

**Hiring: What is the Best Fit for the Fairlawn Fire Department?**

By: Justin N. Joy  
Lieutenant  
City of Fairlawn  
3525 South Smith Rd.  
Fairlawn, Ohio 44333

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## ABSTRACT

The hiring of qualified candidates that match the culture of an organization has a lasting impact in a multitude of ways. The process by which those candidates are hired is the only mechanism that an organization has to determine which candidates are the "best-fit" for an organization. The problem is the potential lack of qualified future candidates. The purpose of this study was to research a hiring process that ensures quality candidates through initial qualifications and sufficient number of candidates by establishing a testing process that is beneficial to the department. This project uses a descriptive research to answer three research questions: (a) what hiring processes are being used in other fire departments; (b) what hiring processes are being used in other non-fire department organizations; (c) what initial minimum qualifications are being used to determine eligible candidates for application. A literature review and survey were used to address the three research questions. The results indicated that the majority of those surveyed used a hiring process that included both internal and external candidates to maximize the candidate selection pool size. The minimum qualifications were based upon certification as an emergency medical technician and various levels of firefighter certification. Recommendations included the use of an outside agency to help conduct the hiring process and determine the personal characteristic of the candidate that an organization is seeking, changing current civil service policy to define the candidate selection pool as those who are internal and external candidates, and institute a program to develop internal candidates and groom them for the selection process.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Fairlawn fire department was established in 1981 with the addition of the first full-time firefighters for the department. The initial group of firefighters that started the organization in 1981 is due to retire within the next couple of years. The Fairlawn fire department will be faced with multiple vacant positions in the full-time ranks. The past hiring processes have produced a very limited number of qualified candidates that the department could choose from due to Civil Service rules. The Civil Service rules limited the candidate selection pool to internal candidates only. This requirement has created an undesirable position for the department in hiring future employees. This will be especially felt during the next hiring period; the largest the department has faced to date. *Thus, the problem that this study has addressed is the potential for a lack of qualified candidates due to the current hiring process restrictions within the Fairlawn fire department.*

### **Purpose of the Study**

*The purpose of this study was to develop a hiring process that ensures quality candidates through initial requirements.*

### **Research Questions**

*The following questions will be answered by this descriptive research:*

1. What hiring processes are being utilized in other fire departments that are similar in demographics as the Fairlawn fire department?
2. What hiring processes are being used in other non-fire department organizations?
3. What initial qualifications are being used to determine eligibility of candidates?

## **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The City of Fairlawn is located in the northeastern portion of the state of Ohio. The city resides in Summit County and borders the City of Akron and Bath and Copley Townships. The City of Fairlawn was established July 1971. The city covers 5.2 square miles with approximately 7,007 residents. During the day, the city swells to over 40,000 people due to the influx of those who work or travel to Fairlawn. The City of Fairlawn is home to many successful companies such as Rubbermaid, A. Schulman, Veyance technologies and more. The City's location between the City of Canton and the City of Cleveland, as well as the proximity to two major airports and a major interstate, have allowed the city to prosper and grow during poor economic climates.

The Fairlawn fire department was commissioned in 1981 due to the overwhelming growth that the city was enduring. The department has grown through the years, to its present force of fifteen full-time and forty part-time employees. The department is under the direction of Chief Glenn Goodrich, who has been with the department since its inception. The department operates out of one station that houses a fire engine, tower truck, three advanced life support ambulances, and five support vehicles. The department runs an inspection bureau and a training bureau in addition to the fire suppression personnel. The fire department is staffed during normal business hours with up to ten firefighters.

The initial groups of nine full-time firefighters were all hired during the 1981 inception of the fire department. This has created a unique situation where as all nine of the original full-time members will be able to retire in a close proximity of time. In a department with fifteen full-time employees, this constitutes a 60% turnover of employees within a single period. This drastic event will most likely never repeat itself, but is a problem none the less. To deepen the problem, the pool of candidates that the fire department has to hire from to replace these nine personnel is

very limited. Currently the fire department can only hire from internal part time employees that meet the requirements set forth by the City of Fairlawn Civil Service Commission. This is a City policy that was established in 1981. This policy has historically created a very small hiring pool that has led to the hiring of individuals that may not have otherwise been chosen had a large pool of candidates been available. There have been four employees in the past five years that have left Fairlawn fire department for other employment; and one that left for disciplinary reasons. In a department with fifteen full-time employees, this translates to a turnover ratio of 25% of the workforce.

