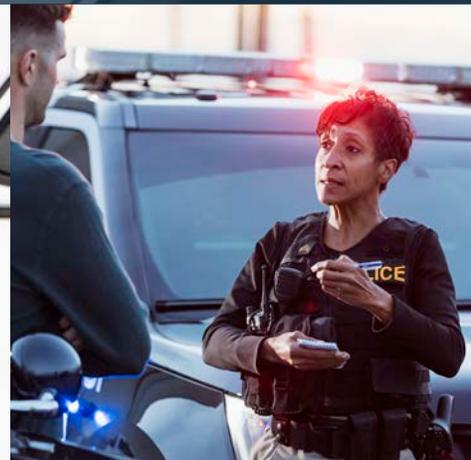




JOB-SHARING AND PART-TIME OPTIONS FOR PEACE OFFICERS: Considerations for Agencies Seeking to Implement Flexible Scheduling Policies



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Executive Summary



Recruitment and retention are critical issues in law enforcement, especially in light of the current staffing crisis.

To improve recruitment and enhance retention, agencies may consider implementing a type of flexible scheduling called job sharing—a work arrangement in which two people share the duties of a single position while dividing the benefits. Job sharing in law enforcement may benefit a range of workers, including women, senior personnel transitioning to retirement, parents or caregivers, and employees experiencing personal or family issues.

Notably, if job sharing is not a feasible option for law enforcement agencies, they can still implement or enhance other flexible scheduling arrangements, such as part-time positions or extended leave for qualifying events.

Research on job sharing in many different industries has identified both potential benefits and drawbacks.

Potential Benefits

Job sharing:

- Retains two people through a single salary and thus two sets of knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Improves employee work-life balance.
- Reduces stress and burnout for personnel, including those who have suffered a traumatic event.
- Supports greater productivity and lower absenteeism.

- Mitigates talent loss and loss of organizational investment caused by retirements and other voluntary separations.
- Retains expertise, experience, leadership, and mentorship.
- Retains employees with changing or unique family situations, especially women.
- Supports a larger pool of auxiliary personnel in case of emergencies, disasters, special events, and unexpected staffing shortages.
- Increases agency personnel's creativity, life experience, and complementary non-law-enforcement expertise.
- Provides a recruitment tool for those considering (or resuming) a full-time law enforcement career.
- Provides unique perspective and insight on agency policies and procedures.

Potential Drawbacks and Challenges to Implementation

Job sharing:

- Requires training, equipping, and managing two people for one position.
- Creates more employees to supervise, evaluate, counsel, and mentor.
- May lead to stigmatization of job sharers and reinforce negative stereotypes.

- May be difficult—especially in smaller agencies—to match two officers interested in sharing a single role, or to have enough officers interested to justify the program.
- May require a benefit reduction for job sharers, such as decreased health insurance.
- May not be allowed according to local union contracts.
- May not be allowed due to local and state ordinances, especially those governing pensions and health benefits.
- Evaluate the units and assignments that may be suitable for job sharing.
- Develop specific policies for job-sharing positions, including eligibility requirements and the application process.
- Train employees and supervisors about job-sharing benefits to the organization and to employees to avoid marginalization of job-sharing officers.
- Recruit, interview, and hire personnel specifically for job-sharing positions.
- Conduct an ongoing evaluation of the job-sharing program.

There are more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States, and there is no single job-sharing program or process for implementing flexible scheduling that can serve as a universal model. Each jurisdiction has its own unique needs, policies, logistical issues, ordinances, and labor contracts. In light of this diversity across agencies, we have identified several general recommendations for agencies considering job-sharing programs and policies.

Conclusion: If implemented properly with respect to local ordinances, labor contracts, and logistical considerations, job sharing can improve both recruitment and retention for police agencies, as well as prolong officers' careers and alleviate staffing issues caused by retirements.

If job sharing is not feasible, law enforcement agencies should still consider implementing other types of flexible scheduling, such as expanding the pool of part-time officers and assignments. Other options include allowing officers to work from home or creating an extended leave policy for those serving as primary caregivers. An extended leave policy could also accommodate individuals pursuing or completing their education. These additional options highlight the main benefit of flexible scheduling—such arrangements may not only benefit and attract a more diverse pool of employees but also recruit and retain a larger number of employees in general.

