



PSO Newsletter

April 2024

Our newsletter this month features

- New partners
- Partner publications
- Research opportunities
- Professional activities

We regularly update our [website](#) and our [LinkedIn](#) page. Please follow us and invite interested contacts to do so as well. Those interested may sign up for the PSO Newsletter by using the [contact form](#).

New Partners

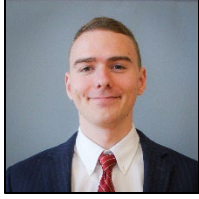
The PSO welcomes three new partners: Kevin Ford, Ashleigh Wojslawowicz, and Ethan Humphrey.



Kevin Ford is a professor of psychology at Michigan State University. His research interests include improving learning and retention in the workplace through training and other activities. He has also worked on influences on organizational change and identifying how to build continuous learning and improvement orientations within organizations. His work has been funded by the National Institute of Health, the National Institute for Justice, the State of Michigan, the Naval Training Systems Center, and the Air Force Resources Directorate. He is a Fellow of the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Kevin received his B.S. in psychology from the University of Maryland and his M.A. and Ph.D. in psychology from The Ohio State University.



Ashleigh Wojslawowicz is the Research Manager for the Charleston County (SC) Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). She served as a Master Crime Scene Investigator with the Charleston (SC) Police Department, spearheading evidence-based practices and data application for community engagement, recruitment, retention, and forensics. In 2023, she was named a National Institute of Justice Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) Scholar. Her research interests include law enforcement recruitment, retention, officer wellness, and applied research methodology. She has B.S., M.S., and Ed.D. degrees from Charleston Southern University and serves as an adjunct faculty member of the Michael Sattler School of Public Service at Truett McConnell University.



Ethan Humphrey is a Michigan State University research assistant and doctoral student in criminal justice. His research interests include police staffing, community policing, crime reduction, and crime analysis. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in criminal justice from Radford University, where he also worked as a graduate research assistant, supporting funded projects on community policing and evidence-based responses to shooting incidents. Since graduating from Radford University in 2023, Ethan has worked on revising and creating new materials for Dr. Egan Green's new edition of *The Police Manager*.

Partner Publications

Recruitment, Deployment, Promotion, and Attrition of Female Officers: The Impact on Staffing and Perceptions of Police Practice

Toby Miles-Johnson, Western Sydney University; Suzanna Fay, University of Queensland
The authors conducted semi-structured interviews with 46 male and female constables in an Australian police organization on the collective experience of women in policing from recruitment through deployment, promotion, and attrition. They found “that exclusionary staffing policies start from the onset of recruitment because female applicants are singled-out by their sex . . . exclusionary staffing practices for female constables occur throughout initial recruit training, during placement within a police station or area of command, whilst being deployed or not deployed to police work, and during consideration or application of promotion related processes.” All this “increases the probability that attrition rates of female constables will be high.” Unless police organizations can address these issues, the authors warn, the number of female constables advancing to senior roles will likely remain small, “reducing the likelihood that police organizations will implement or achieve equitable staffing principles” and “hav[ing] a negative impact on staffing.”

The Law Enforcement Leadership Pipeline

Marshall Jones, Florida Institute of Technology

This three-part series “provides a blueprint to help agencies better understand and strategically navigate solutions” in maintaining their leadership pipeline. [Part 1](#) explores “actions to build and maintain a culture and organization efficient at leadership, followership, and development.” [Part 2](#) focuses on the components of agency culture and processes, with an emphasis on field training. [Part 3](#) explores the “passages of the leadership pipeline and provides actionable interventions that can increase leadership development.”

Ask the Women in Blue: Female Officers’ Thoughts on the Recruitment and Retention of Women in Policing

Rachael M. Rief, University of Memphis; Samantha S. Clinkinbeard, University of Nebraska at Omaha; Lexi E. Goodijohn, University of Nebraska at Omaha; Trisha N. Rhodes, University of Nebraska at Omaha

This work interviewed 40 current and retired women officers on how police agencies can better target women to increase their representation. Participants noted difficulty hiring amid a larger police-staffing

crisis, as well as how the structure and culture of police work pose barriers to the recruitment and retention of women. Participants suggested outreach and mentorship as strategies to increase the integration of women into policing.

