

**Police Department**  
**City of Keene, New Hampshire**

**Date:** January 7, 2025

**To:** Steven Stewart, Police Chief

**From:** Mike Kopcha, Police Captain 

**Subject:** Calendar Year 2024 Recruiting Analysis

## **I. Identified Objectives**

It is the policy of the Keene Police Department to actively conduct a recruitment program to the best extent in order to fill all vacant positions as quickly as possible, using validated methods and instruments, and ensuring positions are filled with the most qualified candidates.

## **II. Demographics**

The 2023 population of Keene stood at 22,917 (2023 est. US CENSUS). Males comprised 49% and females 51% .This does not include the population of Keene State College's (KSC) approximate 2,735 students or Antioch University, with an estimated 888 students. Additionally, Keene is the County Seat and the shopping and business center of Cheshire County. Keene is also home to Keene High School (KHS) with approximately 1,400 students and teachers present per day in attendance. It is estimated (by the City's planning department) that during a weekday there may be between 60,000 and 75,000 people in the City of Keene.

In 2023 the population of Cheshire County was at 77,703. The State's population is 1,402,054. It is a rural state, with the largest population density located in the area south and east of Concord, NH and, specifically, Manchester, NH. For recruitment purposes the following demographics are offered:

**City of Keene:** Population 22,917 (2023 est. US CENSUS)

- Females comprised 51 % of the population
- Males comprised 49% of the population
- 91.7% of the population is White
- 2.3% of the population is Hispanic or Latino
- 1.5% of the population is Black
- <1% of the population is Asian
- <1% of the population is American Indian
- 5% identified as two or more races

**Cheshire County:** Population 77,703 (2023 est. US CENSUS)

- Females comprise 50.5% of the population
- Males comprise 49.5% of the population
- 95.1% of the population is White
- 2.7% of the population is Hispanic or Latino
- 1% of the population is Black
- 1.5% of the population is Asian
- < 1% of the population is American Indian
- 1.9% of the population is two or more races

**New Hampshire:** Population 1,409,032 (2023 est. US CENSUS)

- Females comprise 50% of the population
- Males comprised 50% of the population
- 92.5% of the population is White
- 4.8% of the population is Hispanic or Latino
- 2.1% of the population is Black
- 3.1% of the population is Asian
- <1% of the population is American Indian
- 1.9% of the population is two or more races

The Keene Police Department's end of calendar year (CY) 2024 sworn ranks were as follows:

- Authorized full time strength during 2024 was 44
- 36 positions filled at end of CY 2024
- 92% of sworn officers were male (33)
- 8% of sworn officers were female (3)
- 3% of sworn officers are minorities (1)

Achieving a 50% female number of sworn officers for the department is unlikely. Therefore, we use a nationally accepted number of 14%. If fully staffed at 44 sworn positions, this would lead us to a goal of having on staff a minimum of 6-7 (6.5) female officers, a goal we continually strive for.

We currently employ 2 Reserve Police Officers (part-time, sworn). Both are male.

The Keene Police Department's full and part-time non-sworn ranks (excluding crossing guards) were as follows:

- 15 non-sworn positions (includes Assistant County Attorney Prosecutor)
- 10 were female (66%)
- 5 were male (33%)
- All are Caucasian

### **III. Recruitment Efforts**

In 2024 the Department's sworn officer shortages stayed varied over the course of the year between 6-8 budgeted positions. Our status at the end of December 2024 is eight (8) open, budgeted sworn positions.

In CY 2024 our department experienced three officer resignations. One officer retired from our agency and now works in the private sector. Two other officers resigned from our agency and took a position with another law enforcement agency.

We had three civilian employees resign in CY2024: a Dispatcher, our Assistance County Attorney Prosecutor, and a Records Specialist. The Dispatch position is still open, however, the other positions were filled during CY2024.

In 2014, through efforts with the City Manager, City Council, and Finance Department, we have been authorized to hire one extra Officer above funded strength. This effort has been made to help mitigate the issue of only hiring to authorized strength, only to lose a trainee in the FTEP or having an Officer retire and leaving us again short of authorized funded strength. We see this effort as a step in the direction of having qualified Officers already hired before another Officer retires or resigns. As of this writing, we are still trying to fill this "one above" position, having never been able to achieve this through qualified candidates.

