

2021-2022 Fresno County Civil Grand Jury Report No. 4

Clovis Police Department Responds To Its Diversity Challenges

Summary

The 2021-2022 Fresno County Civil Grand Jury received a citizen complaint requesting the review of the Clovis Police Department and its ethnic diversity to include African American sworn officers within the department. It is the responsibility of the Grand Jury to assure local governments act in the best interest of the citizens they represent.

The Grand Jury's investigation over more than a year concluded the Clovis Police Department has made significant efforts to ethnically diversify the department to include African American and other sworn officers of color. However, to date the results have not met their expectations.

Glossary

CPD	Clovis Police Department
FPD	Fresno Police Department
POST	Peace Officers Standards and Training
FCC	Fresno City College Police Academy
Fresno SMSA	Fresno Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (Includes Fresno-Madera-Hanford combined)

Background

In late 2020, the Fresno County Civil Grand Jury received a citizen complaint requesting a review of the Clovis Police Department's hiring and staffing practices as they relate to ethnic diversity. The complaint suggested the possibility of systemic racism because there was one African American officer on the force in 1990 and only one in 2020. Further, the complaint alleged, other law enforcement agencies throughout Fresno County, hiring from the same officer-candidate pool, have had greater success in hiring African American officers than Clovis despite CPD's historical superior compensation package.

Fresno has experienced slower growth and has a very different demographic. Incorporated in 1885, Fresno is a city in California's San Joaquin Valley. Fresno

is the fifth largest city by population and the sixth largest city by area in California having an area of 116 square miles. It is the largest municipality and serves as county seat to Fresno County. By comparison, Clovis was incorporated in 1912. It is in Fresno County, at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Clovis covers 25.91 square miles and abuts the City of Fresno on the Northeastern edge.

Comparative Demographics Clovis/Fresno/Fresno Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, 2020						
Category	Clovis Pop.	CPD	Fresno Pop.	FPD	Fresno SMSA ***	FCC Police Academy Graduates* ***
Population	120,124	99	542,107	771	1,008,654	138
White (non Hispanic)%	52	74	26.9	45.26	37	38.4
African American%	2.9	2	7.4	5.7	5	7.2
Native American/Alaskan%	1.2	0	1.2	0	2	0.7
Asian%	10.9	3	13.8	5.57	11	11
Native Hawaiian/Pac Islander%	0.3	0	0.1	2.07	0.17	n/a
Other	0	0	0	0	28	0
Two or more races%	5.5	0	4.2	n/a	16	n/a
Hispanic or Latino%	30.6	21	49.6	41.37	---	45.6
Total%	103.2*	100	103.2*	100**	100	100

*Hispanics may be of any race so are also included in applicable race categories
** Current data as provided by FPD, 03/25/2022
*** SMSA Data source was City Population and cited statistics shown in above chart were by race only
When listed by ethnicity, Hispanic or Latino numbered 540,743 or 53.61%. Other ethnicities were numbered at 467,911 or 46.38%
**** FCC Police Academy percentages show combined classes of 159,160, 161 and 162 for 2020
Clovis and Fresno population/demographics sources taken from US Census Bureau 2020

Methodology

The Grand Jury interviewed both the City of Clovis and Clovis Police Department leadership as well as general employees. The Grand Jury additionally interviewed personnel of neighboring law enforcement agencies, including Fresno City College Police Academy (FCC Police Academy) to better understand hiring practices and diversity efforts.

The Grand Jury also reviewed census data, relevant hiring information and other material about the Clovis and Fresno communities as well as the state's Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) guidelines.

The Grand Jury's research found no online information about the Clovis Police Department's diversity recruitment efforts.

Discussion

The primary focus of this investigation is on the diversity of African American sworn officers for the Clovis Police Department (CPD). The number of African American sworn officers (2%) is not reflective of the demographics of the Clovis community.