The hiring process for the fire department is only candidates who have obtained a minimum of six months of part-time employment within the City of Fairlawn fire department and possess the minimum professional qualifications of professional firefighter certification and state of Ohio Paramedic certification are eligible to apply. The hiring process consists of an application, written examination, and a panel interview. During the initial hiring of personnel when the department was formed, the personnel consisted of all part-time personnel who were desiring full-time employment within the fire department. Over the past two decades, the fire department has shifted the priorities to hiring part-time personnel who are fully trained; the majority of these individuals come from other career fire departments that desire to work only part-time hours for the Fairlawn fire department. This specific sub-set of employee consists of 72% of the current part-time work force. While this is a benefit to the Fairlawn fire department in terms of having qualified, experienced part-time personnel, it limits the number of individuals who are actively looking for full-time employment within the Fairlawn fire department.

Since 2000, the Fairlawn fire department has conducted four civil service exams to hire additional personnel due to growth, and to replace individuals who left for other reasons.

Table 1 shows the number of open positions and the number of candidates that were eligible for the openings.

Exam date	Open positions	Eligible candidates
2000	4	8
2002	4	6
2005	3	4
2008	2	8

*Table 1*

As you can see in Table 1, the number of eligible candidates in relation to the number of open positions is not very favorable for the competitive selection of the best candidate for the department. In 2005, the department had three open positions and four candidates apply for the positions. All four candidates went through the hiring process, but one candidate was determined ineligible for hiring due to a nepotism clause the city has in regards to hiring. This left three eligible candidates for three open positions. This is a great ratio for the candidates; but the ability to select the best candidate for the department was removed from the process due to the limited number of candidates. Due to the limited eligibility list, the department was forced with the decision to hire from this short list and risk not getting the quality employees, or leave the positions vacant.

The City of Fairlawn fire department is being challenged to continue to conduct hiring practices as it has done in the past and risk the ability to have adequate, qualified candidates for hire or to change the process and risk the ability to hire from internal candidates.

*The potential impact that this study could have on the Fairlawn fire department is the development of a hiring process that ensures quality candidates through initial requirements and sufficient number of eligible candidates by establishing a testing process that is beneficial to the department.*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The hiring of qualified candidates has a lasting impact on any organization in a multitude of ways. The process, by which those candidates are hired, is the only mechanism that an organization has to filter from those eligible for the position. "The process of getting the right person for the right position is complicated and can be frustrating." (Sells, 1999, p. 62). The impact that hiring candidates, who are not the "best-fit" for the organization, can cause severe problems. They can have an impact on organizational budget, as well as an impact of morale and organizational efficiency. The monetary impact of hiring candidates that are not ready to make a direct impact in the organization is a factor to consider when choosing the best candidate. "Although an agency may believe it is saving money by hiring less-expensive staff with limited experience and educational skills, it may in fact be losing funds over time because of the additional training required." (Neistadt & Murphy, 2009). If an organization is spending time training new candidates to the minimum level needed to operate within the organization, they are impacting their budget by spending the man hours to train those individuals and losing hours that should be spent performing their actual job responsibilities. Neistadt & Murphy (2009) found the following, "In addition to the monetary cost of training, daily work still needs to be done during the training process. This usually increases the overall workload of experienced employees who often do the training, potentially adding to job burnout and low morale for these employees." If the organization does not have the ability to select candidates who immediately make a direct impact in the position, then the organization is not being given the option to select from the best candidates. The selection process by which the candidates are chosen must be able to provide a candidate pool that can produce personnel that will have an immediate impact to an organization. This way an organization can see less of a financial burden as well as less of a decrease in

efficiency if personnel are spending time training the new employees rather than doing their own job had the right candidates been chosen for the position.

Selecting the best candidate begins with identifying the qualifications that are required from an organization. When developing a hiring process, an organization should consider what qualifications the open position requires to allow for only those who meet the criteria apply and limit the amount of time and money spent on processing applicants who are not qualified to fill the open position immediately. The development of clearly defined hiring qualifications also gives the potential applicants the information that the organization desires in candidates. This is amicable to both parties to allow the hiring procedure to process the best fit for both sides.