The department continues to use the Great Bay Community College (GBCC) testing alliance as our secondary testing/recruiting mechanism. However, GBCC testing alliance has also experienced challenges in attracting interested applicants for their tests. Many of their scheduled tests in 2024 had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. In CY 2024 we received zero applicants from the GBCC testing alliance.

The Department finds it more beneficial to advertise our open positions on-line. By soliciting applications on a more consistent basis, it allows the department to administer in-house hiring processes more frequently. In CY2024 a hiring process was conducted in every month except for December.

Additionally, we have in the past signed up for several college Job Boards advertising our open positions. We continue to advertise our open positions with the use of social media. The department has accounts with Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The department also advertises our open positions on the City's website. This site leads candidates to our department employment website. We continuously use the employment websites Indeed and PoliceApp to advertise our job postings.

In addition to the above social media, the department has advertised our open positions on the following platforms: Military.com, Equal Opportunity Employment & Education Journal, and CALEA.

In CY 2018 we created a recruitment video. Despite the fact that the video was created in CY2018, it is still relevant to today's department. The video was professionally produced in an effort to attract candidates to our department. The video focuses on five different officers within the department. Each officer explains different situations they may encounter on a

daily basis. Some of the officers talk about the overall atmosphere of the agency. Other officers discuss why they were interested in applying to our department. The video also demonstrates the various types of department teams and other ancillary responsibilities within the department. The video lasts 2 minutes and 27 seconds. The video was posted on all of our social media sites as well as YouTube. The following link plays our video on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h81th1q-ZGg&feature=youtu.be>

As of this writing, the video was viewed 4,096 times on YouTube, and 20.9K views on our Facebook page.

We continue to have incentives in place to attract candidates from the heavier populated areas of the state (Central and Seacoast) and Certified Police Officer whether In-State or Out-of-State Certified.

The incentives were posted on our department website and social media sites. The incentive packages, as of July 2023 are as follows:

**NH Certified Officers (\$10,000)**

**Out of State Certified Officers (\$8,000)**

**Uncertified hires**

- 6 months Probationary schedule increase (successful interim evaluation)
- 12 months Step increase (probation completion)

**All newly hired probationary officers (certified or uncertified)**

**Vacation leave**

- 40 hours of vacation leave during the probationary period after completion of 6 months of employment and a successful interim evaluation

**Relocation Assistance** (if required to move from longer distances)

- Up to \$2,500 paid out on a reimbursement basis for moving, housing, or related expenses

We have the ability to start certified officers off at a higher starting pay grade within the CBA contract, due to their various levels of work experience. The department in the past has bought-out certified officers' contracts with other local departments to allow them to move to KPD sooner than they would have otherwise been able to.

In CY2024 the department hired three (3) new officers under the hiring incentive program. Based on our current shortage of officers, I would recommend keeping the incentives in place in order to stay competitive within the employment market.

As briefly noted above we expanded the offering of in-house written testing for all those who sent in applications. In CY 2024, we ran an in-house test every month except for December.

#### **IV. 2024 Sworn Officer Hiring Processes:**

During CY2024, the Department conducted eleven hiring processes.

An **in-house process** is when candidates express self-initiated interest in a career with our department. **Mixed hiring processes** are candidates that express self-initiated interest in a career with our department and candidates from the GBCC test. A **certified officer hiring process** is for candidates previously certified that express interest in our department. An **individual hiring process** is rarely utilized at our department. There are certain circumstances this process will be utilized when a candidate cannot attend the other hiring processes listed above.

Those that take a Police Written Exam with our testing alliances are invited to the hiring process if they score a 75% or higher in either the overall score or the cognitive score (GBCC). GBCC written exams consist of three scores, cognitive, personality, and overall. In 2023, no participants from any GBCC exam expressed interest in our department.

Those who take our in-house test must score a 70% or higher on a validated Police Written Exam we purchase through a vendor.

It should be noted that we invite back most candidates from the previous processes that failed the written test or physical fitness test (PFT), with an emphasis on getting female and minority candidates to return if possible.

Below is a summary of each monthly process from CY2024:

##### January, 2024

On January 29, 2024 I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I scheduled one morning session for the written exam and physical fitness test.