The CPD's percentage of sworn officers is even less reflective of the demographics of its larger community, the Fresno Metropolitan area, especially falling short for the number of African American sworn officers. In contrast, the Fresno Police Department (FPD) has 5.7% African American sworn officers, as does its larger community, suggesting African American candidates are available. The local police academy graduates include about 6% African Americans and all local police departments sponsor candidates in the academy and hire from their classes, including the CPD.

The Grand Jury was told that the City of Clovis and CPD leadership acknowledge the need to continue to do more to address diversity. The majority were not aware of any objectives to increase the diversity among sworn officers. However, a few interviewees indicated increasing diversity would be beneficial to CPD. None of the interviewees indicated there were any incidents of disrespect or discrimination for people of color within the CPD, although, they did indicate they experience such in the Clovis community.

Many interviewees said there is a perception that the CPD does not welcome candidates of color, especially African Americans. This perception has had

significant impact, as such candidates typically were not enticed to apply for the higher compensation previously offered by the CPD. Recently CPD hired 10 sworn police officers, none of which are African American.

The CPD has primarily focused on the early development of candidates and young people who may aspire to be a police officer in the Clovis community. The Grand Jury found minimal information regarding the CPD recruiting African American lateral transfer officers or cadets from police academies outside California's Central Valley. This has limited their opportunity to recruit more African American candidates.

The CPD leadership established a Citizens Diversity Committee in 2019. The stated goals of the Committee are to:

- Engage a diverse group of community leaders to generate strategies and ideas that will increase the number of applicants who represent a wide range of cultures, ethnicities, and who have a wide range of skills.
- Meet 2 to 3 times per year with subgroups meeting and communicating as needed.

CPD provided the Grand Jury the current demographic makeup of the Citizens Diversity Committee:

	Male	Female
African American	4	1
Asian	0	1
Hispanic	2	0
Indian	0	0
White	0	3

In 2018, CPD leadership went on to formulate a Diversity Strategic Plan, which was developed as a means to insure the CPD hire the most-diverse, well-trained,

professional police officers and staff. This Plan and its administrators are also charged with developing and implementing a methodology to continually monitor the state of diversity within the department as it relates to ethnic/racial and gender make-up. The Plan attempts to engage every employee in the CPD to understand that providing exceptional services to the citizens of Clovis will only occur with a diverse, highly qualified police department.

The CPD provided the Grand Jury with the following Strategic Objectives (Goals) of the Diversity Strategic Plan:

1. CPD adopted the following goals to improve diversity: Facilitate multiple discussions with the Command Staff to fully develop the Diversity Strategic plan and ultimately gain consensus as to the importance and viability of the plan prior to implementation.
2. Utilize Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Summary Reports for Police Officers, the EEO Summary Reports for professional Staff, the current Clovis Police Department Ethnic/Racial Report, the current Clovis Police Department Gender Report, the City of Clovis census data and the Fresno County census data to evaluate both the recruitment and hiring of people from a diverse ethnic/racial and gender groups.
3. Identify and request participation from a diversified group of citizens to attend a number of meetings throughout the year to provide input about the Diversity Strategic Plan and other ideas about how to get employment information to people from all racial/ethnic populations and women.
4. Communicate the Vision of this Strategic Plan to Sergeants, Corporals, Police Officers and Professional Staff within the department.
5. The Police Command Staff will identify and recruit at least three officers that represent different ethnic/racial groups to participate in the recruitment and hiring of new staff.
6. The Clovis Police Department will increase the number of applicants who are women and the number of applicants who represent various ethnic/racial groups.
7. The Police Command Staff will identify at least four new methods to

advertise employment opportunities to people from various ethnic/racial groups and women.

8. Review the progress toward achieving the established goals annually.
9. The Clovis Police Department will demonstrate an increase of 25% in the number of applicants who are from racial/ethnic groups and women.

