

**TO: GENERAL PUBLIC**  
**FROM: CAFA PRESIDENT RAFFEL PROPHETT**  
**RE: DIVERSITY PLAN FOR THE CINCINNATI FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**DATE: MAY 30, 2017**

## **Synopsis**

This plan will help the City increase racial diversity in the Cincinnati Fire Department (CFD). Inaction will see the number of African American firefighters decline. That is not acceptable. This plan recognizes and rewards the skills and talents possessed by candidates from our Cincinnati public schools.

## **The Number of African Americans in the Fire Department is Decreasing**

Currently there are 852 sworn members in the CFD. Only 240 or 28% of those are African American (AA). Meanwhile the City is 45% AA and that percentage is rising. If hiring continues as it has in the past we project that the CFD will be only approximately 22% AA by 2026. This is based on the following facts and assumptions:

- In the next 10 years approximately 121 AA FF will retire (average of 31 years of service)
- This is based on 69 being hired for the next 10 years (69 AA FF were hired since 2006)

That is completely unacceptable.

## **The Current System Disadvantages AA Applicants from Cincinnati**

The current highly competitive process to become a Cincinnati firefighter is unfair to Cincinnati Public School (CPS) graduates. To become a Cincinnati Firefighter requires that you have a high school diploma, you are free of any serious criminal offenses, and that, by the time of hire, you live in any county contiguous to Hamilton County, Ohio. If you are a military veteran, you will be awarded 5 or 10 points to boost your test score. The structure of the civil

service exam is written at the high school level and may involve a mechanical attitude portion. There is a large number of candidates that come from the surrounding suburbs, whose public-school systems out performs intercity schools. According to the Ohio Department of Education there are 17 High Schools in the (CPS) System; all but three received the grade 'F' for the category 'Prepared for Success.' Conversely, other than the CPS, there are 21 public school districts in Hamilton County that have high schools, of which, only 2 received the grade 'F' for the category 'Prepared for Success.' Further, many candidates hold firefighting and EMT (emergency medical technician) certificates that they earned while employed by suburban fire departments, which often provide a prequalification advantage during the CFD's selection process. Consequently, CPS graduates fail to adequately complete in this highly competitive process. This unjust and unfair trend will continue unless the City of Cincinnati enacts a plan and public policy measures to mitigate its impact.

### **The Existing Diversity Efforts are Ineffective**

There is no evidence of a CFD strategic recruiting plan, nor does there appear to be any written recruiting metrics or desired outcomes. It appears that typically earnest recruiting takes place when a fire recruit class has been allocated and approved by the city administration. There is only one full time recruiter.

Currently there is an 8-week summer Fire Cadet Program that provides minimal job readiness and life skills training to Cincinnati youth between the ages 14-18. The students are provided with awareness to the CFD and its operation. The program does not provide a direct path to the CFD.

### **Proposed Public Policy Measure to Mitigate Current Trend**

To allow Fire Recruit Candidates that graduated from a ‘CPS at risk school’ to compete in the recruit process, five (5) “Equity Points” should be added to the scores of CPS graduates who pass the fire recruit test. This measure, along with a comprehensive intercity recruiting plan, may mitigate the educational inequalities that CPS graduates currently face. Awarding equity points to CPS graduates rewards skills and aptitudes these candidates have by virtue of their years in the CPS system. They are familiar with the city and its people and the social issues that impact fire, EMS and all of the services provided by the fire department. They bring extra value to the department.

### **Cincinnati Public Schools Law and Public Safety Career Pathway**

1. Establish a formal Fire Academy within Cincinnati Public Schools (Western Hills) where students:
  - a. Obtain training to meet the National Fire Protection Association Firefighter 1 and Firefighter 2 requirements
  - b. Obtain CPR certification
  - c. Obtain EMS certification
  - d. Prepare to pass the Firefighter Examination(s)
  - e. Intern with and/or shadow Cincinnati Fire Department employees (i.e. participate in designated number of ride-a longs)
  - f. Are assigned Cincinnati Fire Department professional mentor
2. Graduates of the CPS Fire Academy receive merit points (10 points).
3. At least one, CAFA endorsed, member of the Recruiting Team will serve as a liaison between CPS and CFD, as well as the CPS Fire Academy programming.

### **Cincinnati Fire Department Recruitment Team and Hiring**

1. CFD creates and staffs a full time recruiting and hiring department similar to CPD, which shall include at least two CAFA members. One Fire Captain, three Fire Lieutenants, and

one Clerk III. Part of the Recruiting Teams will also serve as trainers when there is a recruit class in session.

- a. CAFA will assist with the development of eligible fire recruit candidates year round
  - b. Recruiting Staff to indentify CPS public safety graduates to continue their development
  - c. Recruiting Staff to create partnerships with other city certifying institutions, such as Cincinnati State, to identify and develop fire recruit candidates
  - d. Metrics will be established to validate recruiting staff's efforts
2. At least one CAFA member serve on the hiring selection committee for each incoming class
  3. Outcome is to have each recruit class reflect the diversity of the City of Cincinnati

**With the City's Assistance, CAFA will Establish Leadership Development Center**

1. CAFA will renovate current office space to establish a Leadership Development/Community Resource Center (LDCRC)
  - a. The LDCRC will be used to develop viable fire recruit candidates in collaboration with the CFD's Recruiting Team
2. Using its 501-C3 status CAFA will solicit funds to pay for renovation of current CAFA office
3. As a 501-C3 organization the City of Cincinnati will exempt CAFA from property taxes, (approximately \$700.00 per month).

**Cost**

CAFA estimates the cost to fund the additional 4 positions listed above at \$400,000.00.

Funds required to support West High Cadet Program is estimated to TBD.

Funds to assist CAFA with establishing the LDCR is estimated to TBD.