



FORT LAUDERDALE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL
RECRUITMENT
AND
DEMOGRAPHIC
REPORT

2023

WILLIAM SCHULTZ
CHIEF OF POLICE

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



On behalf of the dedicated men and women of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, we extend our gratitude for taking the time to read our annual recruitment and demographic report. Our Department's members are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of respect and dignity as they serve our residents and visitors.

We are proud to announce that our Department holds full accreditation from the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation and has held the prestigious status of an Excelsior Agency since 2013. We remain steadfast in our commitment to fostering a strong community and providing excellent opportunities for those aspiring to pursue a career in law enforcement.

Fort Lauderdale stands as the largest city in Broward County and is a premier tourist destination in the State of Florida. As the Chief of Police, I am genuinely enthusiastic about the opportunities that lie ahead for our community. I warmly invite our residents to join us in our mission to maintain the safety of our city. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to serve you with unwavering courage, pride, and dedication.



YEAR-END SWORN STAFFING

In 2023, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department (FLPD) commenced the year with 31 unfilled sworn positions. However, by the year's end, this number escalated to 39 vacancies. This surge can be attributed to the rise in budgeted sworn officers from 550 in 2022 to 564 at the onset of fiscal year 2023, alongside the persistent hiring challenges prevalent across the nation.

The charts depict the racial and gender composition of the Department at the close of 2023, alongside the 2023 U.S. Census data for the City of Fort Lauderdale. White individuals continue to constitute over half of the department's sworn personnel (55%), although this figure has seen a 3% decline since 2022.

When factoring in Professional (civilian) staff, White personnel comprise 53% of the Department. Hispanic/Latino sworn staff represent more than a quarter (26%) of all sworn personnel, while Black personnel account for almost 16%. The count of sworn staff identifying as "Other" has decreased by one from ten in 2022, now constituting 1.7% of sworn personnel.

2023 YEAR-END SWORN STAFFING LEVELS BY RACE

RACE	2023	% OF TOTAL	2023 CITY CENSUS ¹
ASIAN	3	0.6%	1.5%
BLACK	83	15.8%	29.2%
HISPANIC	139	26.5%	19.8%
OTHER	9	1.7%	11.7%
WHITE	291	55.4%	54.7%
TOTAL	525	100%	

2023 YEAR-END SWORN STAFFING LEVELS BY GENDER

GENDER	2023	% OF TOTAL	2023 CITY CENSUS ¹
FEMALE	114	22%	47.8%
MALE	411	78%	52.2%
TOTAL	525	100%	

The demographic composition of our sworn staff currently does not accurately mirror the full racial diversity observed in the City of Fort Lauderdale, as indicated by the 2023 census data. Many racial categories show either underrepresentation or overrepresentation within our department. According to the most recent census figures, White residents constitute 54.7% of the city's population, closely aligning with the nearly 55.4% of our staff who identify as White. In contrast, while Black residents make up 29.2% of the city's population, Black sworn staff comprise almost 16% of our personnel.

Furthermore, there is a notable overrepresentation of male officers and an underrepresentation of female officers. Despite females constituting 47.8% of the City of Fort Lauderdale population, they represent only 22% of our officers. Conversely, males make up 52.2% of the city's population; however, they account for 78% of our officers.

1. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fortlauderdalecityflorida>



YEAR-END SWORN STAFFING 2022/2023 COMPARISON BY RACE

RACE	2022	% OF STAFF	2023	% OF STAFF	% CHANGE
ASIAN	2	0.4%	3	0.6%	⬆️ +50.0%
BLACK	77	14.8%	83	15.8%	⬆️ +7.8%
HISPANIC	129	24.9%	139	26.5%	⬆️ +7.8%
OTHER	11	2.1%	9	1.7%	⬆️ -18.2%
WHITE	300	57.8%	291	55.4%	⬆️ -3.0%
TOTAL	519	100%	525	100%	⬆️ +1.2%

The racial breakdown of year-end staffing has undergone significant changes compared to 2022. The Hispanic/Latino demographic saw a notable increase of 7.8%, while the count of officers identifying as "Other" decreased by 0.4%, dropping from 11 to 9 officers. The percentage of Black officers increased by 7.8%, whereas the percentage of White officers decreased by 3%. Overall staffing experienced a modest uptick of 1.2% by the conclusion of 2023.

