



Milwaukee Fire & Police Commission

FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT - 2025





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Introduction

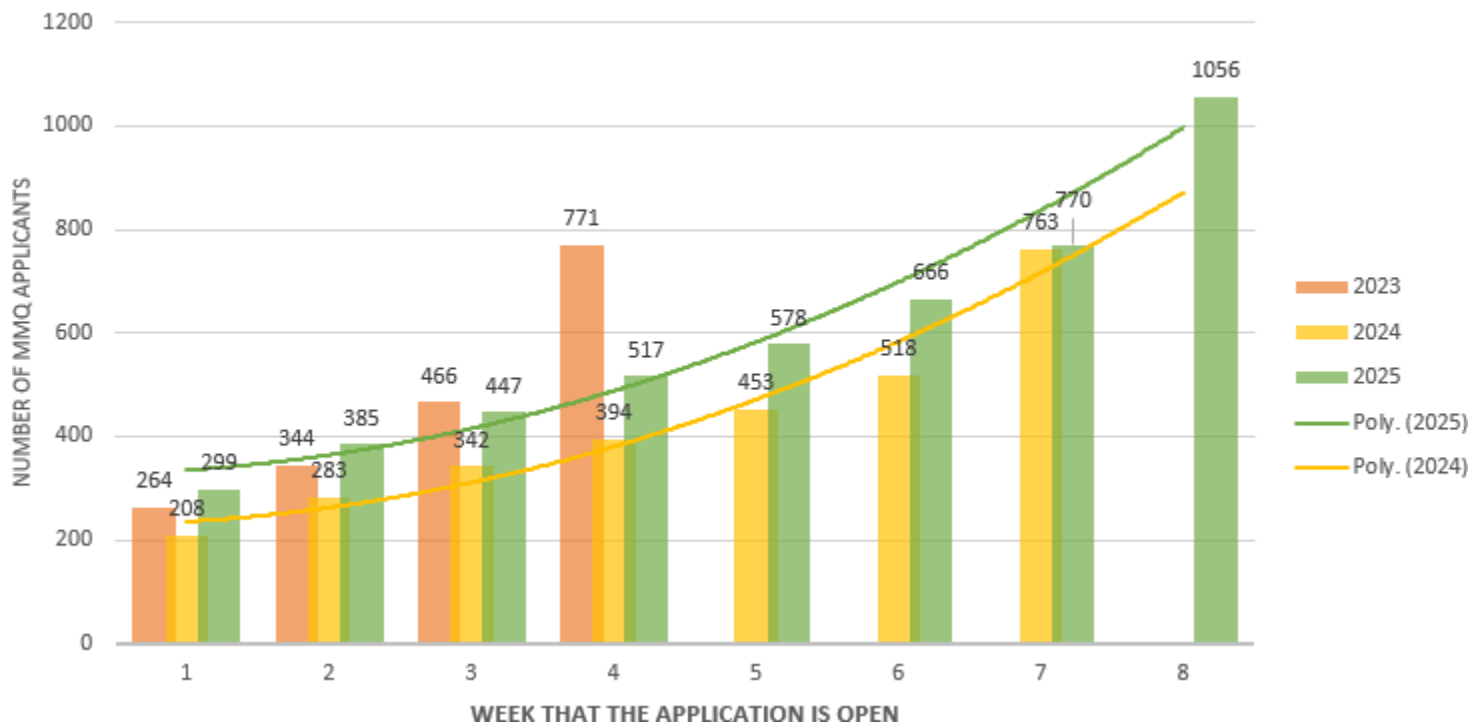
The intention of this report is to provide an overview of the Firefighter recruitment for 2025. Efforts were made in this recruitment by the Milwaukee Fire Department to seize upon the energy of the 150th Anniversary of the department to heavily push recruitment events and expand recruitment outreach. This represents the largest push for recruitment from the Milwaukee Fire department since a major 2017 push. FPC has collected significant data from this recruitment to use as a tool for improving future recruitments when relevant.

This report will provide significant amounts of information from variety of angles with the goal of pivoting for the next recruitment based on what exceeded expectations, what did not, and where the FPC can provide additional support to Milwaukee Fire Department's robust recruitment efforts with targeted recruitment support.