The Fairlawn fire department is a civil service based organization, which means the hiring for firefighter is governed by the civil service commission. The civil service commission handles all aspects of the hiring process. The process begins with the posting of the position which includes the minimum requirements and testing information. Candidates have a specific time frame to submit applications to the city. After the cutoff date for submission of applications, the civil service board reviews the applications and determines the eligibility of the applicants. Next a written exam is administered, followed by a panel interview, and concludes with the final selection. This hiring process is unique to the public sector, as the private sector has the ability to determine the candidate pool from which the organization can choose the eligible candidates. "Fire departments seeking candidates for key positions should take their cue from the business world." Sells (1999). Some private sector organizations take hiring the "right candidate" so seriously, that they enlist the help of professional recruitment firms to gather a wide array of qualified candidates for the open position. "Recruitment is big business today. We are all competing to identify, attract, and hire the best candidates." (Andrica, 1995, p. 311). By using, a

third party that has an objective interest in determining the best candidates for the open position within an organization; the organization can rest assured that their hiring process is being utilized as efficiently and effectively as possible. This will benefit the organization by attracting candidates that it may have otherwise never been able to recruit. The public sector is limited in these hiring processes; by the inability to attract a wide range of candidates either due to lack of funds or lack of resources to handle such a detailed hiring process. Andrica (1995) discusses the difficulty of recruitment stating “recruitment is a two-way process, just as we seek out the best talents; candidates are also looking for the best opportunity and organization to work in.” (p. 311).

The qualifications that an organization sets as minimum requirements are a determining factor in the number of candidates that apply, as well as the quality of candidates. “The most common entry-level firefighter minimum requirements are: must be at least 18 (or 21) years of age, must possess a high school diploma or equivalent (GED), and must possess a current driver’s license.” (Priziborowski, 2007). These are very basic requirements for a very technical position. This should allow for a larger pool of candidates, as specific training is not a requirement. Although requiring more specific minimum requirements can mean benefits to the organization long term. One example of a requirement that has started to become more prevalent in organizations is the requirement of a college degree. “In an analysis of disciplinary cases against Florida Law Enforcement Officers from 1997 to 2002, the International Association of Chiefs of Police found that officers with only high school educations were the subjects of 75% of all disciplinary actions. Officers with four-year degrees accounted for 11% of such actions.” (Johnson, n.d.). The addition of requiring a college degree to the minimum hiring qualifications can have a long term benefit to an organization on the type and quality of candidate an

organization hires. By adding qualifications, you are directly shrinking your pool of viable candidates. This is a determination that the organization needs to prioritize prior to conducting the hiring process.

Candidates often have an attitude that they are being hired based on resume only. "They feel they have to possess all of the education, training, certificates, and experience in the world to get a job as a firefighter." Priziborowski (2007). Organizations can get caught up in hiring based upon strictly a candidate's resume. This can be deceiving and can lead to the wrong choice of candidate for the organization. Priziborowski states "A fire department is not hiring a resume; they are hiring a person who has demonstrated to them they are the "best-fit" for their department" (2007). The key for the organization and the candidate is to find the "best-fit" for each. "Your job is to find the best fit. You're not judging the person; you're judging whether his or her personality set will work in your office." (Davis, 2008, pp. 85-87). This "best-fit" is not always determined on a resume or in an application. The addition of a competency based interview process allows the organization to determine if the candidates possess the qualities that cannot be identified on an application or through a resume. "Creating a job-specific, competency-based interview that will allow candidates to demonstrate their potential." Sells (1999). From the competency-based interview, an organization can determine if the potential candidate has the right job-specific qualifications, as well as determine if the candidate will fit within the organizational culture.

The selection of internal versus external candidates as the basis of the hiring selection pool is based upon the organizations determination of many factors. "Internal recruiting is not better than external recruiting necessarily. Both of the recruiting methods however have pros and cons, benefits and pitfalls that you should be aware of when deciding which recruitment method

to focus your company around" (Asala) The hiring of candidates from either internal or external sources will affect the organization. By hiring candidates from an internal pool, the process of moving through an organization to higher levels and creating vacancies tends to have potential positive effects on the workforce. "Internal recruitment may lead to increased morale for employees as the organization is perceived to reward good performance or loyalty" (Asala). Asala also states "the internal applicant will also assimilate faster into the position because the challenges that external applicants have of adjusting to corporate culture is non-existent". Every organization, no matter what size or type, has an internal culture and finding new candidates that can mesh into that culture to become successful is difficult and even more difficult for the candidate that is being hired externally. "An internal candidate with a deep grasp of company culture, leadership potential, and a track record of success in the service of company goals has a higher probability of success in your organization than an externally-sourced candidate whose true skill set, culture, and motivations are ultimately questionable" (Wong 2009).