YEAR-END SWORN STAFFING 2022/2023 COMPARISON BY GENDER

GENDER	2022	% OF STAFF	2023	% OF STAFF	% CHANGE
FEMALE	109	21.0%	114	22.0%	⬆️ +4.6%
MALE	410	79.0%	411	78.0%	⬆️ +0.2%
TOTAL	519	100%	525	100%	⬆️ +1.2%

In 2023, female staffing saw a rise of 4.6%, while male staffing experienced a more modest increase of 0.2%. According to FBI nationwide law enforcement data from 2021, for cities with populations ranging between 160,000 and 200,000, male officers typically constitute an average of 86.3% of sworn staffing, with female officers comprising 13.7%. In comparison, within the FLPD, female officers represent a larger percentage, while male officers make up a smaller percentage than cities of similar population sizes.



SWORN EMPLOYEE PROMOTIONS 2023						
	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	OTHER	TWO OR MORE RACES	WHITE
FEMALE	0	0	1	0	0	0
MALE	0	1	4		0	12
TOTAL	0	1	5	0	0	12

SWORN EMPLOYEE PROMOTIONS
 A total of 18 sworn employees were promoted in 2023. Five of 18 employees identified as Hispanic and 1 identified as Black. A total of 12 that identified as White received promotions in 2023, making up 67% of all promoted sworn employees. Only 1 female sworn employee was promoted.

**SWORN
ATTRITION**

SWORN RETIREMENTS*				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL	19	7	8	6

Despite only eight (8) mandated DROP retirements listed for 2023, twelve (12) members seperated under the program. An additional twenty-eight (28) members either retired prematurely, voluntarily resigend, or were terminated. Given those attrition factors, FLPD ended 2023 with a net gain of one (1) sworn hire against 39 vacancies.

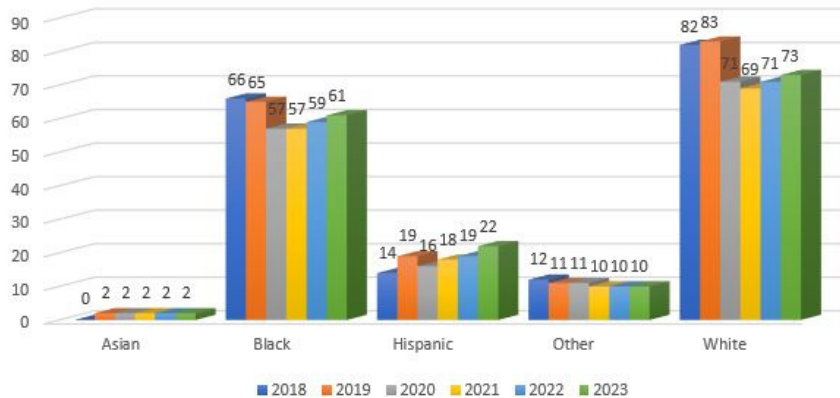
*Mandated by DROP



YEAR-END PROFESSIONAL STAFFING

In 2023, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department commenced the year with 161 Professional staff employees, and by the year's end, the total had risen to 168. The bar charts below depict the demographic trends among Professional staff from 2018 through 2023. Over this six-year period, there was an uptick in Hispanic/Latino employees, whereas decreases were observed in the numbers of Black, White, and Other employees, with the count of Asian employees remaining constant.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF BY RACE
2018-2023



It's a common occurrence for law enforcement agencies to see a higher representation of female professional staff. In agencies of similar size, female professional staff typically constitute around 72%, while male staff account for about 27%. The Fort Lauderdale Police Department mirrors this breakdown in its professional staff composition. It's important to mention that the count of professional staff includes detention officers and corporals. Currently, the Department also comprises four reserve officers and 16 part-time employees.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES PROMOTIONS/TRANSFERS 2022/2023			
RACE	2022	2023	% CHANGE
BLACK	2	3	⬆️ +50%
HISPANIC	4	5	⬆️ +25%
OTHER	0	2	⬆️ N/C
WHITE	1	3	⬆️ +200%
TOTAL	7	13	⬆️ +86%

This chart illustrates promotions and transfers of professional staff during 2022 and 2023 along with the percentage change from year to year. There was an overall increase in the percentage of Professional staff employees that received promotions or transfers.



