

OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF



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October 23, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor Fuller and City Council

From: Danny Kistner
Fire Chief

Cc: Paul G. Grimes, City Manager
Jose R. Madrigal, Deputy City Manager
Ike Obi, Human Resources Director

RE: Diversity in the Fire Department

I understand that a request has been made by the City Council to have a Work Session item on Diversity Recruiting in the Fire Department. We will be placing an item to discuss on the November 5, 2018, meeting, however, I wanted to provide some information so the City Council had a summary of our process.

One of my primary goals as chief is to increase the diversity of the organization to better reflect that of the community. At the time of my appointment to Fire Chief in July, 2011, the minimum requirements for fire recruit candidate were 18 years of age and certification as a TCFP basic firefighter and DSHS paramedic. The requirement of a certification as a TCFP basic firefighter and DSHS paramedic was identified as an obstacle for our applicant pool because of the financial burden for a prospective candidate to receive those certifications on their own.

In order to address this we changed our minimum qualifications in 2013. The minimum qualifications for *Fire Recruit Candidate* is now 21 years of age at time of appointment and 30 hours of accredited college credit with a minimum 2.0 GPA. The modification has not only opened up our applicant pool, it has provided the Fire Department with a more diverse applicant pool. Here is a summary of our results. We included 2011 under the old minimum requirements, 2013 the first year the minimum requirements changed and then 2017 which was our most recent applicant pool.

2011	2013	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 83% White• 11% Hispanic• 2% Black	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 75% White• 13% Hispanic• 6% Black	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 69% White• 15% Hispanic• 12% Black

The change in minimum qualifications has also provided us with larger applicant pools from about 250 in 2011 to a self imposed limit of 550. We have had success in hiring of female firefighters as well with

7 currently and an additional female slated to begin in December of 2018. We understand that there is always more that can be done and we will continue to look at ways to recruit a diverse workforce at the Fire Department.

The hiring process for firefighters is different than for general government employees, which are generally hired based upon knowledge, skills and abilities, along with performance in their interview. The Fire Department process is outlined below and is similar to most paid Fire Departments in the state of Texas.

The hiring process includes:

- Competitive written examination
 - A candidate eligibility list is established following the written examination. The written examination is validated by the provider to demonstrate no disparate impact. A minimum passing score is 80% correct responses. Candidates are ranked from highest score to lowest with established tie breakers. Military veterans with honorable discharge or equivalent are awarded 5 additional points to any passing score.
- Physical agility (consisting of firefighting related activities)
 - The top 100 – 125 candidates are invited to participate in the physical agility examination consisting of a variety of firefighting related activities. This test is pass/fail only and does not alter the standing previously established from the written examination. If a candidate fails to complete the agility or takes more than 7 minutes, the candidate is disqualified.
- Background investigation
 - Candidates successful to this point complete a background report and Fire Department investigators verify the information provided.
- Panel interview
 - Panel interviews consist of an array of firefighters, usually a member(s) from HR, and a civilian/community representative. Candidates are given a numerical score from 1 (low) to 5 (high). An average of 3.5 is required to continue in the process.
- Fire Chief interview
 - The Fire Chief interview is the final step prior to a conditional offer of employment and the remaining medical examinations.
- Polygraph/psychological examination/medical physical/drug screen
 - The final step the applicant then must pass these tests. After successful completion the applicant is offered employment.

Additionally, MFD hiring practices were reviewed by the Texas Workforce Commission, Civil Rights Division in 2014, as part of a routine/random audit to determine whether testing is compliant with Texas Labor Code Chapter 21. No changes were recommended.

As we move forward, we will continue to evaluate programs to assist any individual who may wish to become a McKinney firefighter/paramedic. Annually, we host a “How to become a McKinney Firefighter” seminar, followed by a practice session for the physical agility. Attendance in these sessions is increasing, with approximately 250 attending in May, 2018.

Prior to our written exam in June, 2018, we advertised in traditional forums and subscribed to Firefighter’s ABC Diversity National Recruit Database. Previously, we have recruited in military outprocessing centers as well, including Ft. Worth, Houston, San Antonio, as well as local recruiting efforts.

With assistance from Human Resources, we continue to evaluate our recruiting methodology and candidate profile. We are considering increasing the college credit requirement to 45 hours with a 2.5 to 3.0 GPA. HR is currently evaluating this change for disparate impact.

Increasing diversity in a traditionally white male dominated profession remains a challenge not only in McKinney but all suburb cities in the DFW metroplex. We are continuing to do things to expand the pool of candidates such as attend recruitment job fairs.

I look forward to my presentation at Work Session and ability to answer in more detail any questions you have.



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