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Knowledge and Innovation Site Profile

Recruitment and Retention at the Charleston Police Department

KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION SITE PROFILES

This is one in a series of profiles being published as part of the Knowledge and Innovation (KI) Site Network. The agencies highlighted in these profiles are part of the KI Site Network and have demonstrated exemplary practice in a core area of policing. The KI Site Network provides resources and peer engagement opportunities at no cost to law enforcement agencies. Visit www.leknowledgelab.org to learn more.
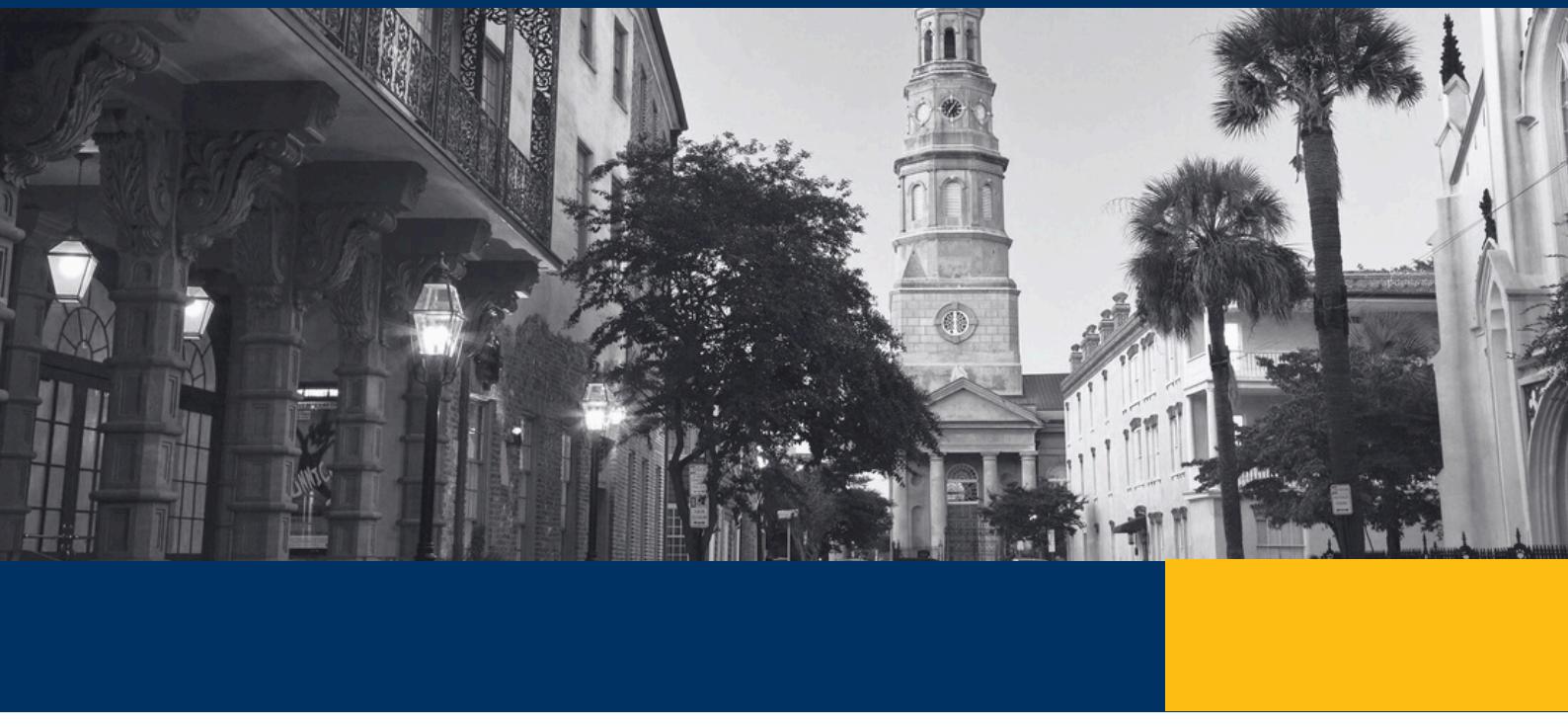
THE APPROACH

The Charleston Police Department (CPD) employs a **data-driven approach to recruitment and retention**, collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data to inform recruitment and retention efforts and enhance practices and procedures.

CPD's **recruitment process has a reputation for being straightforward and efficient**. New hires report quickly moving through the process and feeling recognized and heard by the recruitment team.