There are also negative impacts on an organization from limiting the candidate selection pool to internal candidates only. If the organization is in a period where the culture is damaging the successfulness of the organization, then hiring from within might not be the best choice. "One theory of internal recruiting is that the approach simply self-perpetuates the old ways of doing things" (Asala). Recruiting candidates from external sources can bring a fresh perspective on how the organization operates and also help in implementing new ideas and cultures.

Another negative from limiting the candidate selection pool to internal candidates is that affirmative action goals are more difficult to achieve. Unless the organization is large enough and with a diverse enough personnel base, the ability to diversify the candidate selection pool is

difficult. Asala discusses the difficulties in selecting from a diverse candidate selection pool in the following

Most company's battle with affirmative action goals and this task is made doubly difficult in a small company that uses internal recruiting as its primary recruiting method. To fulfill the quota for diversity candidates from within is tough if you already do not have enough staff from diverse backgrounds. In most cases the only real option is to recruit from outside sources.

A way that was found during the literature review to combat the positive and negatives from hiring strictly either internal or external candidates, was to open the candidate selection pool to both demographics. By using both groups you are taking the best attributes from each category and applying it to the hiring process. A process by giving internal candidates a competitive advantage during the hiring process, would give all of the benefits from hiring from within the organization. This would also allow external candidates to be evaluated so that you can diversify the candidate selection pool and select the overall best candidate. "A competitive handicap can be awarded to existing workers to boost their chances. This strategy is consistent with general observation that an external candidate is recruited only if they are significantly superior to the internal candidates" (Chan 1996).

The information obtained from the literature review directed this research towards the overall process by which new candidates are hired versus solely looking at the difference of internal versus external candidates. The overall process has been determined as the main decision factor in the type of candidate that the organization has to choose from. The parameters that the organization places on the hiring process will inherently decide the quality of the candidate selection pool.

## **PROCEDURES**

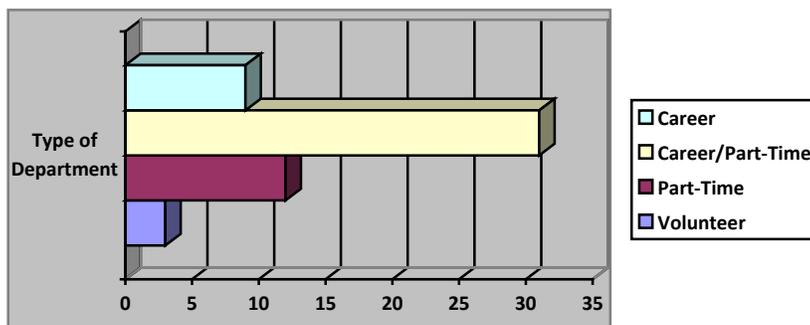
To help answer the research questions, an on-line survey was conducted. The survey was sent out via electronic mail along with a cover letter explaining the basis of the survey and the requested information. The survey instrument was developed establishing demographic information at the beginning of the survey and research based information at the conclusion. The data collected was divided into the appropriate categories specific to the research questions. The survey included Summit County, where the City of Fairlawn resides, and the adjacent counties. This geographical area best represents what others are doing to hire personnel in their department and reflect on the Fairlawn fire department. The premise of the survey is to determine what initial qualifications are being used for initial screening of candidates for hiring, and what additional hiring steps are being used. The survey determined which departments are hiring strictly from within their current employees, or if they are expanding their search to outside candidates. The survey determined what qualifications departments are using in the hiring process. A complete copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

## RESULTS

The research survey was sent out via electronic mail to 135 fire departments. The researcher received 55 completed surveys in return. This equates to a 41% return ratio. Follow up contact was made to the remaining 59% of the surveys in attempt to increase the return rate. The majority of the unreturned survey participants stated they did not have the time to complete the survey as the reason for not completing the survey.