Recommendations for Implementation

- Conduct focus groups with and/or survey officers to gauge interest in a job-sharing program and positions.
- Identify and evaluate state legislation and local ordinances that may affect the certification, training, and retention of law enforcement officers, especially those classified as volunteer, auxiliary, or part time.
- Identify and evaluate state legislation and local ordinances that may affect collective bargaining, retirement plans and pensions, and employee benefits.

Introduction



Over the last decade, recruitment and retention have rapidly become prominent issues in the American law enforcement profession. Although police applicant and personnel levels have ebbed and flowed over the last half-century, several factors have exacerbated the current staffing crisis: highly publicized incidents of police misconduct (Weitzer, 2002; Axios, 2021), widespread protests against such conduct (Mourtgos, Adams, and Nix, 2022), changing public perceptions of police officers (Gallup, 2020), the “Great Resignation” (Police Executive Research Forum, 2021), the retirement of Baby Boomer and Generation X police officers (Hubbard, 2019), the expansion of remote work and flexible scheduling employment options due to COVID-19 (Forbes, 2022), and possible generational shifts in attitudes toward traditional employment and working arrangements (Barhate and Dirani, 2021).

The current recruiting crisis is multidimensional: police agencies are faced with the dual challenges of staffing their agencies while simultaneously ensuring that those agencies are diverse and as representative of the populations they serve as possible. Notably, women compose approximately 51 percent of the United States population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021) but only 12 percent of law enforcement officers (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). Because of these factors, solutions are more complicated than simply recruiting and retaining a greater number of people. There must be a pronounced emphasis on recruiting and retaining specific underrepresented populations, particularly women.

There is likely no single solution, but rather a diverse portfolio of recruitment strategies and agency policies that may be used to attract and retain a greater quantity and quality of employees, and

that present a greater appeal to underrepresented groups.

This is an issue of diversity in the workplace, but it is also an issue of public safety. A growing body of research demonstrates the positive community safety impact of women in policing. Studies have found that compared to male officers, female officers tend to use lower levels of force and generate fewer incidents of excessive force (Schuck and Rabe-Hemp, 2005; Porter and Prenzler, 2017), generate fewer complaints (Brandl, Stroshine, and Frank, 2001), and utilize threats, physical restraint, and arrest less frequently (Rabe-Hemp, 2008).

Notably, given this growing body of research showing the unique value of women officers in addressing many of the most critical issues in policing today, especially with regard to use of force and community complaints, improving the representation and experiences of women in law enforcement may likely ameliorate some recruitment and retention issues while also contributing to agency diversity and population.

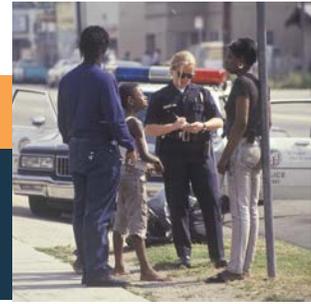
One possible organizational strategy to attract more women—and improve overall recruitment, retention, and diversity—is a type of flexible scheduling called job sharing (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009). This option is especially valuable to retain and recruit female officers. Studies have found that a lack of flexible scheduling may contribute to female attrition (Davies, 2011), and most job-sharing participants are mothers (Lewis, 2001; Branine, 2004). Several professions in many different countries have successfully implemented job sharing, including nursing (Dubourg, Ahmling, and Bujas, 2006), teaching (Williamson, Cooper, and Baird, 2015),

pharmacology (Rogers and Finks, 2009), library services (Brocklebank and Whitehouse, 2003), and banking (Mansor and Idris, 2015).

Furthermore, while there is currently a lack of research on job sharing within law enforcement,

there is reason for optimism: studies in other professions report greater productivity, lower absenteeism, and reduced turnover rate among job sharers (Spencer, 2017; Sacks et al., 2015).

Job Sharing— An Overview



Definition and Prevalence

Job sharing is a flexible work arrangement in which two people share the responsibilities and duties of a single position while dividing the salary, leave, and other benefits (Curson, 1986; Spencer, 1997). There are many ways in which the position can be divided, but it generally entails a combination of employer requirements (e.g., scheduling and job duties) and employee needs (e.g., family leave, childcare, sickness) (Branine, 2004).