Overall Application Data

Applications (MMQ) per week for Firefighter



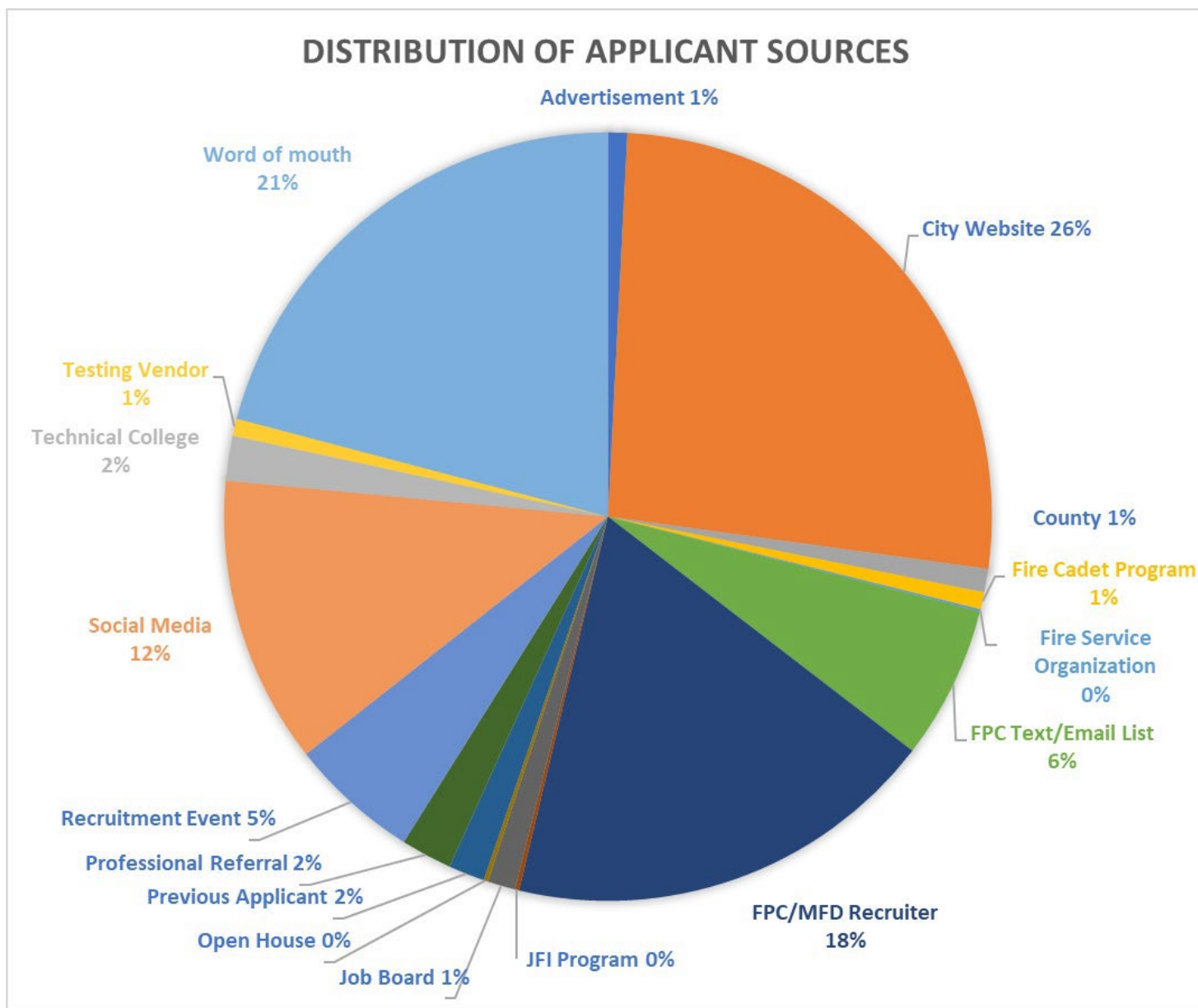
Applications Per Week: Data from the above chart marks the number of valid applications (Minimum Qualifications Met). In 2017, there were 1995 valid applications. The 2023 recruitment, which lasted only 4 weeks resulted in 771 applications. The number of applications for the 2023 was comparatively high as it was the first time since the 2017 recruitment that the position was hired for. In 2024, 770 applications were received by the deadline which was a generally lower number with less of a push to recruit overall. With 2025's recruitment push, a significant increase to 1056 applications was achieved.

