

Seattle Fire Department Race & Social Justice Change Team

2020 Seattle City Council Update

Date 06/26/19

Seattle Fire Department



City of Seattle

2020 SFD RSJI Accomplishments

- Completed Four Important RETs
- Improved Communication and Collaboration with SFD Leadership
- Development of Cultural Competence through Department Wide RSJI Training
- Updated Hair and Uniform Policies – Culturally Progressive

2020 RSJ Challenges

- COVID-19 Impacts
- Employee Incidents that adversely impacted Race and Social Justice in the Department
- Data availability for research
- Implementation of solutions once problems have been identified via RETs.
- Communication with Leadership

Remedies to these challenges will include:

- Continued department wide training.
- Leadership engagement, leading by example.
- Accountability.
- Implementation of items identified in RETs and in conversations with leadership.

2020 Race and Equity Toolkits

- Equitable and consistent standards for participation on hiring panels
- Recruit School Retention
- Recruitment
- Executive Leadership Academy
- Hair and Uniform Policy

Consistent Standards For Participation On Hiring Panels

- The past policy for hiring panels had unintended negative RSJI consequences.
 - In order to establish diverse Oral Board Panels, engage in inclusive recruiting, and combat implicit bias, there was a need to change current policy for participation on hiring panels.
- Participation of members from underrepresented groups in recruiting and mentoring is vital for the department's BIPOC and female recruiting efforts.
- Dual participation in recruiting and on Oral Board Panels does not constitute a conflict of interest or violate the close personal relationships prohibition.

Outcome- *Women and people of color do not have to choose between participation in recruitment or participation or oral boards, they can do both.*



Recruit School Retention

- Competition for firefighting jobs in SFD is fierce. Due to a large number of applicants versus the small size of recruit classes (30-40 recruits), the vast majority of applicants are denied employment at some point in the hiring process.
- Graduation from the recruit training program should be reflective of an individual candidate's ability to meet established, evidence/job-based training requirements. Recruit graduation classes should be diverse.
- Graduation rates should not be influenced by implicit or explicit bias within recruit school, or inequitable practices. Strive for increased race and gender diversity.

Outcome - *Greater scrutiny regarding racial equity impacts and goals over time regarding POC and women in recruit school.*



Department Hair and Uniform Policy

- Historically hair and uniform policies have used words like “conservative style” that can have unspoken racial undertones.
- This required an update of the Department’s hair and uniform policy to create more inclusive language.
- Words from the policy such as “conservative style” which holds coded meanings that resulted in the policy not being inclusive to women and people of color have been retracted and the policy has been rewritten.
- Choices now exist for women with the dress uniform, rather than the one choice of fitting into a uniform that is tailored for a man

Outcome - *A more inclusive hair policy for People of Color. Greater uniform choices for women.*



Recruitment

- In the next five years retirements will significantly reduce the number of women and people of color in the department. Especially in the Officer level positions.
- In the past year alone, the number of Officers that are women and people of color has significantly declined.
- A survey regarding the biggest challenges to recruiting and hiring from diverse communities was conducted among the King County Fire Chiefs, their HR staff, and community members of color. It identified the following issues:
 - 22% Recruiting/Marketing practices
 - 22% Flawed Hiring practices
 - 18% Community Outreach
 - 12% Not changing the culture



- **Participation in a recruitment workgroup.**
 - **Identifying creative solutions to improve recruiting.**
- **Added a member of the City RSJI team on hiring panels.**
- **Workforce Development and Recruiting Plan**
 - **SFD Point person for recruitment and workforce development.**

Outcome - *Create and maintain an ongoing targeted recruitment strategy with adequate resources that builds a diverse workforce, reflects a culture of equity where all members of our community are welcomed, and creates and sustains a Department where women and people of color have equal opportunities for hire, career and salary growth.*

SFD UNIFORMED Workforce - January 14, 2019

Rank	Total	Male	Female	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	AI/AN	NH/OPI	Two +	POC
CHIEFS	37	32	5	33	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
Fire	1	1			1						1
Assistant	3	3		3							0
Deputy	9	8	1	6		1	2				3
Battalion	24	20	4	24							0
OFFICERS	219	204	15	174	12	7	15	2	4	5	40
Captain	55	52	3	44	1	2	5	2		1	10
Fire Boat	8	8		5			2			1	2
Lieutenant	156	144	12	125	11	5	8		4	3	28
FIREFIGHTER	746	690	56	577	43	41	35	15	8	27	142
TOTAL	1002	926	76	784	56	49	52	17	12	32	186

SFD UNIFORMED Workforce - June 29, 2021

Rank	Total	Male	Female	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	AI/AN	NH/OPI	Two +	POC
CHIEFS	36	31	5	31	1	1	2	0	0	1	5
Fire	1	1			1						1
Assistant	3	3		2						1	1
Deputy	9	7	2	6		1	2				3
Battalion	23	20	3	23							0
OFFICERS	222	211	11	180	13	6	12	2	3	6	42
Captain	55	53	2	45	3	2	2	2		1	10
Fire Boat	7	7		5			2				2
Lieutenant	160	151	9	130	10	4	8		3	5	30
FIREFIGHTER	739	683	56	553	45	45	38	14	9	35	186
TOTAL	997	925	72	764	59	52	52	16	12	42	233

Spirit of RSJ in 2020

- Fire Chief and Firefighters actively involved in community presence and handing out water to CHOP protesters
- Leading Regional RSJI participation with other local Fire Chiefs
- Department wide training; Cultural Competence with Dr. Hollins
- Race Conversations through Town Hall Meetings
- Covid Testing and Vaccination locations that considered Race and Social Impacts
- Transparency with RSJ and communication with SFD Leadership