During the AM session, I invited (41) candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. (10) candidates positively responded to the invitation. (2) of the candidates showed for the written exam.

The (41) candidates invited to this process were comprised of (3) females and (38) males. Out of the (41) total invitations (1) moved onto the oral board phase of the hiring process (2%).

On January 30, 2024 an oral board was conducted. This candidate was recommended by the oral board. (100% pass rate).

#### February, 2024

An out-of-state certified police officer participated in a physical fitness test given on 2/6/24 (solo process). He passed that physical test. An Oral Board was conducted immediately following; that candidate was recommended and is now in the background phase.

On February 28, 2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam to 1 candidate (group process). This candidate passed both the written test and the PT test. This candidate is now in the background phase.

During the 2/28/24 session, I invited 40 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 2 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 1 candidate actually showed up to participate in the process; 1 candidate passed the written test and went on to be recommended at the conclusion of the Oral Board.

The 40 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 4 females and 36 males. Out of the 40 total invitations, 1 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (2.5%).

#### March, 2024

In the month of March, 1 KPD officer resigned. 1 officer candidate from a September 2023 process has been hired.

An out-of-state certified police officer is now in the background/poly phase.

An in-state certified candidate from a Fall 2023 process that had previously withdrawn prior to the background/poly phase has changed his mind and has resumed the hiring process and is in the background/poly phase.

On March 25, 2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 38 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 1 candidate positively responded to the invitation. 1 candidate passed the written test and then passed the physical test. That candidate participated in an Oral Board the following day and was not recommended.

The 38 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 4 females and 34 males. Out of the 38 total invitations, 0 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (0%).

#### April, 2024

In April 2024, an in-state certified candidate from a Fall 2023 process that had previously withdrawn prior to the background/poly phase had changed his mind and had resumed the hiring process. He later withdrew from the process during the polygraph phase.

On April 22, 2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 36 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 3 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 2 candidates showed for the testing; 2 passed the written test and 0 passed the physical test.

The 36 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 4 females and 32 males. Out of the 36 total invitations, 0 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (0%).

#### May, 2024

An out-of-state (CT) certified police officer was hired on May 13, 2024.

On May 20, 2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 43 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 9 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 3 candidates showed for the testing; 1 passed the written test and later failed the physical test.

3 candidates that had previously passed the written test but had previously failed the physical test arrived to attempt the physical test. 1 candidate passed the physical test.

On May 21, 2024 an Oral Boards was conducted. 1 candidate participated in the Oral Board phase and was recommended by the board.

The 43 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 6 females and 37 males. Out of the 43 total invitations, 1 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (2%).

#### June, 2024

The applicant that was in the background/poly phase from the May 2024 hiring process was dismissed at the pre-poly phase.

On June 24, 2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 46 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 2 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 1 candidate showed for the testing; 1 passed the written test and later failed the physical test.

1 candidate that had previously passed the written test but had previously failed the physical test arrived to attempt the physical test. 1 candidate passed the physical test.

On June 25, 2024 an Oral Board was conducted. 1 candidate participated in the Oral Board phase and was recommended by the board.

The 46 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 5 females and 41 males. Out of the 46 total invitations, 1 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (2%).

#### July, 2024

The applicant that was in the background/poly phase from the June 2024 hiring process was dismissed at the pre-poly phase.

\*\* Prior to sending invitations for the July 2024 hiring process, the list of applicants that had been rolling over from month to month for the past year was cleaned-up: dismissing those applicants that had been invited to processes over and over with no response were removed from my "active" list of applicants. Thus, this report will show a smaller number of invitations/applicants.

On 7/29/2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 21 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 3 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 3 candidates showed for the testing; 0 passed the written test; no physical test was given.

The 21 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 2 females and 19 males. Out of the 21 total invitations, 0 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (0%).

#### August, 2024

On 8/28/2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 26 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 6 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 3 candidates showed for the testing; 2 passed the written test; 2 passed the physical test.

The 26 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 3 females and 23 males. Out of the 26 total invitations, 2 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (8%).

#### September, 2024

On 9/23/2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 30 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 5 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 4 candidates showed for the testing; 2 passed the written test; 1 passed the physical test.