Note that while this data is good – the measure of successful recruitment also is relative to the need. At current, this increases our candidate pool a little further than ideal with 500-700 being manageable in terms of candidate wait times for actual hire.

Some items of interest regarding the position is that there tends to be a jump of around 250-300 applications for the last week the position is open, regardless of the recruitment. Each recruitment was open for a longer period of time with 2023 being only open for four weeks while the 2024 recruitment and 2025 recruitment were open for 7 and 8 weeks respectively. The goal for increasing the spread of recruitment timeline was to be able to attend more Community focused events during the early summer months.

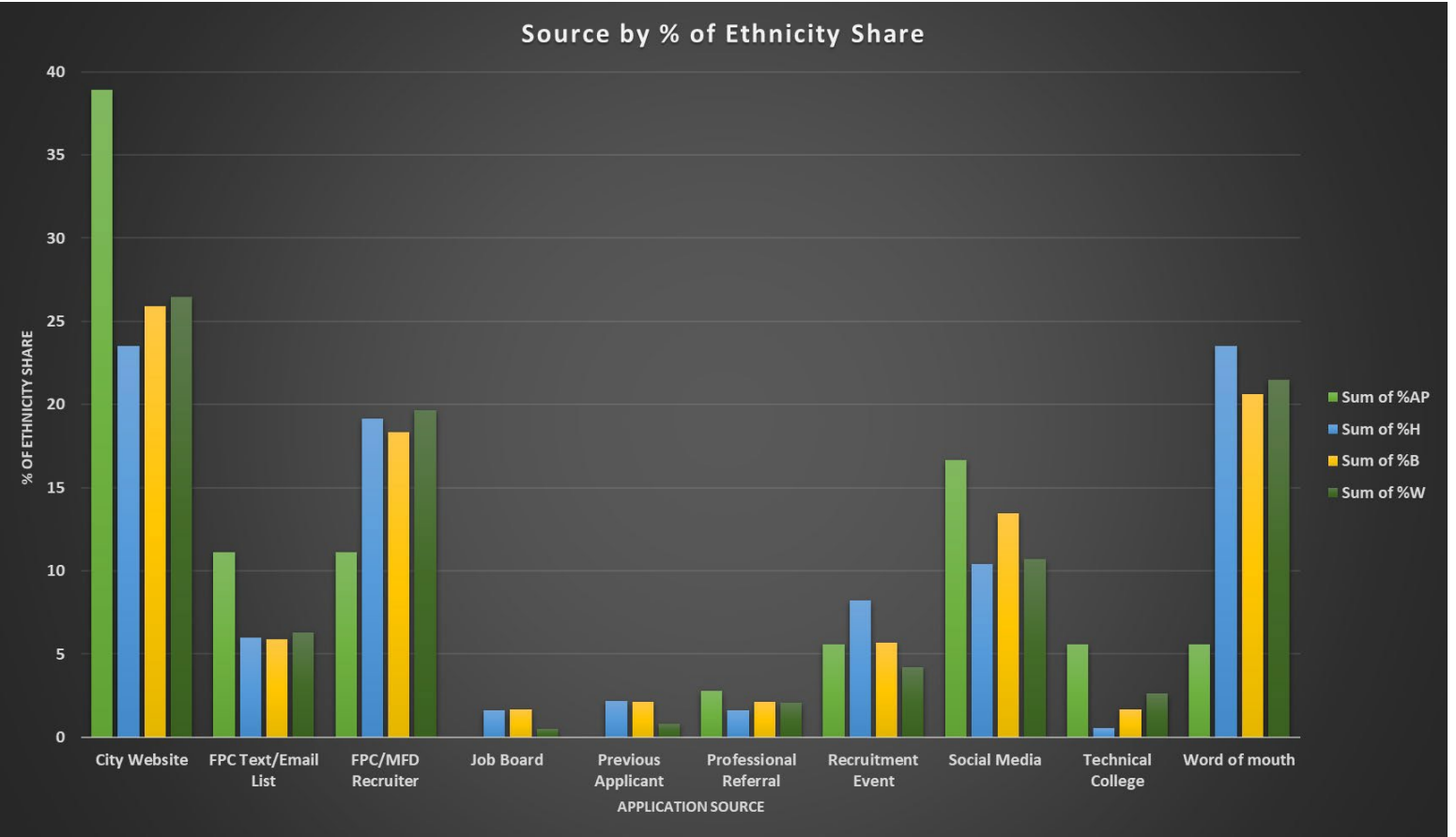
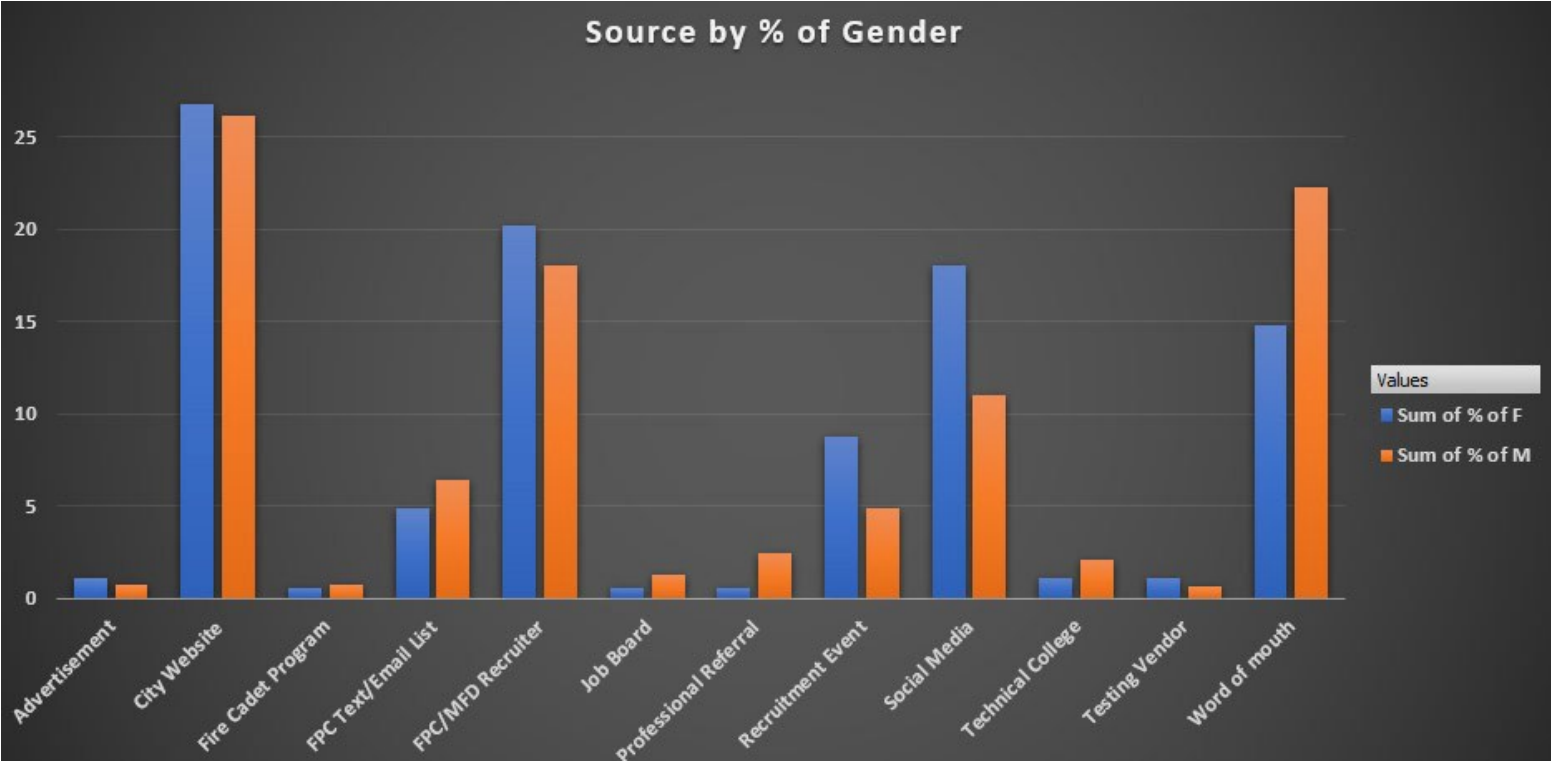
Applicant Sources

Distribution of Applicant Sources: The Fire and Police Commission solicited feedback from all applicants requesting information on how the applicant heard about the position and if they were attending an event. Over 1000 responses were received from the applicants, which makes up the chart. See next page for a breakdown of these categories and what they consisted of.