2023 RECRUITMENT

In 2023, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department (FLPD) embarked on an ambitious and comprehensive recruitment campaign. FLPD's recruitment teams actively participated in 25 in-person expositions and career/job fairs. Furthermore, they conducted over 160 Physical Agility Tests (PATs) and swim tests at the Broward College Institute of Public Safety. Virtual career fair expositions were also prioritized, with attendance at five (5) such events. Formal presentations took place at 20 in-state schools, one (1) military event, and one (1) veteran's recruiting event. The recruiters expanded their outreach to various community events, with a focus on Black, female, and LGBTQ+ candidates. Additionally, the team visited nine (9) in-state police academies and engaged in over 60 events, going beyond traditional recruiting by establishing direct contact with the public.

Throughout 2023, the recruiting team collaborated with the media relations team to enhance FLPD's presence on social media platforms, in magazines, and local newspapers. As of the latest report, FLPD has amassed approximately 63,000 followers across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Advertising efforts extended to networks and stations affiliated with Audacy, Inc., as well as publications such as Saludos Hispanos, Black College Today, South Florida Gay News, The Westside Gazette, NJ Cops magazine, The Chief NY Civil Service Newsletter, Police1.com, NAWLEE.org, The Big O Show, and the Equal Opportunity Employment and Education Journal.

The concerted efforts of the recruiting team resulted in the generation of over 450 job interest cards, demonstrating success in attracting a diverse pool of candidates. This success is further evident in the substantial number of applications (1,061) received in 2023.

To further align FLPD's workforce with the diverse community it serves, the emphasis on minority hiring remained robust. The department actively participated in career fairs and events hosted by the four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Florida, establishing relationships with major institutions like Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) and Bethune-Cookman University. Ongoing collaborations with organizations like the Fort Lauderdale Black Police Officer's Association (FLBPOA), local high schools (Dillard HS, Stranahan HS, Fort Lauderdale HS, and Whiddon Rogers Education Center), the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), YouthBTS, and The Urban League of Broward County underscore FLPD's commitment to enhancing minority representation in its ranks.



RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

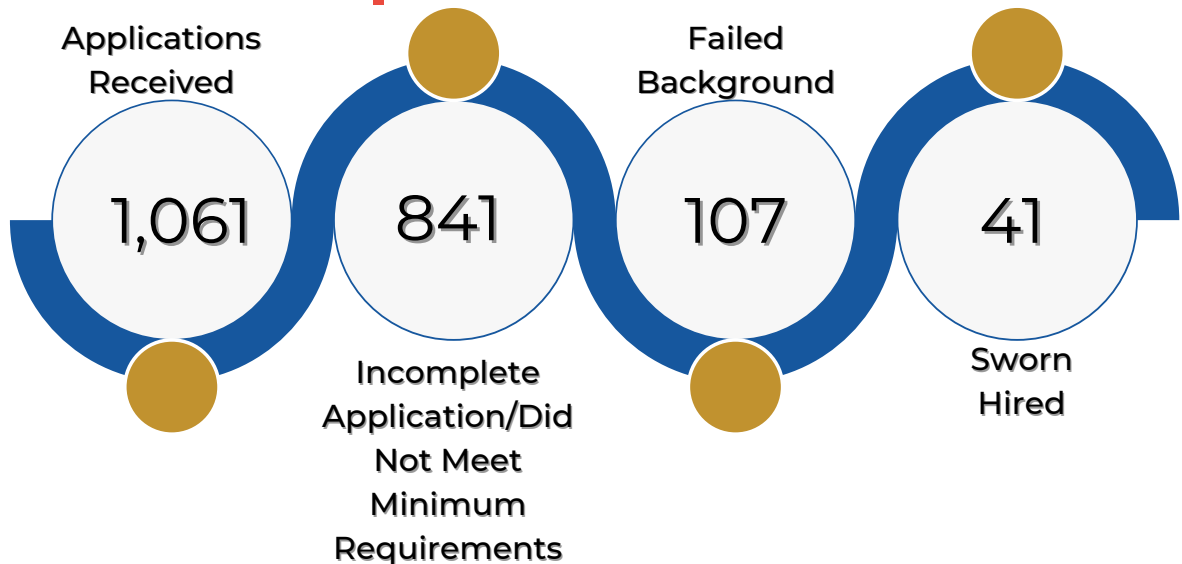
The Background Unit encountered familiar challenges in hiring and recruiting, mirroring those faced in the past couple of years. Intense competition persisted in the quest for top-notch candidates, driven by the nationwide shortage of law enforcement personnel and the reliance on similar applicant pools by agencies across the country. Furthermore, a diminished interest in the profession compounded the challenges, and the substantial hurdle of processing out-of-state applicants was exacerbated by rising living costs in South Florida and expensive housing opportunities.

