



Somerville Police Department 	TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		POLICY NUMBER: 438				
	Subject: Alternative Pathway Hiring Policy						
	Issuing Authority: Shumeane Benford Chief of Police		Signature:  Number of Pages: Page 1 of 5		Effective Date: February 20, 2025		
Accreditation Standards (6th Edition)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Amended				
Revision & Reissued Dates:							

Purpose:

This policy establishes guidelines for hiring practices under the local registry hiring program established under G.L. c. 31, sections 59A & 59D (the “Alternative Pathway Hiring Process”). The purpose of this policy is to ensure transparency, fairness, and equity in hiring, promote diversity and inclusion, and prevent nepotism, favoritism, and discrimination in the recruitment and appointment of public safety personnel.

Scope:

This policy applies to all employees, hiring managers, and appointing authorities engaged in the recruitment, evaluation, and appointment of candidates under the Alternative Pathway Hiring Process.

Policy Statement:

The Somerville Police Department is committed to ensuring that all hiring decisions are made in compliance with basic merit principles, free from bias, and based solely on the qualifications, skills, and abilities of the candidates. This policy outlines the procedures and expectations for maintaining an equitable, lawful, and merit-based hiring process. In addition to this stated policy, the Somerville Police Department will comply with and incorporate the City of Somerville’s established Equal Opportunity Policy in its hiring and recruitment practices to the extent applicable under the terms thereof.

Definitions:

Bias - prejudice or favoritism towards a group of people, which can be conscious or unconscious and based on factors like race, gender, age, or socio-economic status.

Discrimination - An intentional or unintentional act that adversely affects employment opportunities because of a person's membership in a protected class or association with a member or members of a protected class.

Merit - the basis for selecting candidates for a position as a result of their demonstrated abilities, skills, experiences, and qualifications, choosing the most qualified individual for the role based upon actual past performance and their apparent potential to succeed in the position rather than considering factors like personal connections or favoritism.

Nepotism - the practice among those with power or influence of favoring relatives, friends, or associates in the workplace, especially by giving them jobs.

Key Provisions

1. Anti-Nepotism Policy

The Somerville Police Department prohibits nepotism or the appearance of nepotism in hiring decisions. To maintain the integrity of the Department's hiring processes, the following rules shall apply to all Alternative Pathway Hiring Processes:

- **Prohibited Relationships:** No individual involved in the Alternative Pathway Hiring Process may participate in the recruitment, investigation, evaluation, or appointment of a candidate who is a relative, partner, or person with whom they have a close personal relationship.
 - For purposes of this provision, (1) "relatives" include the individual's immediate family (e.g. spouse, and their parents, children, brothers and sisters), aunts, uncles, stepchildren, cousins, or second cousins; and (2) a close personal relationship means any person with whom the individual regularly and/or routinely socializes.
- **Disclosure Requirement:** All employees involved in the Department's Alternative Pathway Hiring Process must disclose any relationships with candidates to the appointing authority prior to the hiring process.
- **Mitigation:** In addition to the Disclosure Requirement set forth above, if a conflict of interest exists, under the Prohibited Relationships provision above or G.L. c. 268A, the individual will be recused from the hiring process.

The Department shall comply with the Somerville Code of Ordinances, Article VI, Section 2-312 (Anti-Nepotism), as amended from time to time, when conducting any Alternative Pathway Hiring Process.

2. Anti-Discrimination Policy

The Somerville Police Department's Alternative Pathway Hiring Processes shall be subject to the City's Equal Opportunity Policy, including the complaint, investigation, and resolution procedure contained therein. The Department will not discriminate against members of a protected class, as defined in the City's Equal Opportunity Policy, in any

aspect of its Alternative Pathway Hiring Process, and shall comply with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination when conducting an Alternative Pathway Hiring Process. Such prohibitions include, without limitation, discrimination on the basis of:

- Race, color, national origin, or ethnicity.
- Sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- Religion or creed.
- Disability or veteran status.
- Age, marital status, or other protected classes under applicable laws.

The foregoing shall not be interpreted or construed to prohibit the Department from complying with statutory or legal requirements concerning medical and physical fitness for appointment as a police officer.

3. Merit-Based Hiring Principles

All hiring decisions under the Alternative Pathway Hiring Process will adhere to basic merit principles, meaning the Department shall recruit and select employees on the basis of their relative ability, knowledge and skills and give open consideration of qualified applicants for initial appointment, assuring fair treatment of all candidates in all aspects of personnel administration without regard to political affiliation, race, color, age, national origin, sex, marital status, handicap, or religion and with proper regard for the privacy and constitutional rights of all applicants and employees, and assuring that all candidates are protected against coercion for political purposes and protected from arbitrary and capricious actions.

The Department shall ensure that all Alternative Pathway Hiring Processes adhere to the following basic merit principles:

- **Qualifications-based Selection:** Candidates shall be evaluated based on objective qualifications established in advance of each individual hiring process, that include, amongst other things, the minimum education, training, and relevant experience required for the role and any residency requirements then in effect.
- **Transparency:** Job criteria, requirements, and evaluation processes will be clearly defined and communicated to all applicants in advance of the hiring process.
- **Consistency:** All candidates within a hiring class or round will be assessed by the same hiring panel and using the same evaluation standards and methods to ensure fairness.

4. Recruitment Strategies

Hiring practices shall reflect the Somerville Police Department's commitment to diversity and inclusion by actively seeking qualified candidates from underrepresented communities. Subject to appropriation and available resources, the Somerville Police Department will actively engage in outreach efforts to promote diversity within its ranks, including:

- Working with the City of Somerville Human Resources Department to expand on current recruitment efforts.
- Creating a position or assignment within the Somerville Police Department who will coordinate and lead on all recruiting efforts and be versed on all aspects and requirements of this policy.
- Partnering with community organizations to reach underrepresented groups.
- Advertising job opportunities in diverse media outlets and through schools, community groups, and other organizations serving groups underrepresented in the law enforcement profession.
- Hosting informational sessions throughout the community to educate prospective candidates on the hiring process.
- Building out partnerships with higher education institutions to expose potential graduates to a career in law enforcement, specifically with the Somerville Police Department.
- Attending career fairs held at local institutions of higher education.
- Maintaining open lines of communication with MPTC operated and approved academies in an effort to seek out student officers that are enrolled in an existing academy class but are NOT affiliated with a police department.
- Exploring the creation of a police cadet program.
- Participating in Somerville High School career fairs.

5. Monitoring and Reporting

To ensure compliance with this policy and the provisions of the Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth's Human Resources Division, the Department shall adhere to the following principles:

- Documentation: Detailed records of the recruitment, evaluation, and selection process for all Alternative Pathway Hiring Processes will be maintained, including a written justification for all hiring decisions, which may be contained in the candidate's background check summary report and/or post-interview notes or memorandums.
- Oversight: The Mayor, or designee, will monitor all Alternative Pathway Hiring Processes to ensure adherence to this policy.
- Periodic Review: The Somerville Police Department will review hiring outcomes annually and submit required reports to the HRD Civil Service Unit, including demographic data and metrics on the effectiveness of outreach efforts.

6. Review and Approval

This policy shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to comply with applicable laws, regulations, and guidance from HRD's Civil Service Unit and any relevant final decisions

issued by the Civil Service Commission not inconsistent with the law or any applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Acknowledgment and Compliance:

All employees and hiring authorities involved in the recruitment and appointment process must review this policy and confirm their understanding and compliance in writing.