

We Need More Female Police Officers



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As we think about how to recruit more police officers, I suggest we start by increasing the number of women in the force. Consistently, female law enforcement officers receive fewer complaints than their male counterparts. This is particularly true when it comes to allegations of rudeness and disrespect.

Studies also show that female officers [use significantly less force](#), both non-lethal and lethal, than male officers. Why? I suspect it is because [women keep situations from escalating](#) through communication while men attempt to control situations by asserting their authority.

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Can male officers be trained to de-escalate situations by communicating? Of course they can. But a larger portion of women already display these desirable skills.

Unfortunately, the [percentage of law enforcement officers that are women](#) has not seen significant growth over the past 20 years. In local departments and sheriffs' offices, women make up about 12 percent of the force. In state agencies, the number dips to around 6.5 percent. The largest percentage of growth has been in some of the larger municipal police agencies.

There are those who will blame the low numbers on a mistaken belief that women do not want to work in law enforcement. But there are law enforcement agencies who have excelled at recruiting women and removing barriers that have hindered their acceptance to police academies in the past. Key to increasing the number of women is specifically targeting outreach to women and providing them with the tools to develop the skills for passing the physical agility tests.

For instance, the use of advertisements which [display women](#) in them in publications and at events where a larger number of women are in attendance; i.e., female college athletic events. One [suggestion](#) for increasing success at physical agility tests is to provide an opportunity for women to come to the academy (or other testing site) on weekends to receive instruction on how to master the various portions of the agility tests and the opportunity to practice the test. These are just a couple of examples to having law enforcement agencies more closely resemble the communities they are sworn to serve.

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