# Logo Description automatically generatedFla. Police Dept. Wants to Boost Number of Women in Ranks

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There are certain characteristics Boca Raton Police Chief Andrew Scott looks for in a woman - maturity, intelligence, a nonsmoker. That's what he hopes to find when he hosts a dinner party for women interested in a career in law enforcement. Ladies Night Out begins at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 12 at Gatsby's on Southwest 18th Street west of Boca Raton.

Scott and his staff will be on hand to answer questions - such as how to juggle raising children while working the midnight shift. "That does create some inconvenience, but hopefully that individual has a good family network," Scott said. "You're going to miss some birthday parties and holidays, and you're going to have to work on the weekends. But our schedule is phenomenal . . . out of 14 days, you'll be off seven."

Regardless of gender, police work poses an inherent danger, Scott said. Is it less of a risk in Boca Raton than other municipalities, yes, but it's still there.

"I don't want anyone coming in here with their eyes shut thinking this community is devoid of violence or danger for our police officers," Scott said. "But we'll train these individuals to protect themselves and the public. That training is on-going for the rest of their career here."

The department's employment criteria are the same for men and women. Applicants must be at least 19 years old and have at least 60 college credit hours, been honorably discharged from the military or had three years of previous law enforcement experience. Individuals will have to pass a series of tests, including a psychological examination, polygraph, video assessment and extensive background investigation.

Specifically, the department is looking to hire women who have world experience, possess critical thinking skills, have confidence in themselves and are comfortable in their own skin, Scott said.

His efforts to increase women's presence on the force come on the heels of a November referendum to expand the city's border to include the Town Center mall and add 422 businesses and 3,255 residents. Annexation led to the creation of 17 new police officer positions, Scott said. Another three vacancies are the result of attrition.

The recruitment drive also comes at a time when the number of female officers is on a national decline. Women make up less than 10 percent of sworn police officers nationwide, according to the National Center for Women and Policing. Out of 160 sworn officers in Boca Raton, 24 are women, including one captain, two commanders and five sergeants. That's 14 percent - one percent higher than the national average of 13 percent.

The decrease can be partially attributed to poor marketing, said NCWP Director Margaret Moore. Police departments still put pictures of their SWAT Team on brochure covers.

"We're seeing this continued perception, perpetrated by police departments and the media, that policing is about strength and brawn," Moore said. "It's really about connecting the dots, using your brain, processing information, problem solving and working with the community."

Research conducted by the NCWP has found women officers are less likely to use physical force, relying more on communication skills to prevent potentially violent situations, Moore said. Studies also have demonstrated women receive less internal affairs complaints than their male counterparts.

Those are the traits Scott's counting on.

"We're not looking for the stereotypical male image of a police officer," Scott said. "Let's not kid ourselves; the workforce is still a male dominated arena. Women are starting to break that paradigm. We look forward to seeing what's out there."

Archives Police1: https://www.police1.com/archive/articles/fla-police-dept-wants-to-boost-number-of-women-in-ranks-UA27RxV9uhW78OKI/