

## MCPD Response on Psychological Evaluations and Bias

Responses on behalf of MCPD Director of Personnel, Captain Nicholas Augustine, on 12/15/20:

- 1) Does MCPD and/or any jurisdictions that you are aware of screen prospective hires for bias? If so, how is this done and have you found it to be an effective tool?

*MCPD Response:* No.

2. What is the process for the psychological evaluation of officers? When is it done? Is it mandated?

*MCPD Response:* For active officers it would be governed under the FOP Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), and the process is handled by the County's Office of Human Resources (OHR), not by MCPD Personnel Division. The pre-hire evaluation is done by an outside contractor after a conditional offer.

3. Does MCPD track any aggregate data on psychological evaluations such as the number of evaluations done, types of psychological concerns found, the types of recommendations and interventions given to officers for psychological concerns or problems?

*MCPD Response:* No, we do not track these data. Also, this information is protected under HIPPA and the Department is not provided any findings - just that the officer is fit for duty. For pre-hire the Department receives a recommendation.

Responses from Captain Amy Daum, Special Victims Investigations Unit/Fair and Impartial Policing Instructor, on 12/17/20:

I am not aware of any accurate assessment mechanisms. During training, we have mentioned that officers can choose to participate in tools like:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

That test, however, like many of the others I have seen, is easily manipulated.

I would like to point out that implicit bias is a normal human attribute. It is important to understand that it exists in all of us, and is a product of a number of factors, like upbringing, education, and experience. While we provide regular training on bias, it is equally relevant to recognize that it is accepted in the academic community that implicit bias will never be eradicated-but that we can train to manage our bias. We strive, through training, to help officers recognize their bias and ensure that their actions are guided by fact. This year, our supervisor in-service focused on the science behind how our brains fill in information regarding ambiguous stimuli, how to recognize potentially biasbehavior, procedural justice, and how to build a culture of awareness and understanding regarding implicit bias. Our regular in-service training regularly focuses on the science of implicit bias.

The current recruit class received two-days of training focused on both cultural diversity and implicit bias. They received classroom and scenario-based training to help them identify their own potential sources of bias.

It's critical to note that police officers are a reflection of the community they serve-and in being so, are deeply human. Like everyone on the planet, we expect our officers to have human traits-including implicit bias. Science has proven that this bias exists in every corner and every strata of society, it pays no heed to occupation, creed, gender, or race. Taking a test to identify bias would be like ensuring that all officers are human-everyone will test positive. The importance is in recognizing the source and managing the implications.

I am certainly not saying that we wouldn't consider a tool should one exist, that would be a question most appropriately asked of Capt. Augustine, whose team is tasked with identifying and hiring the best police officer candidates. His team could answer questions on how things like explicit bias are identified in the hiring process.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you, or the committee, would like more information about how we train implicit bias. Our training is centered around the Fair and Impartial Policing curriculum, more information about which can be found: <https://fipolicing.com/>

More Sources on Bias:

- Washington Post Article (2020) - [How much bias is too much to become a police officer? Experts fear new law might backfire](#)
- COPS and PERF Report (2017) - [Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Success](#)
  - Pg. 16 – Dealing with Bias
- Article in The Police Chief magazine (2011) – [Implicit Bias and Law Enforcement](#)