

## PATHWAYS TO POLICING ACT

*LOCAL ENDORSEMENTS: Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA), Minnesota Fraternal Order of Police (MN FOP), Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA)*

The Pathways to Policing Act invests in programs to help state and local law enforcement agencies struggling to maintain adequate staffing levels. While the root cause of the nationwide officer shortage is multifaceted, bolstering the pipeline of service-oriented individuals is one way to ensure agencies have the resources they need to protect our communities and keep officers safe.

### **NATIONWIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS**

This legislation bolsters the law enforcement candidate pipeline by directing the Department of Justice (DOJ) to operate nationwide marketing and recruitment campaigns. These campaigns will be designed to encourage candidates, including candidates who are members of communities traditionally underrepresented in law enforcement or who have non-traditional educational or career backgrounds, to seek law enforcement careers. The campaigns will be developed in consultation with law enforcement stakeholders at the state and local level, community-based organizations, and academic researchers. DOJ will also be required to share resources with states, local governments, and law enforcement agencies operating their own, similar campaigns.

The bill authorizes \$50 million a year for the DOJ to fully meet the objectives of this requirement.

### **STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY GRANT PROGRAMS**

This legislation further bolsters the law enforcement candidate pipeline by creating a new, \$50 million annual grant program administered by DOJ's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). These grants can be used for two purposes:

1. to create and operate "Pathways to Policing" programs, and
2. to create awareness for these programs and otherwise encourage candidates to seek careers in law enforcement through advertising and marketing campaigns.

### ***Pathways to Policing Programs***

Half of these grant funds can be used by states, local governments, and law enforcement agencies to create and operate "Pathways to Policing" programs. These programs, inspired by a [pioneering program used throughout Minnesota by the same name](#), reduce barriers to service for individuals interested in seeking careers as full-time law enforcement officers.

Pathways to Policing programs are programs that:

1. facilitate the entry into full-time law enforcement positions for candidates that
  - a. face barriers in obtaining the education and training necessary to pursue a law enforcement career, and
  - b. have no prior law enforcement experience;

2. provide candidates with financial support, including tuition, compensation, or benefits, while attending a law enforcement officer education and training program; and
3. can include service in part-time, uniformed positions that further a candidate's training to be a full-time law enforcement officer.

### ***Marketing and Advertising***

The other half of these grant funds can be used by states, local governments, and law enforcement agencies for marketing and recruitment campaigns to encourage candidates to seek careers in law enforcement.

### ***Building a Diverse Force***

Priority for the grants under this program will be given to applicants seeking to build a diverse police force that represents the communities they serve. To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that they seek to recruit candidates:

1. who are members of communities traditionally underrepresented in law enforcement or who have nontraditional educational or career backgrounds; or
2. who reside in or who are willing to relocate to the communities that the candidates will serve, or that are in close proximity to the communities that the candidates will serve.

### **Jeff Potts, Executive Director, Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association:**

“The Pathways to Policing concept was created here in Minnesota back in 2016. Over the past six years this program has been used by several cities in Minnesota as a tool to recruit a diverse pool of non-traditional candidates. It provides an excellent opportunity for candidates who have a heart for service in their community. Particularly those candidates who have obtained an education and job experience in other career fields but have always wanted to become a Police Officer. This program provides them with the pathway to begin a new career in public service. Elevating this program to a national level will help to provide this opportunity on a much larger scale.”

### **Pat Chelmo, 2nd Vice President, Minnesota Fraternal Order of Police:**

“The breadth of experience and perspectives seen in Pathways cops connects law enforcement to the communities they serve and yields positive outcomes in many contacts. The MN FOP supports this legislation as an effort to stem the tide of shrinking candidate pools and police forces. Efforts such as this will directly impact not only the number of cops on the street, but the quality as well.”

### **Brian Peters, Executive Director, Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association:**

“The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA) is the largest association representing public safety professionals in the State of Minnesota. We support the “Pathways to Policing Act” because we absolutely must have more law enforcement officers to keep our communities safe. If there are not enough quality candidates, we will see less help for community safety needs. Fewer law enforcement officers mean longer response times for urgent needs, less time for community engagement, and a reduced presence to deter those wishing to cause harm and mayhem.”