Research has identified three main types of job sharing (Daniels, 2011). The most common form of job sharing involves two employees sharing the duties and responsibilities of one job. A split job share refers to an arrangement where employees have different duties and responsibilities while working toward a shared objective or goal. A hybrid job share involves sharing some common duties and responsibilities while dividing others.

Despite the variety of ways to implement job sharing, few employers offer this option; only about 10 to 20 percent of private employers have a job-sharing option in their policy (Society for Human Resource Management, 2018). There is no estimate on how many of the 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States practice job sharing, but given the dearth of research on flexible scheduling in American policing (as well as the lack of available information on the internet), the percentage is likely even smaller than in the private sector.

Motivations for Job Sharing

Employers may institute job sharing for many reasons, such as reorganizing workers and operations to meet the needs of projects and clients. For instance, if two or more part-time employees share complementary skill sets or expertise, an employer may use a job-sharing model to consolidate those skills and abilities to meet a project deadline or ensure staffing levels. Employers seeking a higher rate of retention may also implement job sharing to avoid losing employees who require flexible schedules. In doing so, employers may acquire and retain a broader employee pool with a wider range of experience and expertise, as well as the ability to fill shifts or assignments due to sickness or other leave.

Job sharing is also an attractive option for employees, and research has found that workers from many different demographics and family situations utilize job-sharing options (Daniels, 2011). They do so most commonly after experiencing a change in family status, such as the birth of a child, in situations involving caregiving for other relatives, or both. For example, members of Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1980) are doubly taxed as they care for their aging parents, who have lengthier life expectancies, and also care for their children (who may still reside with them and rely on them for financial support) (Calhoun, 2020). The outside demands fall especially hard on women, who bear a disproportionate burden of housework and emotional care as compared to men (Coltrane, 2000; Erickson, 2011). Baby Boomers and older Generation X workers also tend to utilize job sharing when

transitioning out of the workforce as a way to reduce their workload and develop personal pursuits as they approach retirement (Collison, 2005).

Potential Benefits

Studies on job sharing have documented numerous possible benefits. However, it should be noted that these benefits depend on several factors, including the industry, the specific job-sharing program, and the organization practicing this type of flexible scheduling.

Research on job sharing across all occupations demonstrates that participants experience a better work-life balance (Crampton et al., 2003; Daniels, 2011), which is an emerging priority for younger workers (Bannon, Ford, and Meltzer, 2011). Job sharing may enhance that work-life balance, allowing employees to care for their family, pursue outside education or training, volunteer, or engage in other hobbies (Hayman, 2014).

Furthermore, for officers grappling with stress and burnout, job sharing may alleviate those issues while allowing agencies to retain at least some of the officer's training, experience, and expertise. Similarly, it may also alleviate stress for officers who have experienced a traumatic event and require time and space to heal but wish to remain on staff with the agency.

Job sharing may also mitigate the loss of talent that results when those from older generations exit the workplace (Collison, 2005). The Baby Boomer and Generation X labor pools contained a large volume of workers, and now industries and professions across the board are tasked with replacing that wave of retirees from a shrinking labor pool. Job sharing would allow officers of every rank and specialty to depart in stages rather than abruptly, potentially extending employees' careers and mitigating the retirement crisis. This transition phase would allow agencies to staff more positions, further capitalize on the experience and expertise of older officers, and bridge gaps in leadership and mentorship caused by retirements. Senior police officers with decades of training and expertise could serve their agency

and the community by sharing the job of a patrol officer, detective, or academy instructor, for example. Although many retiring officers likely do want to fully retire, there may be a sizable pool of retiring officers who wish to, or would, remain if allowed to work two or three days per week.

Job sharing may also increase retention among women, the demographic most likely to participate in flexible scheduling (Lewis, 2001; Branine, 2004). Women perform a larger share of domestic work and childcare (Smithson and Stokoe, 2005) and are more likely than men to interrupt their careers to care for a family member (Pew Research Center, 2013). If presented with an option that allowed them to continue performing crucial domestic work and childcare without interrupting their careers, more women may choose to remain in the workforce.