The demographic portion of the survey confirmed that the majority of the departments who responded to the survey were similar to the Fairlawn fire department in composition of personnel. Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents, 56.4%, were from combination full-time/part-time departments. The remaining departments who responded to the survey consisted of 21% part-time, 16% career, and 5% all volunteer.

*Table 2*



The next demographic question was used to determine the population that each department served. The majority of the respondents served a population between ten to twenty-five thousand residents. This accounted for 41.8% of the respondents. The second largest response fit into the range of ten-thousand or less citizens. This accounted for 34.5% of the departments surveyed. These two population ranges best match the city of Fairlawn. According

to the United States Census Bureau in 2009, Fairlawn had a population of 7,007 residents. The daytime population has been estimated to swell to approximately forty thousand people who work in the city.

The third demographic question in the survey was to determine the total amount of personnel each department employed. The Fairlawn fire department employs 55 firefighters. The largest responding group from the survey was 63.6% of the respondents employed a range of 11-50 firefighters. This was consistent with the Fairlawn fire department. This was the final demographic question that was included in the survey.

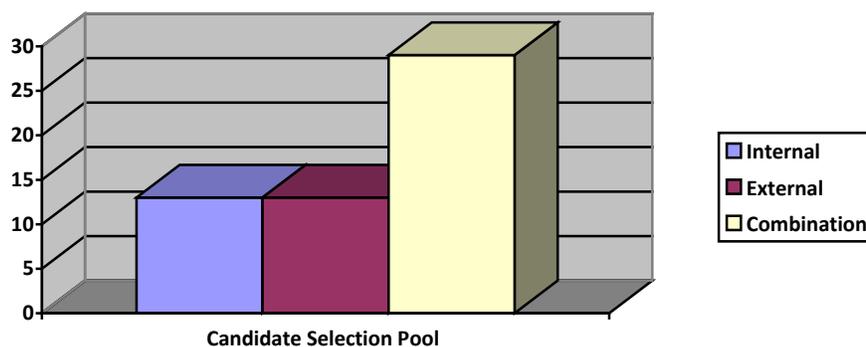
The first survey research question that was asked in the survey was used to determine if there was a formal hiring process within each department. An overwhelming 96.4% of those agencies responding stated that they did utilize a formal hiring process. One respondent stated that they used a membership vote to bring on new personnel. One respondent stated that they used an “other” method to bring on new personnel, but did not define the process in the space provided.

The second survey research question was used to determine how many applicants successfully completed the formal hiring process and were eligible for a full-time position. The largest data set from the survey was received from 69.1% of the respondents, stating a range of 1-10 was eligible for hire after completing the formal hiring process.

The next survey research question was used to determine if the department hired strictly from within its current employees or if the position was open to outside applicants. The survey produced results that showed that 52.7% of respondents utilized a formal hiring process that allowed a combination of internal and external candidates to be eligible for employment (Table

3). The remaining respondents were split equally at 23.6%; between those who hire from only within and those who strictly hire outside applicants.

*Table 3*



The fourth survey research question was used to determine if there were any qualifications that the candidates were required to have prior to being eligible for employment. The largest data set was received from 54.5% surveyed; and they stated they did require some level of minimum qualifications. These minimum qualifications ranged from: firefighter certifications, various levels of emergency medical certification, to basic requirements such as age and obtaining a high school diploma or completing a GED program. The Fairlawn fire department requires that the candidates be certified as an Ohio paramedic as well as a certified to the professional firefighter level. There is a minimum education requirement of possessing a high school diploma or completion of a GED program.

The next survey research question was used to determine if a college degree should be required as a minimum qualification for becoming eligible for the hiring process. An overwhelming 80% answered "no", it should not be an initial qualification for eligibility. The Fairlawn fire department does not currently require any college education for eligibility for employment and this is inline with the departments surveyed.

The final survey research question was a subjective question that asked if the respondents felt that the process that their organization was utilizing to hire for full-time employment was producing the best possible candidates. The results showed 83.6% of those surveyed felt that their current process were producing the best possible candidate.

The results of the literature review and the research survey provided the following answers to the research questions:

1. What hiring processes are being used in other fire departments?

In 96.4% of the participants surveyed, they stated that they use a formal hiring process. This formal process was used with a candidate selection pool of a combination of internal and external candidates. The combination candidate selection pool was used by 52.7% of those surveyed.