Reframing the Police Staffing Challenge: A Systems Approach to Workforce Planning and Managing Workload Demand

Jeremy M. Wilson, Michigan State University; Clifford A. Grammich, Birdhill Research and Communications, LLC

Police agencies typically focus on recruitment and retention in seeking to address their staffing challenges. This oversimplifies the problems and leads to piecemeal efforts. This research draws on multiple threads of staffing research and field experience to highlight lessons for building effective police workforces. The authors suggest that agencies consider staffing from a systems perspective and illustrate the elements of such a system. They present a six-step approach for managing police staffing and workload demand. The lessons they offer should be of interest to all who must address police staffing challenges and community expectations of police work.

Staffing Levels Are the Most Important Factor Influencing Police Response Times

Scott M. Mourtgos, University of South Carolina; Ian T. Adams, University of South Carolina; Justin Nix, University of Nebraska Omaha

Using data on staffing levels, calls for service, and proactive police work in Salt Lake City, Utah, the authors find that the impact of staffing on response times is significantly greater than that of other independent variables they analyzed. Furthermore, higher priority (i.e., more serious) calls for service have a lower elasticity in response to increases in staffing levels. From 2016 to 2022, annual median response times for Priority 1 calls for service were about nine minutes, while those for Priority 4 calls ranged from 31 to 61 minutes.

“I Really Felt Wanted”: Police Recruitment Strategies within a Competitive Labor Market

Ashleigh N. Wojslawowicz, Charleston County (SC) Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; Jeffrey S. Payne, U.S. Air Force (ret.); Anthony Gibson, Charleston (SC) Police Department; W. Terry Cherry, Charleston (SC) Police Department

This researcher–practitioner partnership explored the effectiveness of one agency’s recruitment approach among incoming officers. The research found the recruitment process “play[s] an integral role in the ultimate application and agency selection decision for participants, regardless of participant background.” It also found that responding in a timely manner to applicant questions and concerns, communicating information with applicants, making applicants feel valued and known, and the timeliness of the overall recruitment and hiring process helped convince applicants to work for the agency.

Leaving So Soon? An Analysis of Withdrawal Patterns from Academy Training

Ann Marie Ryan, Michigan State University; Deepshikha Chatterjee, Baruch College; Kurt von Seekamm Jr., Salem State University; Joie Magalona, Michigan State University; Juli Liebler, Michigan State University; Jo M. Alanis, Michigan State University

This research uses data on academy attrition from 1934 to 2022 for the Michigan State Police to analyze the role macroeconomic trends may have on police recruitment. The authors find that recruitment tends

to increase during times of economic expansion, when police agencies are more likely to have funds for recruitment, but academy attrition also increases, as new recruits may find employment elsewhere. Academy attrition falls during times of high unemployment when opportunities elsewhere are scarcer. In times of economic expansion police leaders should work to foster positive experiences in the academy and help trainers catch signs of “flight risk.” In recessionary times, they may wish to conduct additional checks on a candidate’s fitness for the academy. While local police agencies have fewer options in responding to economic downturns, state legislative initiatives may help curb inter-agency poaching.

Flexible Education Reform and Iceland’s Police Staffing Crisis

Guðmundur Oddsson, University of Akureyri; Ólafur Örn Bragason, National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police; Rannveig Þórisdóttir, University of Iceland

From 2009 to 2018, Iceland suffered Europe’s biggest reduction in police officers. Amid this crisis, Iceland moved basic police education to the university level and shifted from face-to-face to flexible learning. This helped Iceland accommodate more students, reverse the downward trend of police staffing, improve female representation, and raise the education level of officers, while maintaining high levels of public trust in the police. The Iceland case demonstrated that blended learning can facilitate police–university partnerships; accommodate more students by expanding access, capacity, and capability; help address staffing challenges; and optimize resources.

Does Prior Military and/or Law Enforcement Experience Influence Officer Retention?

Bradley J. O’Guinn, University of Cincinnati; Elias Nader, Kent State University; Dannelle Goldberg, Charleston (SC) Police Department; Anthony Gibson, Charleston (SC) Police Department

U.S. police agencies have long relied on prior military experience or prior law enforcement experience to fill vacancies within their ranks. Yet few have tested whether such experiences affect officer tenure within policing. This work uses hiring and employment data from the Charleston (SC) Police Department to assess whether these experiences influence officer retention. It finds that officers with prior military service were significantly more likely to leave the agency, and to do so about 20 months sooner, than officers who did not serve the military. It also finds that prior law enforcement experience was unrelated to officer separation but that officers with such experience tended to remain longer with the agency. These findings suggest that police agencies should reevaluate current approaches to recruitment and retention. They also suggest the need for further research on why certain officers are more likely to resign and how agencies can better address the underlying needs of officers at high risk of separating.