Despite these obstacles, the hiring process maintained a steady pace while anticipating the arrival of additional sworn positions to the Department. This anticipation materialized with the addition of 14 new sworn positions, bringing the Department's allotment to 564 sworn positions. The Background Unit is eager to address the vacancy rate in the upcoming year, displaying enthusiasm and commitment to this goal.



2023 SWORN HIRING

In 2023, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department received 1,061 applications, marking a rise of nearly 15% compared to the 925 applications received in 2022. Out of these, 841 applicants did not meet the minimum requirements and were unable to progress to oral boards. Additionally, 107 applicants failed background investigations, leaving 41 applicants successfully hired at the conclusion of the process.



BREAKDOWN OF 2023 SWORN OFFICER APPLICANTS									
	AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE HAWAIIAN	TWO OR MORE RACES	WHITE	UNKNOWN NOT SPECIFIED	TOTAL
FEMALE	1	3	88	50	1	8	25	3	179
MALE	3	16	327	273	2	21	225	15	882
UNKNOWN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	4	19	415	323	3	29	250	18	1,061
% OF APPLICANTS	0.4%	1.8%	39.1%	30.4%	0.3%	2.7%	23.6	1.7%	100%
DID NOT MEET MINIMUM STANDARDS/INCOMPLETE APPLICATION									
FEMALE	1	2	80	41	1	7	21	3	156
MALE	3	14	273	202	2	17	159	15	685
% OF APPLICANTS	100%	84.2%	85.0%	75.2%	100%	82.7%	72.0%	100%	79.2%
ATTENDED ORAL BOARDS									
FEMALE	0	1	8	8	0	1	6	0	24
MALE	0	1	52	68	0	4	60	0	185
% OF APPLICANTS	0%	66%	97%	95%	0%	100%	93%	0	84%
FAILED BACKGROUNDS (AFTER ORAL BOARDS)									
FEMALE	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	6
MALE	0	1	32	28	0	4	36	0	101
% OF ORAL BOARDS	0.0%	50.0%	58.3%	36.8%	0.0%	80.0%	59.0%	0.0%	51.1%
HIRED OF APPLICANTS									
FEMALE	0	0	4	3	0	0	4	0%	11
MALE	0	0	4	12	0	0	14	0%	30
% OF APPLICANTS	0%	0%	1.9%	4.6%	0%	0%	7.2%	0%	3.8%

SWORN OFFICER APPLICANTS

Throughout the period spanning from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, a total of 1,061 applications were submitted. Within this pool, incomplete applications and those failing to meet minimum standards accounted for 79.2% of applicants. Among the initial applicants, only 17% (185) progressed to the oral board phase, slightly surpassing the 180 participants in 2022. Over half (55%) of those who underwent oral boards failed background investigations.

Ultimately, only 3.9% successfully navigated the application process and were hired, a percentage in line with that of 2022.



SWORN OFFICER APPLICANTS BY RACE 2021-2023 COMPARISON					
RACE	2021	2022	% CHANGE	2023	% CHANGE
AMERICAN INDIAN	6	1	⬇️ -83%	4	⬆️ +300%
ASIAN	15	18	⬆️ +20%	19	⬆️ +6%
BLACK	282	233	⬇️ -17%	415	⬆️ +78%
HISPANIC	417	356	⬇️ -15%	323	⬇️ -9%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN	0	2	⬆️ N/C	3	⬆️ +50%
2 OR MORE RACES	35	19	⬇️ -46%	29	⬆️ +53%
WHITE	400	278	⬇️ -31%	250	⬇️ -10%
UNKNOWN	29	18	⬇️ -38%	18	⬆️ 0%
TOTAL	1184	925	⬇️ -22%	1061	⬆️ +15%

SWORN OFFICER APPLICANTS BY RACE AND GENDER TREND

Between 2021 and 2023, there was a 10.4% decrease in the total number of applicants, yet from 2022 to 2023, there was a notable 15% increase. While the number of applicants from most racial backgrounds rose, both Hispanic and White applicants experienced an overall decrease of 9% and 10%, respectively. Noteworthy upticks were observed in the American Indian, Black, and multi-racial demographics.

Research from the Police Executive Research Forum indicates that many law enforcement agencies are still grappling with significant staffing challenges. Although there appears to be some improvement compared to 2022, the ongoing rise in resignations and retirements continues to impede efforts to maintain adequate staffing levels.