Research on volunteer or reserve police officers also sheds light on the potential benefits of job sharing, as both approaches provide agencies with a larger pool of officers to draw from, likely with more diverse backgrounds and abilities. Greenberg (1984) outlines numerous benefits of an auxiliary police force, several of which may apply to job-sharing arrangements in law enforcement. For instance, job sharing would provide police agencies with a larger pool of qualified personnel in the event of emergencies, disasters, special events, and unexpected staffing shortages. Police agencies may be able to pursue crime prevention and community policing initiatives with these additional officers. Increasing the number of police officers via job sharing may also increase an agency's creativity, life experience, and various types of non-law-enforcement expertise (e.g., marketing, data analysis, machinery). These benefits could be especially useful in community outreach, social media development, public information, recruitment, training, and specialty units, such as those requiring aircraft, watercraft, search and rescue, scuba, etc. Furthermore, job sharing may attract people who are thinking about pursuing (or resuming) a full-time law enforcement career with important experience and insight; there is evidence that many volunteer officers wish to become full-time officers (Pepper, 2014).

Lastly, agencies that utilize job sharing can also benefit from a more diverse pool of perspectives to shape agency policies and procedures. Officers who job share may also offer a unique perspective on policies and procedures; law enforcement is an insular culture, and officers' perceptions and decisions are often shaped by their own experiences (Paoline and Terrill, 2005). A job-sharing officer who spends less time within the confines of a police agency and more time in nonpolice settings (e.g., caring for family members, spending time with friends, working for community organizations) may offer a unique and valuable perspective to inform agency policies and procedures.

Potential Drawbacks

Despite the variety of potential benefits, research has also documented several possible drawbacks or impediments to job sharing. For instance, even volunteer officers are not a completely free source of labor (Brudney, 1999), and agencies might balk at the cost of training, equipping, and maintaining two employees for one position. However, most are one-time costs and are generally incurred up-front. Moreover, these costs may well be dwarfed by the cost of losing officers after a few years due to a lack of job sharing or other flexible scheduling, which would require the training of new officers.

It may also be difficult for agencies to establish eligibility criteria for job sharing, and to clarify and codify who and what situations qualify for job sharing arrangements. Broadening eligibility for flexible scheduling arrangements beyond the birth of a child to caring for a relative or pursuing higher education or training may lead to many, and for some agencies too many, officers choosing to relinquish their full-time status.

Job sharing may also place a heavier burden on supervisors, who must supervise and evaluate two employees instead of one for the same position. For example, a sergeant who normally supervises 8 to 10 full-time officers may supervise 12 to 14 officers under a job-sharing arrangement. The day-to-day supervision aspects may not differ much (e.g., approving reports or an arrest), but the longer term

responsibilities may prove to be a heavier burden (e.g., completing quarterly or annual evaluations, scheduling training sessions). The "invisible work" may also increase, such as mentoring, counseling, and supporting additional employees. While the increased monetary and supervisory costs of job sharing may be burdensome, it is important to contrast these expenses with the costs of losing qualified officers in whom the agency has invested significant resources. In addition, an agency could extend job-sharing opportunities to supervisors, thereby increasing the pool of managers and mitigating the workload increase on supervisors.

There is also reason for concern that job sharers in police agencies may be marginalized or stigmatized. Because women participate in job sharing more often than men (Lewis, 2001; Branine, 2004), this may reinforce negative gender stereotypes and perpetuate inequality within law enforcement. Women may not seek or receive promotions and specialized assignments; in turn, they may suffer a continuing lack of respect from their peers. In addition, research has found that part-time work is associated with reduced access to higher status roles, projects, and promotional opportunities for those part-time employees (McDonald, Bradley and Brown, 2009). Police leadership can mitigate the potential marginalization of job sharers, however, by explicitly supporting job-sharing positions, recognizing the work and achievements of job-sharing employees, and ensuring that selection and the promotional process do not penalize job sharers.

Furthermore, where job sharing has occurred in law enforcement, this stigmatization seems to generally not be the case. Those who have participated in job sharing in law enforcement have generally reported feeling satisfied and comfortable with their roles in the organization (Perrine, 2009). Lastly, it may be a challenge to match two officers' schedules to share a shift and manage obstacles to schedule flexibility (Hill, 2007).

