

How many are female?

Number of part-time firefighter/paramedics:

How many are female?

7. Contract Services Personnel:

Number of contract firefighters:

How many are female?

Number of contract paramedics:

How many are female?

Number of contract firefighter/paramedics

How many are female?

8. Does your fire department currently have a workforce that represents the community you serve?

Yes

No

9. What is the racial makeup of all members of your department (Please provide total number regardless of department member or contracted)?

Caucasian

African American

Hispanic

Asian American

Other

10. Does your fire department consider having a diverse workforce a priority?

Yes

No

11. Do you currently have difficulty attracting diversity (women & minorities) to your fire department?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

12. What are the biggest challenges that your fire department is facing when recruiting for a more diverse workforce (Women & Minorities): (Please select all that apply)

Job requirements (EMT-Paramedic, Basic Operations Firefighter)

CPAT (Candidate Physical Ability Test)

Education (Associates Degree)

Support from the leaders

Funding

Diversity Planning/Effective recruitment program

Testing Process Standards

Lack of interest from target audience

Other (please specify)

13. Is your department working toward increasing the diversity and gender makeup through an active recruitment plan?

- Yes
- No

14. If yes, what best describes your recruitment plan?

- Recruit more women
- Recruit more minorities
- Focus on reaching target groups
- Focus on having a fire department that represents the community.
- Other (please specify)

15. Does your fire department have any programs that recruit for a diverse workforce?

- Yes
- No

16. Please select the programs that your Fire Department would use if they were trying to recruit for diversity?

- Explorer Programs
- EMT Basic & Paramedic programs
- Colleges
- High Schools
- Public Education
- Church and Community Groups

Internship programs

Other (please specify)

17. Are your elected officials & fire administration satisfied with the diversity and gender makeup of the current workforce?

Yes

No

**Appendix E**

## Illinois Paramedic Programs Diversity Survey Student Profile

Dear Illinois Paramedic Directors,

My name is Peter J Pilafas and I am an Executive Fire Officer student at the National Fire Academy. For my final project, I am conducting research for the Oak Park Fire Department on diversity. The purpose of this research is to identify strategies that will assist the Oak Park Fire Department with increasing diversity within the workforce. I am looking for data on the gender and racial makeup of students that graduate from Illinois Paramedic Programs from 2010 through 2016. I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing a survey. All data pertaining to this research, agencies or departments will remain strictly confidential. Agency names or departments will not to be provided to any party or included in publication without their consent. If you choose to participate in this research study, please complete the survey by October 16th, 2017.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my research study. The data collected will provide useful information regarding the diversity makeup of Illinois Paramedic Programs. It will also assist the Oak Park Fire Department with developing recruitment strategies to create a diverse workforce. If you would like a copy of the final research paper, please let me know by email. Completion of the survey will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. Please complete survey by October 16, 2017.

1. Name and Location of Paramedic Program? This information will not be published.

2. Gender and Racial makeup of Paramedic Program 2010-2016 - Caucasian

How many students were Caucasian Males?

How many students were Caucasian Females?

3. Gender and Racial makeup of Paramedic Program 2010-2016 - African American

How many students were African American Males?

How many students were African American Females?

4. Gender and Racial makeup of Paramedic Program 2010-2016 - Hispanic

How many students were Hispanic Males?

How many students were Hispanic Females?

5. Gender and Racial makeup of Paramedic Program 2010-2016 - Asian

How many students were Asian Males?

How many students were Asian Females?

6. Gender and Racial makeup of Paramedic Program 2010-2016 - Other

How many students were of another race Males?

How many students were of another race Females?

7. Is the Director of the Paramedic Program satisfied with the diversity and gender makeup of students that attended 2010 through 2016?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

8. Do you currently have difficulty attracting women and minorities to your Paramedic Program?

If no, skip Question 9.

Yes

No

9. If yes, what are the biggest challenges your Paramedic Program face today attracting women and minorities?

Reaching target audience

Effective recruitment program

Lack of interest from women and minorities

Education requirements

Other (please specify)