Applicant Source	Description	Percentage
Advertisement	Specifically mentioned an advertisement seen or news story on the opening.	1.00%
City Website	Cited no specific recommendation or indicated a general internet search for openings.	26.00%
County	Specified a county referral to the position.	1.00%
Fire Cadet Program	Part of the Fire Cadet program currently or previously now old enough to apply.	1.00%
Fire Service Organization	Referrals from other Fire service adjacent professional groups - like IAFC, Black Fire Brigade, etc.	<1%
FPC Text/Email List	Notices/Texts/Emails, or other contacts directly from Fire and Police Commission	6.00%
FPC/MFD Recruiter	Direct recruitment from MFD or FPC recruitment teams. NOTE: Should be considered correlated/in conjunction with Recruitment Events. These are recruitments crediting recruitment teams but not specifying events.	18.00%
JFI Program	Part of previous JFI programs now old enough to apply.	<1%
Job Board	Found on websites like Indeed, Zip Recruiter, etc.	1.00%
Open House	Recruitment during open house events.	<1%
Previous Applicant	Previously applied or currently on an eligible list.	2.00%
Professional Referral	Referrals from other Fire Departments or EMS Services/Ambulance companies.	2.00%
Recruitment Event	Candidates recruited at specified recruitment events. NOTE: Should be considered correlated/in conjunction with FPC/MFD Recruiters section. These are recruitments specifically crediting an event.	5.00%
Social Media	All applications identifying any social media platform as the catalyst for applying.	12.00%
Technical College	Local technical colleges like MATC, WCTC, and Illinois equivalents recommending the position to students.	2.00%
Testing Vendor	National Testing Network providing the hiring opportunity to national candidates.	1.00%
Word of Mouth	Any non-MFD/FPC specific recommendation - family, friends, workplace, or other.	21.00%

Overall Source Feedback: The majority of candidate recruitment occurs through recruitment events, continual contact by the FPC and Fire Department, and word of mouth/sharing of the opening – either online or person to person. This broad recruitment strategy continues to provide a significant candidate pool as a baseline.



Demographics of 2025 Recruitment

Source by Gender: More female candidates are recruited via social media, recruitment events, or by recruiters while more male candidates are recruited via word of mouth, technical colleges, and professional referral. This is likely because the Firefighting profession remains predominantly male – so industry referrals that are person to person may tend to be more male focused recruitment incidentally. Meanwhile, broad recruitment efforts appear to be successful across genders.

Source by Ethnicity: Besides the outlier that Asian/Pacific Islander candidates were not a strong candidate pool, there is largely no major differences between ethnicity and source using the general sourcing metrics. Of note, in person recruitment events appear to have boosted Hispanic recruitment and Black/African American candidates appear boosted by social media.