However, the greatest challenge may be not in costs, burdens to supervisors, or applicant interest, but instead in determining whether such a program is contractually feasible according to local union

agreements and ordinances. Many union contracts govern bidding rights to shifts and days off, legal representation and disciplinary processes, and pension contributions and benefits.

Police agencies would have to address several questions: Would police officers who participate in job sharing be covered by the union contract? If so, how would they select a work shift (according to seniority or union contract) that they can share with another officer? Are job sharers allowed to work within specialized units or only in patrol units? Are they entitled to the union's legal representation and benefits, such as health insurance? Other critical questions relate to the issue of a union's retirement plan: Do job sharers contribute to the pension and draw benefits? If job sharers are not currently covered in a union's pension, would the union collectively bargain with their jurisdiction to obtain that benefit? Adding job sharing to a union's contract may force the union to cede another benefit to the town/city/county/state during negotiations, such as pay increases, vacation days, or other compensation.

One way to address these potential obstacles is to work with agency union(s) from the beginning; this could include enlisting their help and support to survey officers early on and conduct focus groups about job sharing and other flexible scheduling arrangements. Police administrators can partner with union leadership to identify members' concerns about programs and collaboratively write job-sharing policies that articulate eligible assignments and schedules. Administrators can also work with elected officials during contract negotiations; if a job-sharing program is viewed as beneficial to officers, the agency, the jurisdiction, and the public, then perhaps job sharing can become part of the collective bargaining contract without either side having to compromise on any issues or demands.

Agencies must also consider the following: Do local and state ordinances permit job sharing within law enforcement agencies? Are job-sharing officers governed by ordinances related to volunteer, reserve, or full-time police officers? With regard to pensions, would job sharers have to meet certain stipulations and requirements to contribute to and

draw from pensions? Some states have rigid pension requirements that would not permit part-time or job-sharing positions in law enforcement, meaning these ordinances would have to be amended by state legislatures and city councils. In general, agencies that are considering job-sharing programs must carefully scan the legislative landscape for applicable laws, ordinances, and contracts. Yet union contracts and labor laws are not insurmountable obstacles—mapping the legislative and contractual terrain is simply a prerequisite for identifying a possible path to job sharing. Police administrators, union leaders, and elected officials can work to create new legislation or amend existing pension and contract laws to accommodate flexible scheduling.

Flexible Scheduling and Other Alternatives

Where job sharing may not be feasible, police agencies can still implement other types of flexible scheduling. One option may involve expanding the corps of part-time officers. While some agencies maintain volunteer or reserve police officer programs, most do not utilize an auxiliary unit. In many communities, there may be an untapped population of individuals who want to protect and serve their community but cannot make a full-time commitment. Simultaneously, many police agencies are below their authorized strength and cannot fill those positions. Why not designate some of those positions as less than full time and attempt to regain authorized strength by recruiting individuals interested in serving only part time? Currently, about 20 percent of police officers in the United States are volunteers (Dobrin and Wolf, 2016), and studies find that both agencies and individuals benefit from auxiliary police service (van Steden and Mehlbaum, 2019; Wolf and Bryer, 2020). Part-time police service may delay retirements, recruit a wide group of applicants, and help agencies fulfill minimum staffing requirements.

A second flexible scheduling option would be to allow officers to work from home while recovering from pregnancy, illness or injury, or other types of circumstances. These officers could take belated,

nonemergency calls for service; conduct follow-up over the phone (such as interviewing witnesses or victims); and even investigate crimes (e.g., frauds, forgeries, and other crimes already investigated by detectives largely from behind a desk). The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that workers from a variety of different industries can effectively perform their duties remotely. Police officers may likewise be able to handle certain types of calls for service and investigation remotely, although they may need appropriate technology and training to comply with state laws and agency policies (Gallegos, 2020).

Finally, agencies may consider instituting a long-term leave policy that allows employees who meet certain criteria to return to the police agency after 12 to 24 months. Although employees would not be paid, they could care for newborn or adopted children (or other relatives) without interrupting their career path. They could put their careers on hiatus while serving as primary caregivers and decide at the end of the term whether they want to return.