Why Do Police Consider Leaving the Profession? The Interplay Between Job Demand Stress, Burnout, Psychological Distress, and Commitment

Jacqueline M. Drew, Griffith University; Elise Sargeant, Griffith University; Sherri Martin, National Fraternal Order of Police

Drawing on a survey of 2,669 U.S. law enforcement officers, the authors explore the reasons police officers consider leaving the profession. They find that job demand stressors (including trauma, organizational, and operational stressors), burnout, psychological distress, and commitment (both organizational and occupational) all play important roles in explaining the intentions of officers to exit the policing profession. Addressing burnout and psychological distress through a wellness agenda can help stem the outflow of officers.

Balancing Act: Assessing Police Efficiency Amidst Staffing Shortages through Inverse Data Envelopment Analysis

Erik Alda, Marymount University

While police agencies continue to face significant staffing shortages, more efficient allocation of staffing may help alleviate some effects of the shortages. Using inverse data envelopment analysis to estimate the efficient allocation of resources in a simulated agency with 150 sectors, this research finds that reallocating officers and civilians from inefficient to efficient units can improve performance by 4.7 percent without additional officers. Though the analysis has limitations, including organizational complexity that the model may not capture, the methods employed in the study may help police managers make accurate and more efficient operational decisions.

“The Bar Is Different as a Woman”: A Thematic Analysis of Career Advice Given by Female Police Officers

Kathleen E. Padilla, Texas State University; Kellie Renfro, Dallas Police Department; Jessica Huff, University of Cincinnati

This research examines the advice that 154 current and former female officers in the Dallas Police Department would give to other women who might want to enter or promote women in policing. Common themes in the responses include challenges related to the impact of policing work on family life, navigating the male-dominated culture, maintaining one’s own sense of identity and integrity, and creating strong social support networks. Among the implications the authors note is the need for cultural changes “to ensure all officers—male and female—have an understanding and appreciation of the impact of the job on family life.” The research notes tangible ways police “agencies could work to make departments more family-friendly, including focusing on childcare accommodations (e.g. housing a daycare on site, contracting with a daycare, or providing stipends to assist in the funding of daycare) or shift considerations for those with children.” The authors also note the need for showing transparency in the promotions and training processes.

Becoming a Learning Organization for Recruitment

Jeremy M. Wilson, Michigan State University; Clifford A. Grammich, Birdhill Research and Communications, LLC; Terry Cherry, Charleston (SC) Police Department

How can police agencies become learning organizations for recruitment? This article reviews the characteristics of learning organizations and the experience of the Charleston Police Department in becoming one.

“In the ‘Too Difficult’ Box?” Organizational Inflexibility as a Driver of Voluntary Resignations of Police Officers in England and Wales

Sarah Charman, University of Portsmouth; Jemma Tyson, University of Portsmouth

This paper is the first from a national study of voluntary resignations in the police in England and Wales. It finds a lack of organizational flexibility can lead to resignations, particularly among those dealing with needs such as health issues, who have family responsibilities, or who seek to move to part-time work. Cultural norms of “overwork” or “fitting in” can exacerbate these problems, especially for women. The authors suggest that flexible working and “reciprocal flexibility” can help tackle these issues—and, until they are tackled, retention will continue to be a source of inequality within police organizations.

What Works and What Matters to Advance Women in Policing

Ivonne Roman, Newark (NJ) Police Department (Ret.); Maureen Q. McGough, University of South Carolina

Drawing on insights from the 30x30 Initiative, the authors identify several critical areas they identify for advancing women in policing. These are public and sustained leadership support, women-centered approaches, intentional recruitment strategies, streamlined application processes, appropriate maternal and family care policies, part-time options and job sharing, woman-specific equipment and uniforms, and mentorship and communities of practice.

Flexible Work Options

Tanya Meisenholder, New York University; Luke Bonkiewicz, NIJ LEADS Scholar

Among the possible solutions to police staffing challenges in general and building a diverse police force in particular are part-time and flexible work options. “Adding part-time officers,” the authors note, “increases staffing and provides more backup officers to calls for service, improving officer safety and ensuring officers can take leave because minimum staffing levels are met, reducing employee burnout and increasing their quality of life.” They add, “For those new to policing, an opportunity to experience it may result in more applicants for full-time positions.” Part-time and flexible positions may also help “reduce the loss of skills and expertise [and be] especially attractive to those agencies with many officers approaching retirement.”

