

Recruiter

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community, who treat people fairly, have an open mind. For a lot of the young people coming on, we are looking for technological skills; law enforcement is growing exponentially, so we need people who are able to keep up with that.

But when I talk about diversity, I like diversity of backgrounds and experience with people. So every person we hire brings something different to the table in that respect.

TSN: Virtually every law enforcement jurisdiction in the Northwest is hiring now and will be for the next few years. What are some of the other jobs besides the patrol officer?

Henderson: There are other positions related to the Police Department, such as police service technicians. They work the front counter, they take police reports, and they have direct contact with the people to come into lobby. They do a lot of work for us and they are what we call non-sworn employees.

We also have professional office assistants, the chief has his assistants upfront, and they do a ton of administrative work. We have evidence technicians, which are civilian positions, and those things people can find as they look online. When you look under careers on the city's website, those things are all good to look at. It doesn't have to just be a police position.

TSN: One of the things we hear from the police accountability movement time and time again, is that we need to get more local people from the local community to get these jobs and patrol in their

own neighborhoods. But it is a hard job. Can you talk about the hardest things about it that potential police recruits need to prepare themselves for?

Henderson: I like that you say that. I'm doing outreach to a lot of local people, people with ties in the local community. One of the biggest reasons that is important, is that there's a big miscommunication with our communities and society in general about just what it is that police actually do. A lot of times I've had people call and complain, and I say, come out and do a ride along with me, and I'll show you what the situation is out here.

Our perception of the police in our whole nation is driven by the media, so when you see things on the news, it can get sensationalized, I think. There are laws and procedures, and a lot of times I think people don't understand why the police do what they do.

One prime example is, people ask why can't police just shoot the gun out of a person's hand. That's just not reality. We as a police have not done a good job of communicating what it is we actually do and don't do in the community. What are we not allowed to do?

I often say that people do not have a problem with me violating somebody else's rights when it concerns them, but boy they sure will yell and scream if they have an issue and they want that dealt with right away. You know what I mean? We have a lot of rules, regulations, and like I said I'm not making a lot of excuses. There are examples of poor behavior in law-enforcement and any other profession.

TSN: What can a police bureau applicant expect?

Henderson: the first things they're going to do are take a written test, and a physical agility test. Then if they pass that we are going to bring them in for a video test, and look at some scenarios, and they have to describe what they saw. Then we'll give you another interview, and if you pass that interview and you score high enough, then you'll make it to my desk; I or one of my detectives will do a background investigation on you. We are going to get into everything about you. We'll talk to all the previous employers, all your friends, your family. We check your credit history, criminal history, driving history— basically any history that you can think of.

If you pass that part of it, then we give you a polygraph examination. Then you do another interview, and we will conditionally offer you a job — based upon the successful completion of a psychological evaluation in person by the psychologist in a medical examination.

We also do a pre-psychological investigation at the front end of this, you have to score within a certain range to be considered. People who score high risk cannot move on in the process. It doesn't mean you're crazy or anything like that, it's just that studies have shown that while not everybody has the same personality and we do not want that, there are certain parameters that are indicators of whether or not someone would make a good police officer.

TSN: What advice you have for young people?

Henderson: You know it's



PHOTO CREDIT VANCOUVER POLICE BUREAU

Vancouver Police Sgt. Dave Henderson

funny, I just came back here about five months ago, and I've worked patrol most of my career. Coming in here and doing interviews and such, my biggest advice to people is learn how to conduct an interview. It's about learning how to be appropriate, learning how to come in and conduct an in-person interview. Look people in the eyes. In your mind, upfront, think about what you want to say and relate to us. You want to be able to stand

out. And that goes for any job. For younger people, I really see a lack of general interviewing skills.

For more information on employment with the Vancouver Police Bureau, go to www.cityof-vancouver.us/police/page/careers.

Crisis

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TS: I thought you might talk about the money because it's not the best paid job.

JA: Well, it's true that community mental health is not extremely well paid and we do have individuals who have really sacrificed to work in these careers. But they do it because they care about people and want to help them.

TS: Our culture has a long history of not dealing well with mental illness. How are we doing now?

JA: I think when it comes to doing the work, we have made some real progress. We have more integration of medical, mental health and substance use treatment. So we are working with all the facets of an individual's life and viewing that person as a whole person.

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Also, in the last several months we have seen a large increase in the number of people who have health insurance. That is very significant.

As a society there is a still a lot of stigma and a lot of education that needs to be addressed.

I am a mental health first aid trainer and our agency is very supportive of mental health first aid and youth mental health first aid. That is a training that educates the general public on how to counteract stigma and help people who are in a crisis. It's an internationally recognized training and it's really helpful.

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