

Press Release from the Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the Attorney General:

RICHMOND (November 18, 2015) Attorney General Mark R. Herring today announced the launch of an initiative to help law enforcement agencies recruit more minority applicants and build police departments that reflect the cultural and racial makeup of the communities they serve. The data-driven initiative will be launched in Danville and Martinsville and will produce a model for other Virginia law enforcement agencies to recreate and implement throughout the Commonwealth. This is the second in a series of initiatives to promote safe, impartial, 21st century policing in Virginia, and to promote mutual trust and stronger relationships between Virginia law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. The project will be funded by a \$50,000 grant from the Office of the Attorney General.

"In order to be successful, police departments need to be a creation and a reflection of the communities they serve," said Attorney General Mark Herring. "Having a diverse team of officers who understand the culture and experiences of the folks they serve is good for the community, it's good for the law enforcement agency, and it's good for young men and women who look to them as role models. Danville, Martinsville, and other communities across Virginia are already doing great work to build stronger relationships with their police departments, and I think that the strategies developed here in Southside will help us do even more. I'm really proud to partner with Chief Broadfoot and Chief Dunn as they work to build departments that better reflect their communities, and I'm looking forward to the lessons they'll share with their colleagues across the Commonwealth."

To ensure law enforcement agencies have the tools necessary to build a police department that reflects the communities they serve, Attorney General Herring and his team will work with Danville and Martinsville to pilot a recruitment model that can be recreated in other localities in Virginia. The data-driven initiative will survey members of the community to identify barriers to recruitment which will guide the creation of a recruitment plan. Once the localities implement their new recruitment effort, the data and strategies will be combined to create a shareable model for any law enforcement agency in the Commonwealth that wants to more effectively recruit diverse candidates.

"The Martinsville Police Department is very excited about the opportunity to partner with Attorney General Herring to evaluate how we can better attract highly qualified, civic-minded candidates to better reflect the community we serve," said Martinsville Police Chief Sean Dunn. "This effort will serve as the model for the rest of the Commonwealth. This is the first of its kind effort and will very likely reap benefits for law enforcement and other government agencies as we determine what the barriers are and how we can overcome them."

"Successful minority recruitment for law enforcement agencies has been hard to achieve in the past, but we're eager to collaborate with Attorney General Herring to address the issue," said Danville Chief of Police Philip Broadfoot. "This initiative will identify barriers to recruitment and develop promising strategies to recruit a diverse pool

of officer candidates in the two largest cities in Southside Virginia. We're excited about this opportunity and look forward to sharing our findings and best practices with other localities in the Commonwealth."

"We have been working hard in Danville to bring our citizens and our police department even closer together because we know that communication and interaction leads to trust and cooperation, and that leads to safer communities," said Apostle Lawrence G. Campbell, Sr., Pastor of Bible Way Cathedral in Danville. "When Attorney General Herring came to Danville over the summer, we shared our concerns and ideas with him, and I'm very encouraged to see him team up with Chief Broadfoot to make sure that everyone in Danville sees a little of themselves in their police force. Here in Southside, we have been given a tremendous opportunity to show the rest of the state how to build a police department that reflects its community."

Danville and Martinsville's existing community policing initiatives make the localities uniquely suited to pilot a model to curb barriers to recruitment, and Chiefs Broadfoot and Dunn approached Attorney General Herring to volunteer to pilot the initiative. Both localities have implemented minority recruitment efforts, but are now seeking data-driven strategies to help promote a more diverse applicant pool in the short term, and to address any recruitment barriers in the long term. Danville's population is 49% African American with 19 African American officers out of 128, including nine supervisors out of 44. Martinsville has a 45% African American population with four African American officers out of 51, including one supervisor.

The first part of the initiative involves an in-depth survey to identify barriers to joining local police forces. The survey will contact community members, churches, civic organizations, civic leaders, and schools.

After receiving the results of the survey, a recruitment strategy will be designed starting with an evaluation of existing policies and recruitment efforts, and evaluations of any additional relevant findings from the survey. After a thorough evaluation of policies, an action plan will be created to carry out solutions based on the survey findings. Finally, a thorough debrief of the data and subsequent action plan will be distilled into a shareable model for other localities to recreate.

In late September, Attorney General Herring announced his first program to promote 21st century policing - a dual-track law enforcement officer training initiative consisting of regional trainings for current officers and development of contemporary basic training academy materials for new officers. Both initiatives will emphasize up-to-date, modern policing techniques such as impartial policing, bias awareness, situational decision making, de-escalation and appropriate use of force.