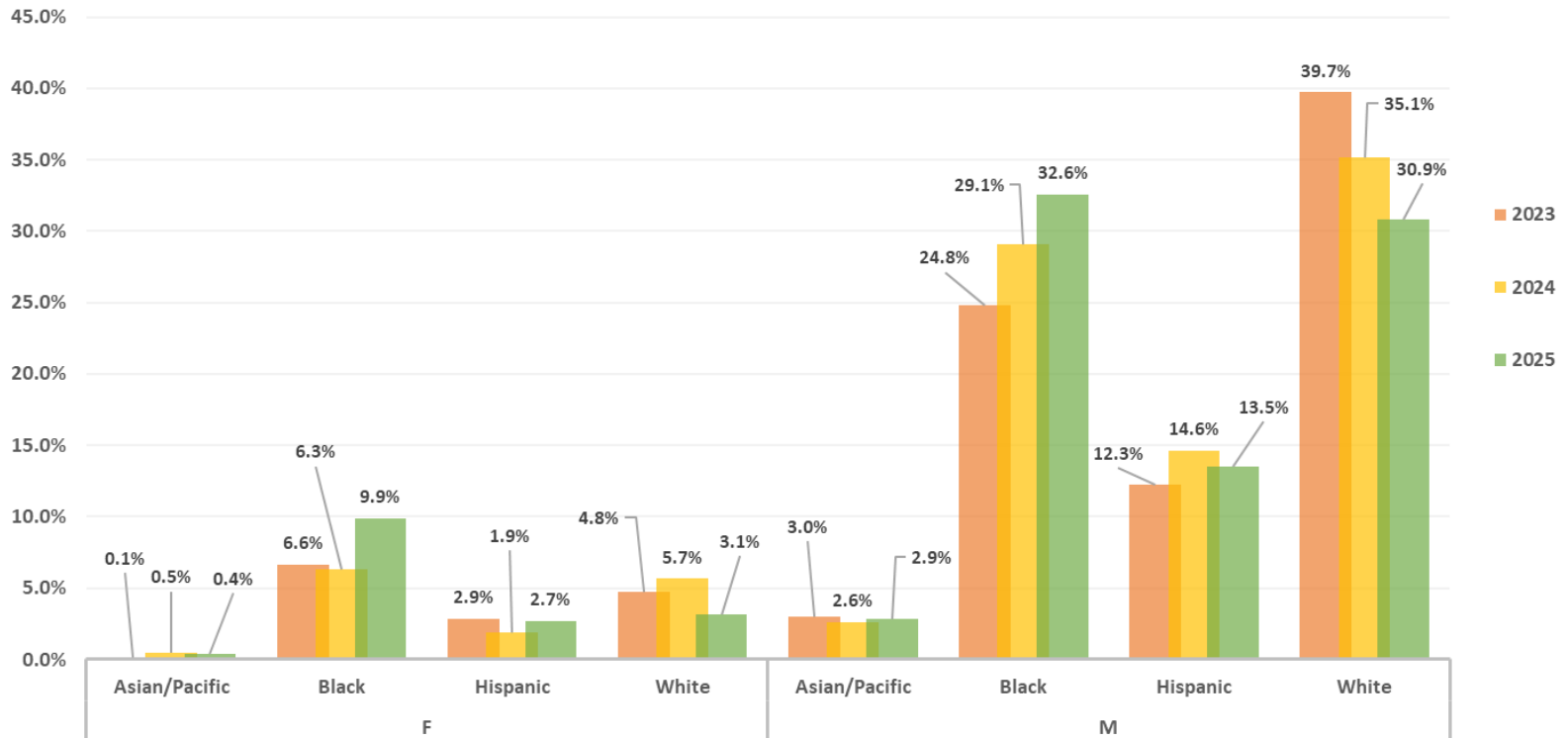
Complete Aps Submitted

Job Number: 2505-2412ZF-001

Percent	# Aps	Race	Gender
0.36%	4	Asian/Pacific	F
2.87%	32	Asian/Pacific	M
9.87%	110	Black	F
32.56%	363	Black	M
0.09%	1	Black	N
0.09%	1	Black	U
0.18%	2	Decline to State	F
1.70%	19	Decline to State	M
0.36%	4	Decline to State	U
2.69%	30	Hispanic	F
13.54%	151	Hispanic	M
0.18%	2	Hispanic	U
0.18%	2	Native American Indian/Alaska Native	F
1.08%	12	Native American Indian/Alaska Native	M
3.14%	35	White	F
30.85%	344	White	M
0.18%	2	White	N
0.09%	1	White	U

Source by Ethnicity: Above is a breakdown of the 2025 Recruitment's demographics information of all applicants from Jobaps.