Research Opportunities

Policing: An International Journal

PSO partners Ian T. Adams, Scott M. Mourtgos, and Jeremy M. Wilson are serving as guest editors of a special issue on police staffing for *Policing: An International Journal*. They welcome submissions on topics such as the global dimensions of police staffing, internal staffing dynamics, the relationship between determinants and outcomes of police staffing, resource allocation, and debunking misconceptions. Submission deadline is April 30, 2024.

For questions, write ian.adams@sc.edu. Submit an article [HERE](#), and find more information on the journal [HERE](#).

Policing and Society Conference

The Police Science Research Center at the University of Akureyri (Iceland) invites abstracts for its 7th Policing and Society Conference on October 2 and 3, 2024. The theme of the conference this year is Community Policing, i.e., close cooperation between the police and the local community to uphold law and order, prevent crime, and solve problems in the interests of a better and safer society for all. Conference organizers strongly encourage abstracts that deal with community policing but will welcome all contributions from professionals and academics who work in fields that involve policing in one form or another and seek to build on their work or research. The deadline for abstracts is June 14, 2024. For further information, see the conference [website](#).

Professional Activities

MSU Hosts Discussion on “Transforming Policing by Advancing Women in the Field”

Students, faculty, administrators, municipal leaders, practitioners, and other professional leaders joined the Michigan State University School of Criminal Justice and the Michigan State University Police Staffing Observatory in early April for a discussion on “Transforming Policing by Advancing Women in the Field.” Maureen Q. McGough, co-founder of the 30x30 Initiative, led the discussion with Sergeant Beth Frazier of the Lansing Police Department, Inspector Sarah Krebs of the Michigan State Police, and Lieutenant Kimberly Parviainen of the Michigan State University Police.

In introducing the panel, PSO Director Jeremy Wilson noted policing has historically struggled with building and maintaining quality workforces, due to both systemic trends and acute issues, and there have long been calls for increasing the representation of women in policing. Despite research and practice showcasing the many benefits they bring to the field, considerable barriers to their inclusion remain.

McGough reviewed the extent of underrepresentation of women in policing, the research that documents the benefits that women can bring to police work, the barriers that women face and which undermine their experience and representation, and how the 30x30 Initiative is working to help. Panel members discussed what drew them to the profession and why they remain, their proudest and most memorable moments, the biggest challenges they’ve overcome, changes they’ve seen since they’ve joined, where the profession is going, and general advice for those who may be interested in policing as a career. Audience questions further focused the discussion on how women should choose the right agency, navigate a career, and further needs for advancing women in policing.



PSO Partners to Present at ASEBP Meeting

Seven PSO Partners will speak on staffing and other policing issues at the 8th annual American Society of Evidence-Based Policing Conference, hosted by Washington State University Spokane, and to be held May 29-31, 2024.

PSO Partners scheduled to speak are

- Ian Adams on next-generation early intervention systems, advancing the utility of body-worn camera footage, and the use of profanity by police officers
- Terry Cherry on models for strategic staffing
- Jessie Huff on evidence of reduced use of force severity following training, and evaluation of a restorative justice diversion program
- Tanya Meisenholder on women in policing, and improving officer wellbeing and retention
- Bradley O'Guinn on models for strategic staffing
- Natalie Todak on the threat of whistleblower retaliation as a barrier to police accountability
- Ashleigh Wojslawowicz on models for strategic staffing, and using local data to inform police strategies.

PSO Director Jeremy Wilson will also be in attendance and sharing information about the PSO. For further information, including registration, see the conference [website](#).

Newsletter Archive

Our newsletters are now online. See [here](#) to read the most recent or previous copies of our newsletter.

About the Michigan State University Police Staffing Observatory

The Police Staffing Observatory (PSO) is a global collaborative of academics, scholars, practitioners, and students working with Michigan State University to promote evidence-based police workforce research, strategy, and operations. Its primary aims are to advance police workforce knowledge and its application by

- Conducting timely and innovative research on critical aspects of a wide-range of police staffing issues, resulting in scholarly and practitioner-oriented publications
- Creating a venue for the network of police staffing scholars to share opportunities, discuss ideas, and enable collaborations
- Facilitating researcher-practitioner partnerships and technical assistance
- Serving as a repository and dissemination vehicle for the research of collaborators so that it is easily discoverable by practitioners and others.

Through its facilitation of research and outreach, the Police Staffing Observatory is a community of science that ultimately serves as a valuable resource for the community of practice.