

# East Palo Alto Police Department

Police Recruiting & Retention

“It’s Showtime”

# What's Behind Curtain #1?

- What is the image of your Department to the:
  - Community
  - Current Officers and Employees
  - City Government
  - Media
  - Profession
  - Candidate
- Why would someone join the Department?
  - Is the Department Diverse?
  - Does it provide advancement?
  - What is the working environment?
  - How strong is the leadership?
  - Does it engage in best practices?
- The answer to these questions (and many others) may impact your recruitment and retention efforts more than pay and benefits
- Branding does not change the answers to these questions; rather, it puts the answers on center stage for all to see

# Branding

- Police recruiting today extends beyond pay and benefits – although officers should not be embarrassed of what they earn.
- Agencies must showcase their strengths to attract candidates that are both qualified and a good fit for the City
- Officers want to be part of something “special” and make a difference
- Officers want to learn and work in challenging and rewarding environment
- Officers want to have pride in their organization and maintain “bragging rights”.

# East Palo Alto Challenges

- Over 11,000 vacancies in California
- Department has never achieved full staffing – loss 12 officers in two years
- Lowest pay in the County & lowest retirement-formula in California
- Extremely busy environment – high calls for service
- High level of violence. Former “murder capital of the United States”.
- Officer killed in January 2006 – 8 others shot at within 3 years
- Past reputation for hiring officers with questionable backgrounds:
  - Numerous officers indicted in the past
  - Scathing Grand Jury investigations
  - Negative media coverage
- Extremely competitive market
  - 101 cities in Bay Area including Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose
- The Department was Branded – it was just negative!

# East Palo Alto Model

## Using Reform as a Recruiting/Retention Tool

- Increase organizational pride: Current officers are the best recruiters
- Enhance organizational accountability
- Adopt Community Oriented Policing: A good relationship with the community is necessary to not only reduce crime but identify viable candidates. Department restructured to Area Command
- Engage in progressive policing strategies and best practices: People want to work with leaders in the industry
- Embrace technology to fight crime: This new generation is immersed in high-tech gadgets
- Engage the community to garner support: Officers want to work in an environment of support
- Establish positive relationship with media: Use the media to “Brand” your Department and highlight your efforts and achieve your recruiting goals

*East Palo Alto Police Department*

*“The Biggest Little Police Department  
in the Nation”*

*Join more than a Police  
Department...Join a Community*

# Public Trust

## **“Police chief reaches out to residents”**

In East Palo Alto, all eyes are on Chief Ron Davis, charged with juggling community relations and Police Department reforms while reducing crime and staying within a tight budget.

OAKLAND TRIBUNE, Aug 2, 2005  
by Nicole Neroulis, STAFF WRITER

# Public Trust

“A fresh start  
*East Palo Alto police reach out to community  
youths”*

Marquis McCrary is being called a snitch in school. The eighth-grader at Costano Elementary School in East Palo Alto faces such razzing because he, along with 15 others students, joined the city's first-ever Junior Police Academy.

by **Bill D'Agostino**  
**Palo Alto Weekly**



# Public Trust

**“East Palo Alto coalition seeks tax to  
fight youth crime**

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**Hundreds attend rally Thursday night  
at local church”**

San Mateo County Times

By Neil Gonzales, STAFF WRITER

# Video Clips

- ShotSpotter Technology
- Crime Fighting
- Bilingual Recruitment
- More Cops Needed
- Promise Kept: Murder Rate Drops

# Results

- Community passed Measure C by 68% – parcel tax for public safety
- Police community relations improved
- Department receives positive media coverage
- Department increases grant and donations (from \$300,000 to over \$4.5 million)
- Department has hired 10 officers in past two years
- Recruits are turning down higher paying jobs to accept position with EPA
- City in negotiations with POA to improve pay and benefits: Great community support
- Crime is down and Department is consider a model in the region

# Recruiting Tips

1. Develop strong recruiting & branding strategy
2. Focus on strengths of Department
3. Do not use hold strategy on new recruits
  1. Technology
  2. Flexible Hours
  3. Outside Interest
4. Streamline Hiring Process
5. Recruit one at a time
6. Use mentors
7. Focus on Quality not Quantity