The Charleston Police Department's mission is to serve all people within the jurisdiction "with respect, fairness, and compassion." These values are reflected in their community interactions, as well as within their organization. CPD fosters a **culture that values relationships among staff**, ensuring peers feel respected and valued, which influences their approach to their work. For example, CPD officers are known to volunteer to cover their colleagues' shifts when personal matters arise, and staff report feeling comfortable approaching supervisors and receiving feedback on their work. Officers report that this internal support contributes to their reasoning for staying with, and in some cases, returning to the CPD. This **supportive culture is one factor in CPD's strength in retaining officers and staff**.

Knowledge Lab Core Practice Areas
- Community Trust & Partnerships
- Crime Investigations
- Crime and Violence Response
- Crime Victim Support
- Mass Critical Incident Response

- Mass Demonstration Response
- Mental Health & Crisis Response
- Office Safety & Wellness
- Public Transparency
- Recruitment and Retention

- Stops, Searches & Arrests
- Technology
- Training & Education
- Use of Force

KEY ELEMENTS

Recruitment
- Strategy that utilizes active, in-person outreach methods for recruiting
- Defensible screening measures and practices that align with industry best practices
- Comprehensive recruitment policy
- Efficient and simple recruitment process
- Strong understanding of community expectations

Use of Data and Technology
- Limited use of digital advertising
- Maintains tracking sheets on various points in the process and demographics
- Streamlined background investigation process
- Conducts exit surveys and collects post-separation data
- Strong proficiency in evaluative efforts and feedback loops
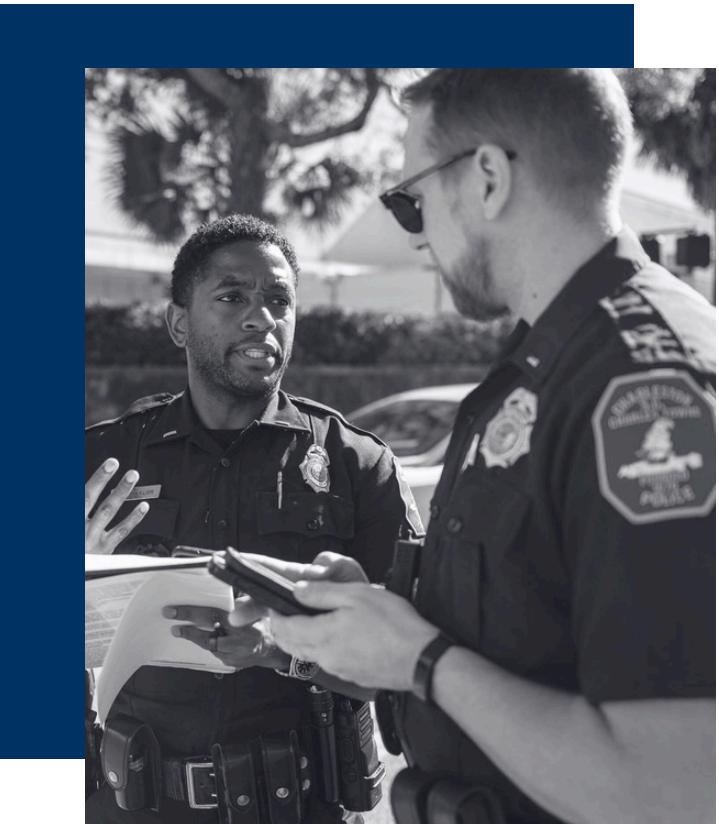
Retention, Wellness, and Culture
- Welcoming and professional environment where officers report feeling valued and respected
- Colleague support
- CPD's peer support efforts and leadership aligned with wellness as a priority
- Culture that supports professional growth and development

> "We were never treated as less [like in other departments] . . . but here everyone, all the way up the hierarchy, is treated well."
> — CPD Recruit

THE BENEFITS

A strong recruitment and retention process enables agencies to bring in new members who are committed to their work and who enhance an agency's culture. By fostering a culture of fairness and respect throughout an agency, a space is created where people want to remain and feel empowered to serve the community. Fostering a healthy environment within an agency has a direct impact on officers' work in the community.

AGENCY AT A GLANCE

The Charleston Police Department serves the City of Charleston, South Carolina with a population of nearly 160,000. CPD has approximately 450 sworn officers and 115 professional staff. CPD includes Investigations, Data, and Intelligence Division, a Community Oriented Policing Division, a Patrol Division, and a Special Operations Division.