Recruitment Demographics - 2023, 2024, and 2025



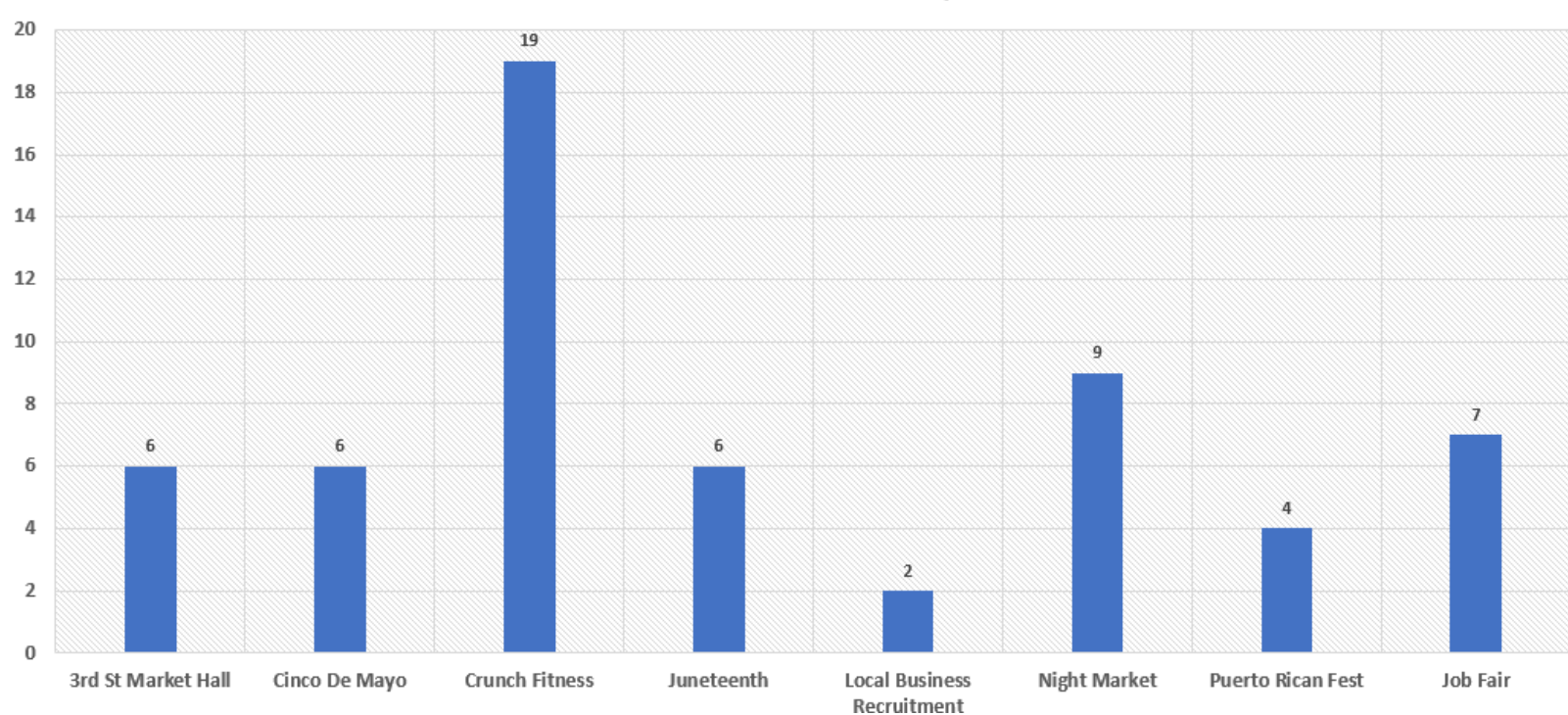
Recruitment Demographics Over Time: Relative to the past few recruitments, 2025 saw gains in the rate of Black/African American applicants balanced by a decline of White applicants. While we have the highest rate of recruitment for Black/African American women, we also saw a decline in the rate of White women applicants. This is a shift in rates over the span of just a few years. Notably, not a significant increase or decrease in any other ethnicity. Overall female recruitment remains around the same level despite stated gains.

2025 Recruitment Event Information

At this time, candidate touches and number of applicants by event are not tracked by the recruitment teams. In some cases, this would be a big ask of the recruitment teams as they juggle in person conversations and application navigation to also track additional information. That said, this information is only tangentially added to the reporting ability of JobApps through supplemental questions provided to the applicant. As indicated in the **Applicant Source** section of this report, the data isn't 100% accurate and many times candidates were not specific enough to help us identify date/times of events.