SWORN OFFICER APPLICANTS BY GENDER 2020-2023 COMPARISON					
	2021	2022	% CHANGE	2023	% CHANGE
FEMALE	193	159	⬇️ -18%	179	⬆️ +13%
MALE	980	766	⬇️ -22%	882	⬆️ +15%
TOTAL	1184	925	⬇️ -22%	1,061	⬆️ +15%

When applicants are broken down by gender, an increase of both female and male applicants occurred in 2023. Female and male applicants experienced similar increases from 2022, of 13% and 15%, respectively.

3. <https://www.policeforum.org/workforcemarch2022>



2023 PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING

In 2023, the Department hired a total of 40 professional employees, marking a notable increase from the 23 employees hired in 2022. The challenge of maintaining adequate staffing levels for professional employees persists within the Department, primarily attributed to wages that are not competitive enough and the continuous escalation of living expenses.

Several professional staff positions have been vacant for some time. Detention officers fall under the Professional Staff category and four of these positions have been vacant for more 315 days as of the end of November 2023. Four Police Records Clerk positions have been placed on hold with an average of 500 days vacant.

Additionally, six public service aide positions remained open as of December 2023. Throughout 2022, the professional staff vacancy rate has increased from 6.1% to 14.2%. Two Realtime Tactical Crime Analyst positions were reposted in December 2023 and SMEs are currently in progress.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES HIRED BY RACE			
2022/2023			
RACE	2022	2023	% CHANGE
ASIAN	0	2	⬆️ N/C
BLACK	11	10	⬇️ -9%
HISPANIC	7	9	⬆️ +29%
OTHER	0	1	⬆️ N/C
2 or More Races	0	2	⬆️ N/C
WHITE	5	16	⬆️ +220%
TOTAL	23	40	⬆️ +74%

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES HIRED BY GENDER			
2022/2023			
GENDER	2022	2023	% CHANGE
FEMALE	18	22	⬆️ +22%
MALE	5	18	⬆️ +260%
TOTAL	23	40	⬆️ +74%