2. What hiring processes are being used in non-fire department organizations?

Upon review of literature, it was revealed that non-fire department organizations are using a wide variety of tools to help obtain the best candidate selection pool. Some of these tools are; recruitment agencies, a combination of internal and external candidates to create the candidate selection pool, and specific job qualifications through the hiring process.

3. What initial minimum qualifications are being used to determine eligible candidates?

Minimum qualifications were used in 54.5% of the respondents. These minimum qualifications were as follows:

Ohio Certified Paramedic

Ohio Certified Firefighter I/II

High School Diploma or GED Certificate

## DISCUSSION

The majority of the responding agencies, 96.4%, use a formal hiring process to bring in new employees. This process, whether it is by written exam, interview or any other means is the pathway to determine the best overall candidate for an open position within the organization. The problem that the City of Fairlawn is facing is not the process itself, but rather those who are eligible to participate in the process. The determination of the candidate selection pool is as important in the hiring process as the actual process itself. Steve Prziborowski, battalion chief for the Santa Clara County, CA, Fire Department, had this to say about candidates and the hiring process.

The word "qualified" is very subjective. Meaning, how do you really justify who is the most qualified person for a job? By the person who scores the highest on the test? By the person who has the most education, training, or certificates? By the person who has the most experience? I think all of the above can be argued to make someone the most qualified. Take it a step further, but even if someone is qualified on paper to be a firefighter, it doesn't mean they are meant to be a firefighter or cut out for the rigors of the career.

The qualifications an organization sets as the minimum to be eligible for full-time hiring, is what determines of the parameters of the candidate pool. The literature review discussed how the level of qualifications you place on the candidates has a direct impact on the selection pool size of qualified candidates. The survey instrument showed that 54.5% of the departments did utilize some sort of pre-employment qualifications to determine the eligibility for full-time employment. Higher education seemed to be the most controversial pre-employment qualification. Eighty percent of the respondents did not feel it was warranted for initial hire.

Placing such a stringent qualification on pre-employment would greatly shrink an already small candidate selection pool. The benefits are clear in hiring an employee with post-secondary education; “departments have been reluctant to adopt stricter recruiting standards despite evidence suggesting that better-educated police officers perform better” Johnson, K. (n.d.).

Johnson goes on to state, “the pressure to meet hiring goals has discouraged some from making requirements too tough”. The overall negative impact on the selection pool in sheer numbers would outweigh the benefits for the City of Fairlawn. Most of those surveyed required only very basic job performance requirements for initial hire. This would correlate to the findings in the literature review which stated that those candidates which can make an immediate impact on the organization are a great benefit. “If an organization is spending time training new candidates to the minimum level needed to operate within their organization they are impacting their budget by spending the man hours to train those individuals and losing hours that should be spent doing their actual job responsibilities” (Neistadt & Murphy, 2009).

The candidate selection pool is impacted by the determining those who are eligible to compete in the hiring process. The qualifications that were discussed above, set the professional parameters for the eligibility, but where the candidates come from is equally important. In the case of the City of Fairlawn, the eligibility is determined if you are a current part-time employee. The results from the research survey show that 52.7% used a combination of internal and external candidates for eligibility. This allowed all who met the minimum professional qualifications to be eligible for the hiring process. The remaining respondents equally either allowed only internal or external candidates. Each represented 23.6% of the data set. By narrowing the candidate selection pool through either selecting strictly from internal or external candidates, you are having the same effect of increasing the minimum qualifications.

Both methods limit the candidate selection pool and reduce the ability of the process to produce the best candidate for hire.

The literature review looked at the private sector hiring practices to see how the hiring processes impacted their organization. The literature review found that the private sector took the hiring of new employees very seriously. Sells (1999) make this statement in the literature review to reinforce this belief, "Fire departments seeking candidates for key positions should take their cue from the business world." The private sector has taken further steps in securing the best candidates for open positions by soliciting outside agencies that specialize in producing hiring practices and defining the best characteristics in a candidate that the organization would desire. These agencies sole purpose is to determine what personal characteristics the organization is looking for in a candidate and put together the appropriate hiring process to bring these candidates to the organization. This coordination of efforts is a testament to the difference between the private sector and the public sector when it comes to hiring the "best-fit" for the organization. The private sector has realized the importance of hiring the best candidate to fit the organization, and the lasting effects that it has. The private sector is taking a proactive approach and actively finding the best candidates for the position. "Recruitment is big business today. We are all competing to identify, attract, and hire the best candidates." (Andrica,1995, p. 311).