Such long-term leave policies could also potentially accommodate officers who are pursuing or completing higher education or other law enforcement-related training. However, agencies would have to clearly define the eligibility criteria to avoid misuse of the policy to pursue training that is not related to law enforcement or other employment opportunities. For example, the policy might articulate that eligible employees include those serving as a primary caregiver for an immediate family member or who are pursuing law enforcement-related education or training. Extended leave policies would also outline stipulations concerning pay, leave accrual, seniority accrual, retirement contributions, and reentry procedures (perhaps similar to government employees returning after extended military leave).

Potential Agency Units Suitable for Job Sharing

Over the last few decades, recruiting obstacles have led to staffing deficiencies, with 25 percent of police agencies forced to reduce or eliminate services due to personnel shortages (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2020). Because patrol composes the largest percentage of a police agency's staffing, a job-sharing program may need to remedy any staffing deficiencies in the area of patrol. On the other hand, if job sharing allows an agency to retain two or more employees who would otherwise resign their full-time commission, job sharing may actually *increase* staffing in patrol and other units.

There are also other units that may be suitable for job-sharing arrangements, including but not limited to community policing and outreach, public information, data and crime analysis, crime scene investigators, traffic and collision investigations, and criminal investigations. Each of these units could benefit from diversity in insight, expertise, and experience that job-sharing officers would bring. For instance, an employee might bring experience in the nonprofit sector to a community outreach unit, crisis communications skills to a public information unit, research abilities to a data analysis unit, or a biology or forensic science degree to a crime scene investigation team. Moreover, these units may have more regular schedules (as opposed to shift work), making them more amenable to two officers sharing job duties and a shift.

Recommendations for Implementation



There are over 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States, each abiding by its own respective policies, union contracts, local ordinances, and state legislatures. In turn, every police agency likely has unique circumstances and challenges that must be evaluated and addressed before instituting any type of flexible scheduling. Based on the extant research on job sharing and its application to law enforcement, the following recommendations for police agencies involve a series of steps that may aid in implementing many different types of flexible scheduling programs, not only job sharing.

1. Survey officers and/or conduct focus groups to determine the level of interest in flexible scheduling programs and positions.

Depending on the agency and jurisdiction, there may be logistical challenges to designing and implementing flexible scheduling positions and programs. Before deciding how to address those challenges, it is recommended that agencies first survey their officers (and possibly community members and potential recruits) and/or conduct focus groups to determine the level of interest in alternative scheduling.

2. Identify state legislation and local ordinances that may affect the certification, training, and retention of law enforcement officers, especially those classified as volunteer, auxiliary, or part time.

The second step in determining the feasibility of a flexible scheduling program is to assess whether such a program is compatible with state and local laws. In addition, police agencies must evaluate whether they can meet the requirements

of these laws, especially those related to training and education. For example, depending on the program, some officers may not reach the number of hours worked or training hours to retain their law enforcement certification. Agencies must first determine whether any proposed flexible scheduling arrangement will comply with local laws.

3. Identify state legislation and local ordinances that may affect collective bargaining, retirement plans and pensions, and employee benefits.

Next, law enforcement agencies must identify how job-sharing or part-time positions may be affected by collective bargaining and the benefits guaranteed by labor contracts. In some jurisdictions, pensions are governed by state statutes with stringent eligibility criteria. If a program does not meet legislative or labor contract criteria, then participants may not receive pension benefits, legal representation, or other benefits enjoyed by full-time police officers.

4. Evaluate what units and assignments may be suitable for flexible scheduling.

Every police agency has unique strengths and faces unique challenges, and this is especially true concerning personnel issues. Therefore, the question of which units are most suitable and would benefit most from flexible scheduling must be answered by each agency independently. For example, job sharing may allow one agency to enhance its public information office, while another agency may use part-time employees to staff its community services unit. Some agencies may use flexible scheduling to stem the tide of retirements from higher ranking officers and retain knowledge and leadership within

the agency. Other agencies may use job-sharing or part-time programs to cover projected personnel shortages in their patrol units due to military leave, family leave, medical leave, or other issues. The critical point is that agencies must assess where flexible scheduling could be most feasible and beneficial.

5. Develop specific policies for flexible scheduling positions, including eligibility requirements and application processes.