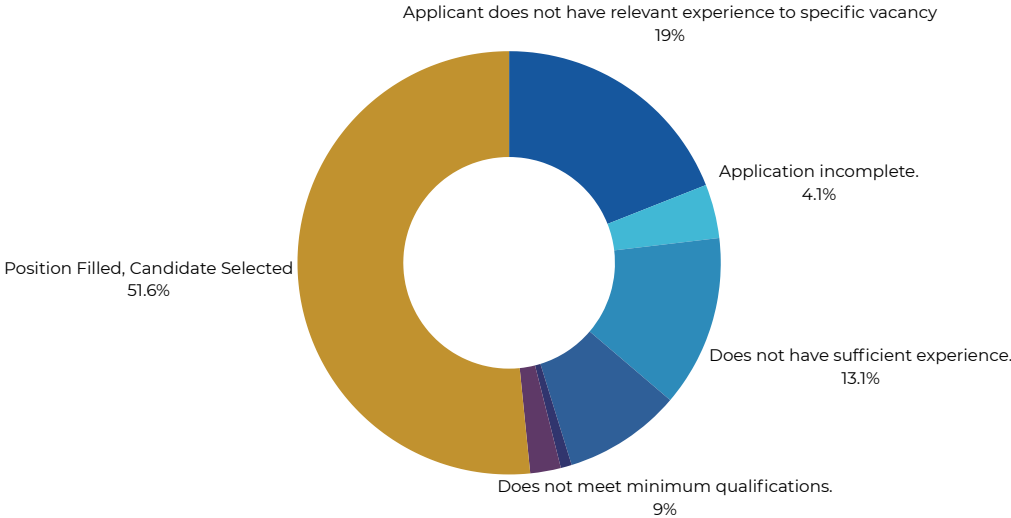


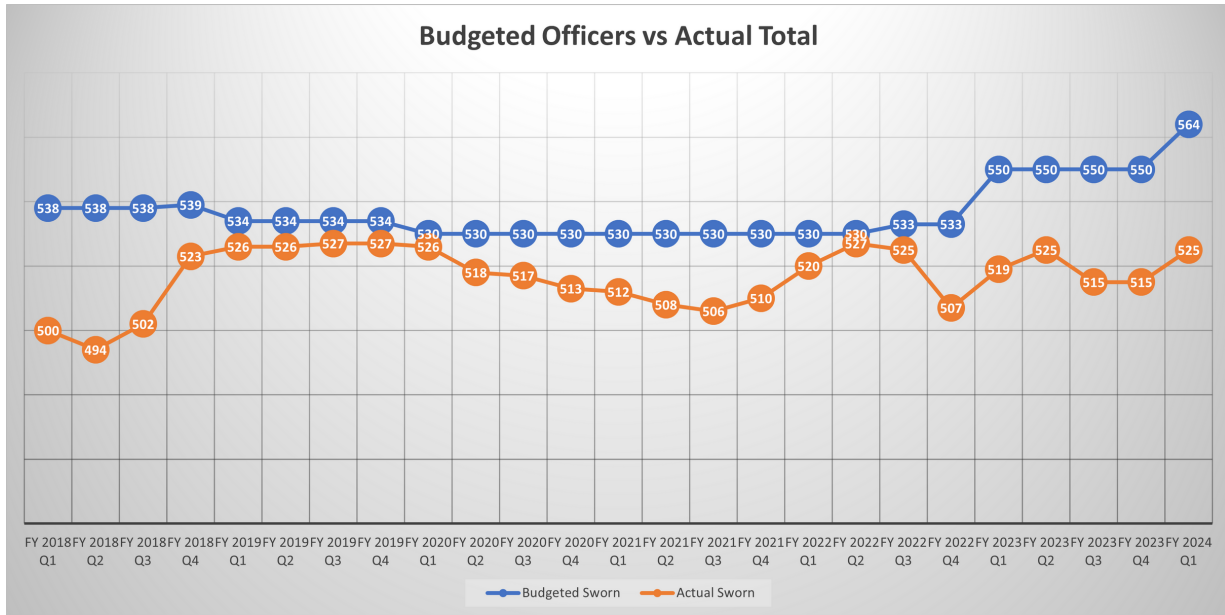
A total of 1,540 applications were received for several professional staff. Below is the breakdown by race and sex/gender of applicants. Historical data is not available as of the writing of this report. Black applicants made up almost 50% of total applicants, while 21% was made up by White applicants. Female applicants made up almost 62%, while male applicants made up almost 38%.

2023 PROFESSIONAL STAFF APPLICANT RACE/ETHNICITY	
RACE	TOTAL
ASIAN	32
AMERICAN INDIAN	4
BLACK	744
HISPANIC	306
2 or More Races	65
NATIVE HAWAIIAN	3
NOT SPECIFIED	65
WHITE	321
TOTAL	1,540

2023 PROFESSIONAL STAFF APPLICANT SEX/GENDER	
SEX/GENDER	TOTAL
FEMALE	949
MALE	579
NOT SPECIFIED	12

The pie chart below illustrates the categories applicants fell into during the application process. Almost 52% were categorized as “Fail”, but this was due to the position being filled. Nineteen percent did not have relevant experience to the vacancy, while 13% did not have sufficient experience. It should be noted that the City’s Human Resource Department handle a majority of the hiring process for Professional staff, except for the SME reviews and background checks.





DEPARTMENT GROWTH

The line graph above illustrates the budgeted officers per fiscal quarter starting in 2018 and ending FY 2024 Q1. Over the course of 6 years, staffing has allowed for an average of 537 budgeted officers. At the end of 2017 and the start of 2018, the Department saw a large dip in police officer staffing. Currently, there is a large gap between 564 budgeted officers and 525 employed. This is due to an increase of 14 police officer positions at the beginning of FY 2024. The Recruitment Team will focus on filling those additional positions by the close of 2024.

Throughout 2023, our focus remained steadfast on recruitment and hiring efforts. Notably, in October of that year, the Department secured an additional 14 police officer positions, bringing the total number of budgeted officers to 564. This augmentation will significantly augment the workload of both the Recruiting Team and the Backgrounds Unit as they strive to bolster the Department's workforce.

As previously highlighted, there exists a nationwide crisis of understaffing in police departments, attributable to various factors such as the prevailing political climate, public sentiment towards law enforcement, the inherent stress of the profession, and the rising cost of living versus competitive wages and benefits.

The Fort Lauderdale Police Department remains dedicated to fostering a diverse workforce that mirrors the racial, ethnic, and gender makeup of our community. Efforts to recruit minority and diverse candidates will persist through targeted advertising, college outreach, recruitment events, and community involvement initiatives.

The City of Fort Lauderdale is an equal opportunity employer.





 **WeAreFTL**

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