Hurricane Katrina Created Serious Recruitment and Retention Issues for the NOPD

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• After Katrina, budget for officers has shrunk . . .

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• Since Katrina, NOPD has lost officers at an annualize rate of 17%
  – Compared to 5% before

• Even worse, losses concentrated disproportionately among junior ranks

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RAND Agreed to Support “Quick Look” at NOPD Recruiting and Retention Problems

• Visited New Orleans during August/September 2006
  – Conducted interviews with all ranks of NOPD, the Police Foundation, FEMA, and Louisiana Recovery Authority

• Drew on extensive relevant experience working with large personnel systems
  – DoD and several large municipal police departments
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• Identified initiatives that could be implemented in today’s environment
  – Public policy informed by cost-benefit analysis
  – In New Orleans, little ability to take on any cost regardless of benefit derived

BUT
Today’s Briefing Focuses on Initiatives in Five Areas

• Compensation

• Career management—the promotion process

• Recruiting

• Mix of officers and civilians

• Morale
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Initiatives were tailored to NOPD circumstances
NOPD Salaries Are Not Competitive

- Relative to comparable cities like Houston, New Orleans underpays its police force
  - Police salaries in Houston are substantially higher at all levels, except for police recruits
  - Many NOPD officers relocated there, so New Orleans will need to compete with Houston
- Also notable, NOPD has failed to pay increases to grades of PO 2, 3, and 4 after officers pass exams qualifying for promotions
  - Hinders retention and ability to attract new recruits and motivate current officers

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<th>Position</th>
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<th>Houston Min</th>
<th>Houston Max</th>
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<tr>
<td>Police Recruit</td>
<td>30,732</td>
<td>29,164</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 1</td>
<td>33,111</td>
<td>36,033</td>
<td>50,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 2</td>
<td>34,797</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 3</td>
<td>36,570</td>
<td></td>
<td>55,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 4</td>
<td>38,433</td>
<td>51,114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Sergeant</td>
<td>42,449</td>
<td>61,784</td>
<td>67,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Lieutenant</td>
<td>45,734</td>
<td>69,354</td>
<td>75,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Captain</td>
<td>53,750</td>
<td>79,421</td>
<td>86,613</td>
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Some Options Can Help Address Compensation Problems

• Cost-neutral reduction in pension program and increase in more-immediate compensation
  – Pensions are very generous
  – But have little effect on recruiting new personnel or retaining those in early to middle years of service
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  – But have little effect on recruiting new personnel or retaining those in early to middle years of service

• Using housing as component of compensation
  – City likely to have stock of relatively good housing
  – Might be made available to police/other first responders as non-cash payment for committing to years of service
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Infrequent Promotion Process Has Led to Career Progression and Promotion Problems

• Promotion exams supposed to be held every three years, but as many as five years pass between exams

• Officers promoted based on exams, with NOPD moving down list of qualified candidates over time as need arises

• But many not promoted to fill immediate need leave rather than wait five years

• As a result, NOPD is often left with those at bottom of the list
Increasing Frequency of Exam and Promotion Boards Can Help Address the Problem

• NOPD should convene promotion boards every 12–18 months
  – Qualify (pass) only enough officers to fill expected vacancies between newly reduced periods between exams

• Doing so would allow most talented officers to progress rapidly

• Also would foster climate of continuous learning
  – Those who do not pass will be motivated to try again as they see highly qualified officers advance
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Current Efforts to Recruit New Officers Appear to Be Rather Passive

- Head of recruiting selects recruiters for NOPD
  - No specific selection criteria for choosing best recruiters

- Uniformed officers assigned to recruiting mostly spend time recruiting those who have already volunteered
  - Use Internet and other research tools to conduct background checks on potential candidates
  - Could be done just as well by civilian specialists
Taking a More Proactive Approach Would Improve Recruiting

• Examine Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC)-type or school-based program
  – One district that tried it reported less costly than traditional methods

• Potentially include:
  – After-school employment in school year
  – Summer employment between grades
  – Post-high school employment as civilian NOPD employees

• Potentially consider programs providing up-front support for college in exchange for employment commitment
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As NOPD Shrinks, It Will Be Necessary to Reassess Assignment of Officers

• Now, some uniformed officers “permanently” assigned to duties civilians could do
  – Searching Internet as part of recruiting process

• Some assignment of officers to “civilian-type” jobs may be needed because of “special” situations, but assignments should be:
  – Temporary, of limited duration
  – Tied to a physical limitation
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Improving Morale Is Critical in Improving Recruiting and Retention

• Make the NOPD whole as soon as possible
  – Repair criminal justice system and NOPD infrastructure

• Make serving officers feel good about accomplishments
  – Work with press to get story out about NOPD

• Increase support for the police
  – Institutional—Provide 10 percent pay increase
  – Personal—Provide psychological services as needed
  – Community—Organize police recognition events
## Cost and Immediacy of Impact of Initiatives Are Not Well-Correlated in Every Case

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*City must make trade-offs between two objectives*
City Has Already Begun the Process

• Mayor Nagin and RAND released study at press conference in March 2007

• Mayor noted that city had already acted upon several of the initiatives
  – Increasing pay of junior patrolmen
  – Moving to increase the frequency of promotion exams (with the New Orleans Civil Service Commission)