Assuming that local ordinances and labor contracts permit flexible scheduling and that agencies can identify suitable units, police agencies must develop program-specific policies. These policies should address numerous issues: eligibility requirements, specific job assignments and availability, the application and selection process, the process for leaving an assignment, compensation rates (including overtime and other differential rates), employee benefits (including but not limited to retirement, disability, life insurance, holidays, and leave accrual), employee rights (such as grievance procedures), criteria for terminating a job assignment, and commitment to retaining a sufficient number of flexible scheduling positions.

6. Train employees and supervisors about the benefits to the organization and to employees to avoid marginalization of job-sharing or part-time officers.

As noted, flexible scheduling in law enforcement has the potential to stigmatize and/or marginalize participants, depending on the culture of the police agency. Such a concern is especially notable for women, who are the most common participants in job-sharing programs (Lewis, 2001; Branine, 2004) and may already experience isolation, sexual violence, and marginalization in law enforcement (Sands et al., 2022).

To combat such stigma and the compounding marginalization, it is critical for police agencies to educate their personnel of all ranks about the potential benefits of flexible scheduling, including

reduced stress and burnout, mitigation of talent loss, longer retention of expertise and leadership, retention of larger auxiliary pools of officers in case of critical incidents, and recruitment of those considering a full-time career, among many others noted in this report. Explaining the benefits may normalize flexible scheduling and reduce the chances that participants will experience stigma and marginalization.

7. Recruit, interview, and hire specifically for flexible scheduling positions.

Agencies should specifically recruit and hire for flexible scheduling positions, as well as include job sharing as part of the agency's recruitment and retention plan. Police agencies may establish and even maintain job-sharing assignments, but these programs may be underutilized if agencies do not actively recruit to fill these positions. Agencies should also present job-sharing positions as both a career destination and a potential path to further career advancement. That is, agencies should recognize job sharing as a legitimate and valued career choice while also allowing interested individuals to utilize it as an intermediary step in pursuing a full-time law enforcement career. If police agencies implicitly present job-sharing or part-time assignments as inferior to full-time assignments (or allow the agency culture to demean flexible scheduling), participants may feel excluded and marginalized from their agency.

8. Conduct an ongoing evaluation of flexible scheduling programs.

Evidence-based policing should be the cornerstone of any agency, especially concerning new policies and procedures. It is important for agencies to evaluate their job-sharing programs objectively and critically to identify successes and challenges. Ideally, agencies should partner with outside researchers to conduct long-term assessments. Soliciting an outside evaluation would help ensure that a program is given sufficient time to impact recruitment and retention. Researchers may also be able to provide advice on how agencies can reconfigure or expand job sharing

as these programs develop. There are several outcomes worth analyzing, including the career path and destination of flexible schedule participants, motivations for obtaining (and retaining) a flexible schedule position, job satisfaction, participants' perceptions of the agency (and experiences after obtaining a position), trends in overall recruitment

and retention, and ways in which flexible schedule participants contribute value to their units and the agency overall. In addition to measuring what agencies gain, evaluations should also identify and measure what agencies will *lose* in terms of personnel, experience, knowledge, and abilities without the option of a flexible scheduling program.

Conclusion and Recommendations



The law enforcement profession is in the midst of a serious recruitment and retention crisis. Agencies are struggling to attract job applicants and, at the same time, large numbers of officers are retiring or departing for other professions. This crisis is compounded by a lack of applicant and employee diversity in most police agencies.

As police agencies evaluate and enhance their recruitment and retention strategies, they should consider implementing flexible scheduling arrangements, specifically job-sharing programs along with other programs such as volunteer and other paid part-time positions, and the option of extended leave. Although research indicates that flexible scheduling may primarily benefit women, this type of flexible scheduling may also benefit those who are transitioning to retirement, workers caring

for other relatives, and employees experiencing personal or family issues.

This is the key takeaway: Law enforcement must broaden its focus when it comes to flexible scheduling. Although administrators may not be able to implement job sharing due to legislative, contractual, or logistical constraints, there are other types of flexible scheduling that may be more feasible (e.g., part-time assignments, working remotely, extended leave). At a time when agencies are losing senior officers and failing to attract new talent—especially among underrepresented demographics—police administrators should fully explore how flexible scheduling can improve the recruitment, retention, and diversification of their agencies.

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