Utilizing the information provided by candidates, taking all Milwaukee Fire and FPC hosted recruitment events (times, dates) and comparing that with application times and dates, the below information provides an interpretation of the data that best represents event success without having a specific method in place tracking candidate interaction at recruit events.

2025 Recruitment Event Snapshot



From the above we can see Milwaukee Fire Department's partnership with Crunch Fitness seems to have been an effective recruitment tool. Of note, the 3rd St. Market Hall, Night Market, Crunch Fitness and general Job Fair categories occurred over multiple days – as many as 8 dates versus single event recruitment dates like Juneteenth/Puerto Rican Fest. Local business recruitment includes one-off locations in the City such as Home Depot, El Rey, and Sam's Club tabling events.

This data represents candidates who either explicitly credited an event or applied during the hours of an event and didn't specify something other than the event itself. As a result, though recruiters may have had many contacts during these events and potentially applications later in the timeline, we have no reliable method for tracking event success.

Extrapolating, Crunch Fitness and local, high traffic events prove most effective for recruitment.

FPC Recruitment Goals

The goal for the Milwaukee Fire Human Resources team heading into this recruitment was to improve overall engagement and retention tools. Working through an existing eligible list from 2024's recruitment while heavily pushing the 2025 recruitment will result in longer waits for candidates pending hire.

To this end, FPC Fire HR/FPC Recruitment began working early in 2025 on informational newsletters highlighting Milwaukee Fire personnel to work as both a recruitment and an engagement tool during long recruitments. Additionally, MFD's consistent presence offering Fit Camps to those on the eligible list has improved retention for candidates who are interested in the position by keeping them involved. In 2024 and continued into this recruitment, FPC has worked with MFD to offer Fit Camps to all eligible list candidates rather than just offering Fit Camps to specific candidates ahead of a class – allowing candidates to participate essentially year-round while preparing for the role.



FPC developed tools to assist with recruitment – flyers, posters, and Q+A documentation that can be utilized for current and future recruitment efforts. These documents highlight specific areas of Fire service and are eye catching. FPC Fire HR's position is that targeted, supportive recruitment efforts would go a long way to assist Milwaukee Fire's broad strokes approach to target recruitment at specific folks. For example, focusing on college campus/medical students, Milwaukee Rec partnerships with local men's and women's sports leagues, and tapping other community resources to disperse information effectively. FPC Fire HR intends to further amplify efforts on recruitment in this pinpoint manner in future recruitment periods. To further supplement, FPC has begun producing interviews of Fire personnel and the offerings unique to Milwaukee Fire to utilize in improved digital recruitment and retention initiatives.

FPC Fire HR has and will continue reaching out to Community organizations, other Fire Departments of like size, and National Organizations to help identify applicable strategies for recruitment and bring them home for adaptation to Milwaukee's landscape. Additionally, some organizations/departments will act to boost recruitments for Milwaukee to their audiences.



2025 Recruitment Takeaways

This recruitment was overall highly successful, in large part due to the dedicated FPC and Milwaukee Fire recruitment teams. Room for improvement exists in collaboration between Milwaukee Fire and FPC ahead of major recruitments – something that can be shored up prior to the next recruitment cycle.

FPC's role in recruitment has largely not been as necessary with MFD's leadership in the area, though there is a desire to improve FPC support and recruitment collaboration going forward. Finding a way to ensure that this occurs will also be beneficial ahead of the next recruitment cycle.

Worth noting is that the larger the candidate pools, the longer the wait for candidates generally. This recruitment being as successful as it was means there will be increased wait times for candidates from application to class which can have many adverse effects. As a result, we will not likely be pursuing any recruitment in 2026 and possibly 2027.

Current state is worth considering ahead of recruitment to forecast candidate wait times and class timelines – this is something that FPC can help factor in by proposing hiring needs or recruitment goals as well as clarify timelines ahead of future recruiting.

Future recruitment effort would highly benefit from a better tracking system for applications or in person recruitment event contacts other than user submitted response. Though tracking applications by date and time can give a general outline of how an event went, it isn't accurate and won't reflect the exact measure of an event's success.

In future recruitments, having a method in place to track reliability of events or even tracking contacts would provide some data driven backing for continuing or discontinuing specific recruitment events on both FPC and MFD's side of things, especially when seeking business cases for doing so versus other times and locations.