The CPD has stated they have achieved 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 of the above listed objectives and goals. For numbers 2, 6, 8, and 9, CPD is committed to continually analyze their efforts to achieve these goals.

While the Citizens Diversity Committee and the Diversity Strategic Plan are excellent initial steps for the CPD in minimizing an applicant's perception that CPD has a bias against recruiting African American officers, the fact is that in the past five years the CPD has only been successful with hiring one African American sworn officer. While extensive efforts and action items have come from the Citizens Diversity Committee and the Diversity Strategic Plan, the results presented to the Grand Jury indicate that more needs to be done to achieve their goals.

The CPD follows the guidelines of POST regarding implicit bias. Such training is designed to help leadership in the CPD build on the culture of value of diversity. The Grand Jury was told that the CPD trains its officers in "Principled Policing" which is required training by POST at least once every five years per California Penal Code section 13519.4. The last time CPD officers were trained on this topic was in June and July of 2020 and 2017 prior to that.

The Grand Jury was told a substantial challenge exists for the CPD in hiring more officers of color, especially African Americans, as the perception is CPD does not welcome them. The interviewees indicated the CPD did not seek outside professional advice on how to develop a strategy and plan to overcome this hurdle.

The 2021-2022 Fresno County Civil Grand Jury finds:

- F1** There is a perception among police officer candidates of color that the CPD would not be a welcoming department for them.
- F2** The demographics for diversity among police officers in the CPD is nearly reflective of the Clovis community, however, much less diverse than its

larger community as stated in the Fresno SMSA.

- F3** There is presently no evidence or reports of explicit discrimination or disrespectful treatment of police officers of color at CPD.
- F4** CPD purports to hire candidates at a higher standard than other agencies.
- F5** Until recently compensation packages for CPD new hire officers were higher than other agencies.
- F6** The CPD is implementing programs to make it more diverse (examples include the Citizens Diversity Committee and their Strategic Plan).
- F7** The CPD follows POST standards for the training of officers in issues regarding implicit bias.
- F8** The FCC Police Academy graduates classes with diversity that reflects the entire Fresno/Clovis metropolitan area.
- F9** The CPD command staff established a diversity strategic plan in January 2018, which has been partially completed to date.
- F10** The CPD does not publicly share information on their diversity efforts.

Based on its findings, the 2021-2022 Fresno Civil Grand Jury recommends:

- R1** The CPD should commit to a 1, 3, and 5 year incremental plan to reach the level of diversity that resembles the demographics of the Fresno metropolitan area, no later than March 31, 2023. (F2, F6, F9)
- R2** The CPD should identify diversity-value training tools and require it biennially (every other year) for leaders in the Clovis Police Department no later than March 31, 2023. (F2, F6, F9)
- R3** The CPD should expand their reach for recruiting purposes no later than March 31, 2023. This would encourage recruiting cadets from areas with a higher percentage of persons of color and African Americans in particular. Lateral transfers can be encouraged from those same areas such as Los Angeles, East Bay (Oakland) and San Francisco, for example. (F4, F6, F9)
- R4** The CPD leadership should develop and implement a marketing/recruiting

plan to overcome the perception that the Clovis Police Department does not welcome police officer candidates of color no later than March 31, 2023. (F1, F2, F6, F9)

R5 The CPD should seek outside professional advice on developing a strategy and plan to overcome the perception that the CPD does not welcome officers of color, including African Americans no later than March 31, 2023. (F6)

R6 The CPD should make their Diversity Strategic Plan available to the public via CPD website and within the City of Clovis' mobile application by March 31, 2023. (F10)

Request for Responses

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05, the 2021-2022 Fresno County Civil Grand Jury requests responses to each of the specific findings and recommendations. It is required that responses from elected County officers or agency heads are due within 60 days of the receipt of this report and 90 days from a governing body of a public agency.

Respondents:

Clovis Chief of Police

Clovis City Council

Clovis City Manager

Disclaimer

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.