

Virginia State Police Briefing

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The Problem

- Fair compensation
 1. Starting Salary
 2. Compression
 3. Retention
- Lack of human resources



Lack of Human Resources

- VSP is unique and necessarily different from other agencies
- VSP responds in support of local law enforcement
- When local resources are inadequate for the situation, VSP fills the gaps
- When subject matter experts are required, VSP responds to support
- When the emergency has been resolved, VSP commits personnel and resources to sustain the environment for days, weeks, months – whatever is necessary.
- VSP is capable of rapidly providing large contingencies of law enforcement support to gain control of deteriorating environments.
- VSP responds and addresses law enforcement concerns across the entire Commonwealth.

We are the Commonwealth's Police Force

Human Resources

- Troopers and Agents are routinely mobilized from all over the State. They respond for extended periods; staying in barracks and hotels away from their families, which creates personal **hardships—hardships not routinely experienced by other agencies**. Examples include:
 - The Pentagon on 9/11
 - The Queen of England's Visit, Governor's Conferences, NASCAR Races, Etc.
 - Virginia Tech Shooting
 - Presidential Rallies and Debates
 - Hurricanes, Floods, and other disasters
 - Large scale criminal investigations – Eastern Shore Fires, Captain Kevin Quick, Serial Arsonist, Morgan Harrington, Hannah Graham, WDBJ Shooting, Noah Thomas, Nicole Lovell
 - Police Shootings, Etc.

Our personnel move from one demand to the next; often with no break

Staffing: Current status (12-1-16)

- 2,966 total positions (2,118 Sworn and 848 Civilian)
- Vacancies:
 - 157 Sworn
 - 122 Civilian
 - **Total: 279**
- Attrition: (January – Nov. 30th, 2016)
 - 148 Sworn (13.5 sworn lost per month)
 - 55 remain in the 125th Basic School
 - 122 Civilian (11.1 civilians lost per month)



Resources and Compensation

- 125th Basic School will graduate in the Spring of 2017 (Currently at 55 students)
- 126th was spared during budget cuts – 65 students are anticipated
- **Starting pay \$36,207**
- Personnel across the agency suffer from pay compression issues that result from years of no salary increases due to varying priorities and/or budget shortfalls. We have numerous **civilian employees as much as 37% below** the standard rate of pay as determined by a compensation study



The Decision



- At \$36,207 we are unable to successfully compete for trooper candidates—**Why join VSP?**
- Employees are hired with no expectation of a pay increases—**Why join VSP?**
- Tenured employees are making the same as new employees with no hope on the horizon—**Why stay?**

Agency	<u>Starting Salary</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Percentage Difference</u>
Henrico County PD	\$43,893	\$7,686	21%
Chesterfield County PD	\$42,800	\$6,593	18%
Hanover County SO	\$41,719	\$5,512	15%
Virginia Beach PD	\$41,194	\$4,987	14%
Richmond PD	\$41,000	\$4,793	13%
Winchester PD*	\$40,269	\$4,062	11%
Norfolk PD	\$40,000	\$3,793	11%
Chesapeake PD	\$39,199	\$2,992	8%
Newport News PD	\$38,325	\$2,118	6%
Roanoke PD	\$37,410	\$1,203	3%
Harrisonburg PD	\$36,504	\$297	1%
City of Lynchburg	\$36,420	\$213	1%
Virginia State Police	\$36,207		
Charlottesville PD	\$35,256	\$951	-3%

State Police Salary Survey – Nov. 2016

- 30 Agencies responded to the survey
- 40% have a dedicated funding source
 - 23% have a combination of general fund and dedicated funding
- 90% provide salary increases for longevity
- Average Starting Salary: \$40,494
- Average Salary After Graduation: \$50,497
- VSP Starting Salary: \$36,207
- VSP After Probation: \$41,582 (one year after graduation)
18 months from start date

Compensation

- The challenges facing troopers are **more complex than ever**.
- **Modern police officers** must now respond to situations involving mental illness, extremely diverse populations (ethnic and cultural), terrorism, and crimes involving myriads of technologies. The Committee on 21st Century Policing concluded that, “The skills and knowledge required to effectively deal with these issues requires a higher level of education as well as **extensive and ongoing training in specific disciplines**.”



Compensation

- In order for VSP to be successful, we need to recruit and hire the very best people possible. Our current financial situation has reduced the overall quality and quantity of our applicant pool.
- The shrinking applicant pool **means agencies are competing with each other for the best** candidates. Agencies with low starting pay and poor salary structures are not competitive in this market. Our inability to attract top candidates to VSP will have a long term negative impact on our ability to provide premier policing services to the Commonwealth.

Compensation

- Despite all of the challenges, we have been forced to take on countless **new initiatives and expanded others**, while staffing is stagnate.
- - Personnel are **working longer hours** and earning leave, but the lack of adequate staffing makes it nearly impossible to take the leave.
- - **Therefore, employees lose their earned leave, which essentially means they worked for free—this is completely unacceptable.**
 - **One employee summed up the problem by saying, “Compensatory leave does not pay the bills or put food on my table”.**

Recruiting



Recruiting

- We are pursuing **new ad campaigns** – bulletin boards
- We are changing recruiting strategies and capturing metrics to determine where we are being successful.
 - Most candidates come to us through the webpage – we are working to revamp our page
- We are working with minority groups to ensure a **diverse workforce**
- We have new recruiting literature and handouts
- Recruiters **mentor every applicant** through the process
- Every candidate that leaves the process is interviewed to determine what we could have done differently
- We are **extraordinarily proactive** and have reformatted our basic training to better suit the 21st century candidate



Recruiting

- Training costs, not including equipment, is **\$55,054 per student**
- Once many of these employees gain experience and realize they can make significantly more money in local departments, they leave. We have become the training ground for many local agencies.
 - Texas actively recruiting VSP on Facebook
 - Agencies across Virginia are actively recruiting troopers
- Pay issues are keeping some of the most qualified from taking promotions
- **Our ability to catch-up is directly tied to a competitive starting salary and a pay structure that provides hope through a graduated pay structure**



Budget

- VSP is subject to funding allocations by the General Assembly
- VSP does not generate funding from enforcement, nor should we
- The Commonwealth's dependency on VSP as a core function of government does not change with the economy
- The **current funding format negatively impacts our ability to provide service** and support to our citizens and the greater law enforcement community.

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Conclusion

- We have reached the **breaking point**—we can't survive on the current path
- We must have a **sustained funding** source outside the general fund
- We must be able to **fairly compensate** employees to be competitive
- We must be able to provided a **graduated and funded pay structure** to retain existing employees
- We must address and **fix pay compression**
- We must be able to keep and utilize all allocated funds