The different factions of the hiring process should have a beneficial effect on the overall hiring of eligible candidates. If any of the individual functions of the hiring process: application, qualifications, the formal testing process, etc, limit the overall candidate selection pool, then the outcome will be less desirable then what could have been produced if all parts of the hiring procedure worked in the same direction.

## **Recommendations**

The purpose of this study was to research the development of a hiring process that would ensure quality candidates through initial requirements and sufficient number of eligible candidates by establishing a testing process that is beneficial to the department. The review of numerous literature sources and the results from a research based professional survey has led the researcher to the following recommendations.

The first recommendation is that the City of Fairlawn consults with an outside agency that develops hiring procedures. The agency will determine what qualities and personal characteristics that our organization is looking for in candidates. By determining these qualities, the agency can determine the professional job qualifications that are the minimum to become eligible to continue with the testing process. The hiring agency will coordinate with the city to conduct the hiring and recruitment for attracting the quality of candidates that the organization desires to hire. This is a change from the norm in the City of Fairlawn as well as the public sector in general. This will require extra funding on the city's part to pay for the outside agency and to develop the specific hiring process. The up-front cost to put together this hiring process will reap the benefit in the future when the 'best-fit' candidate is hired; rather than spending money to hire a candidate and have to replace them because they did not fit the culture of the organization.

The second recommendation would be that the City of Fairlawn makes changes to the current Civil Service policy that dictates that only internal candidates are eligible for the testing process. By placing a limit on the candidates who are eligible for the hiring process, an organization is limiting the ability to attract the best candidate. The recommendation is that the City of Fairlawn opens the eligibility to external and internal candidates. The research survey that was conducted showed that 52.7% of the agencies surveyed utilize this eligibility

requirement. The literature review supported the findings that the ability to increase the candidate pool is the best option for an organization to have the ability to find the best candidates. The smaller the candidate pools the less chance that the "best-fit" candidate will be found.

The final recommendation would be that the City of Fairlawn institutes a program to develop internal candidates and groom them for the selection process. The literature review showed that there were positive attributes from hiring from within your organization. The problem that the City of Fairlawn fire department is facing is internal candidates alone will not provide sufficient numbers to provide replacements for open positions, let alone sustain growth. The change for the City of Fairlawn took place when the organization changed their hiring priorities within the part-time ranks and hired fully trained candidates that were interested in only a part-time employment. The recommendation would be that the fire department conducts the hiring of part-time personnel with the same belief that they are hiring the next full-time employee. This provides the department with the opportunity to develop these candidates internally and evaluate if they are the "best-fit" for the full-time vacancies. By developing these candidates, the organization will be benefitting them by developing an employee that no matter what their employment status, part-time or full-time, the employee will be a valued employee.

This research paper opens up further investigation into other areas not covered in this research. There will need to be further research on the impact of each step of the hiring procedure to evaluate what will produce the best candidate for the organization. This research did not dissect the individual components of the hiring process to determine what impact each step has on the selection process. Further research needs to be done to study the impact on internal personnel when the department begins to open eligibility to outside candidates. The

opening of eligibility to outside candidates can have an effect on internal candidates, which will affect the organization. There needs to be further research on using an outside hiring agency to assist in the hiring process for the fire department. This is common practice in the private sector, but it is uncommon in the public sector. Research will need to be conducted to determine the impact that it will have with the hiring policies of the city, the funding impact, the internal candidates, the different bargaining units in the city and state and federal laws.

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**APPENDIX 1 – RESEARCH SURVEY**

Fire Service Professionals,

I am asking for your help with an attached survey that will be used to enhance my research project. The research is being conducted for the Ohio Fire Executive Program and is centered on the hiring process for new firefighters. I appreciate your time and help. If you have any questions or would like a copy of the final research project, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

To access the survey, just click on the link below. All answers are confidential.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QC8B9Z9>

Respectfully,

Lt. Justin N. Joy

Station 330-668-9540

Cell 330-612-6915

Fax 330-668-9545

joyju@ci.fairlawn.oh.us

**APPENDIX 2 – JOB POSTING OF INTERMITTENT EMPLOYEE**

**APPENDIX 3 – JOB POSTING OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE**