

OVERVIEW

Colonel Ann C. Assumpico was appointed Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police by Governor Gina M. Raimondo on November 3, 2016. As the new Superintendent, Colonel Assumpico wanted to assess the agency's policies and procedures and identify strategies to improve recruitment, training and administrative procedures. As a result, Colonel Assumpico hired Terrance W. Gainer, Sr., LLC, a nationally recognized law enforcement expert, to conduct an independent assessment of the Division. **(More – opens to full document)**

“As Superintendent, my goal is to attract and retain a diverse group of men and women to serve with the Rhode Island State Police now and in the future. By keeping pace with best practices in law enforcement, we will ensure the Rhode Island State Police continues to provide exceptional levels of service and protection to the residents of our state.”

**-- Colonel Ann C. Assumpico,
Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police
February 17, 2017**

The assessment included personal interviews with personnel of various ranks and positions, including recruits who resigned from the most recent Training Academy; electronic surveys conducted anonymously; meetings with focus groups to discuss specific issues; and a review of thousands of pages of documents.

The results and recommendations were formally presented to Colonel Assumpico earlier this month; however, some of Chief Gainer's recommendations also were proposed and implemented during the assessment process, especially those related to the ongoing recruitment process for the 2018 State Police Training Academy.

In addition, Colonel Assumpico has assigned members of her Command Staff to oversee the ongoing implementation of necessary changes and improvements in each specific target area. Below is a list of specific changes recommended and/or implemented as a result of this assessment.

RECRUITMENT, HIRING AND DIVERSITY

During the assessment process, the following changes were recommended and implemented for use in the recruitment process for the 2018 Rhode Island State Police Training Academy that is now underway:

- Establish a Recruitment Unit comprised of diverse members to recruit and mentor applicants and assist the Training Academy staff;
- Provide applicants with access to recruiters who can offer information and guidance regarding all aspects of the recruitment and testing process;

- Develop an advertising strategy with an increased emphasis on the use of social media and web-based advertising, as well as advertisements in non-English print media (i.e., Spanish-language newspapers);
- Involve community partners throughout the recruitment process, including special interest organizations that had not been included in previous recruitment efforts (i.e., the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers (NABLEO), the Rhode Island Commission on Women, Rhode Island National Guard, Office of Veterans Affairs, Women’s Fund of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Guardians Association);
- Conduct orientation workshops to provide information and helpful insight into the recruitment and testing processes;
- Create a Women’s Forum using female Division members to address specific questions and concerns of female applicants;
- Eliminate the vertical leap test from the physical fitness requirement;
- Increase the timeline for submission of applications to allow a greater number of candidates to apply;
- Add a new recruitment section to the Division’s website to provide additional information to help recruits better prepare for the written exam and physical assessment;
- Develop a revised tattoo policy allowing the use of flesh-colored sleeves to cover tattoos while in uniform;
- Provide for weekend testing to accommodate applicants’ schedules;
- Determine that conditional offers of employment will be reviewed by a board of designated Command Staff members; and
- Establish a Recruit Mentorship Program (RMP) through which Division recruiters will serve as mentors for the selected applicants throughout the Training Academy.

These new recruitment and training strategies will help attract, prepare and retain highly qualified and diverse candidates. They will also serve to complement the current high standards of the Rhode Island State Police Training Academy.

PROMOTIONAL PROCESS

The Assessment Team recommended a review of and changes to the promotional system now used by the Rhode Island State Police. Currently, recommendations for promotion are made by commissioned officers who present their recommendations to the Command Staff, which in turn submits recommendations to the Superintendent. The Assessment Team identified concerns about the lack of transparency in the promotional process and recommended the following changes:

- Institute use of a written test for promotions;
- Create candidate application packages;
- Use oral board interviews; and
- Consider the person’s level of education; length of time in his/her current position/grade; and seniority within the Division.

The Division supports a promotional system that is transparent, fair and equitable to each of its members. The Division will continue to work with the Rhode Island Troopers Association to ensure that this is achieved and will be assembling a panel of sworn members to discuss changes to the promotional system.

PROFESSIONALISM AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

The primary function of the Professional Standards Unit is to ensure the integrity of the Rhode Island State Police and its personnel through a comprehensive and objective process of investigating inquiries into all complaints and allegations of employees or employee misconduct.

As a result of the assessment, the following recommendations have been or will be implemented within the Professional Standards Unit:

- Initiate use of the Guardian Tracking System, a software program used to track employee performance and discipline;
- Develop a standard of discipline to assess discipline for specific violations, including policies or procedures to help ensure a fair and equitable system;
- Create a handbook/manual that will outline procedures to be followed to standardize case management, including the investigative process, record keeping and the disciplinary process;
- Establish a committee to review all recruit and in-service training regarding the legal aspects of police use of force
- Develop a tracking program to help identify needs for policy change, training requirements and improvements to equipment;
- Create a two-step investigation and review for all use-of-force incidents.

CONCLUSION

Colonel Assumpico and members of the Command Staff will continue to review the results and recommendations from the assessment process to ensure the Rhode Island State Police follows what are considered to be best practices for law enforcement agencies nationwide while continuing to provide exceptional levels of service and protection to the residents of Rhode Island.