On 9/24/2024 I administered an Oral Board: 1 candidate was recommended.

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The 30 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 5 females and 25 males. Out of the 30 total invitations, 1 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (3%).



## October, 2024

On 10/28/2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 37 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 6 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 6 candidates showed for the testing; 3 passed the written test; 2 passed the physical test.

On 10/29/2024 I administered an Oral Board: 2 candidates were recommended.

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The 37 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 5 females and 32 males. Out of the 37 total invitations, 2 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (5%).

## November, 2024

On 11/25/2024, I administered an in-house Police Written Exam. I invited 38 candidates based on self-initiated inquiries about employment. Each candidate submitted an application for employment. 6 candidates positively responded to the invitation. 5 candidates showed for the testing; 4 passed the written test; 3 passed the physical test.

On 11/26/2024 I administered an Oral Board: 3 candidates participated; 2 were recommended.

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The 38 candidates invited to this process were comprised of 6 females and 32 males. Out of the 38 total invitations, 3 moved on to the oral board phase of the hiring process (8%).

## December, 2024

I did not conduct a hiring process in December 2024.

## **V. Overall Sworn Hiring Statistics for 2023:**

Invited candidates, Male:	349
Invited candidates, Female:	47
Total	396
Invited candidates that actually showed up:	31 (8% of total invitees)
Passed PFT:	14 (45% of those that showed up)
Passed oral board:	12 (86% of those who passed PFT)
Passed background investigation:	3 (25% of those who passed oral board)
Hired	3 (25% of those who passed oral board; 21% of those who passed the PFT; <1% of all those invited)

\*\*\*It should be noted that many of the candidates reflected in the statistics above were invited to multiple processes and were counted more than once as “invitees” over multiple months. However, the number of applicants listed in our CIMRS data (90), reflects the total number of unique applicants in CY2024.

## **VI. Civilian Position Hiring Processes**

In CY2024 the department ran four civilian hiring processes: one part-time Animal Control Officer position, one full-time newly-created Police Social Worker (non-sworn), one full-time Office Manager position, and one full-time Records Specialist.

In CY2024 one of our Dispatchers filled a vacancy created when a Records Specialist retired. This accounts for our current vacancy in Dispatch.

We continue our practice of seeking assistance from the City’s Human Resources (HR) Department for the hiring of non-sworn positions. This assistance centers on advertising; the utilizing their automated database for candidates to apply rather than applying directly to the Police Department, as well as assistance in notification to those who have applied for the position posted. Additionally, a member of the City’s Human Resources department has helped in the interview process by being a member of the interview panel.

## **VII. Ongoing Activities:**

Our department has reviewed the Governor’s LEACT Recommendations for Hiring Practices and Background Investigations. The Keene Police Department has done its best to recruit and hire a diverse law enforcement workforce. Our background investigations exceed the LEACT recommendations and subsequent Police Standards and Training Council rule changes to vet out any candidates who possesses or demonstrate an outward bias towards a protected group. This vetting process is done through an aggressive polygraph examination and subsequent background investigation interviews.

Both our College Liaison Officer (CLO) at Keene State College and our School Resource Officer (SRO) at Keene High School continue to provide meaningful interaction between both high school and college students at their respective schools, solidifying the visibility and professionalism of the Department, and participating in job fairs.

## **VIII. Conclusion:**

Recruiting in this part of the state has historically been challenging and continues to be. Younger candidates are often pulled through social and family contacts to the more populated areas of the south central and eastern portions of the State. This, coupled with resource and budgetary constraints, makes non-standard recruiting practices difficult. Over the recent past we have used a variety of techniques, to include newspaper and radio ads, the mentioned

Police Testing Alliances, college fairs, local job fairs, various web sites, and word of mouth. We have also committed to the recruitment of veterans.

What we have found is that the best outcomes are in the continuation of our own hiring process and the established testing alliances to rely on a large number of candidates, as well as our website, FaceBook page, public websites such as PoliceApp.com, Military.com, Equal Opportunity Employment & Education Journal, CALEA and college bulletin boards. These constant hiring processes give us the best chance of drawing a variety of minority and females from a wide area of New England. We also continuously attempt to recruit certified officers from surrounding agencies and elsewhere.