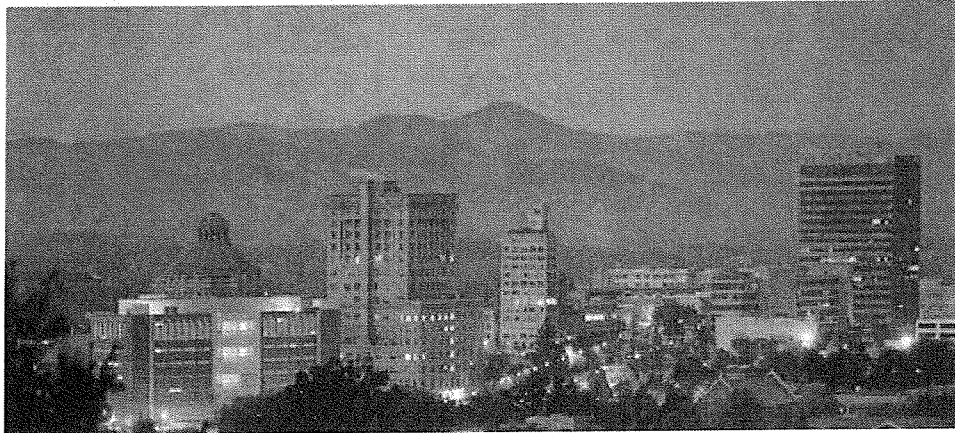


# **The City of Asheville, North Carolina**

---



## **Report**

**PREPARED  
BY**

**Anthony Franklin**

---

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Asheville North Caroline demographics</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>City of Asheville workforce demographics</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Asheville Police Dpt. demographics</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>History</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>African American Relations</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Promotional concerns</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Recommendations and Comments</b>	<b>16</b>

## **OBJECTIVE**

The Asheville Police Department contacted this consultant, Anthony Franklin regarding concerns they were having with their public relations within the African American community and their lack of participation amongst African Americans in the department's promotional process.

The Asheville Police Department also expressed concern in the area of minority officers willingness, not only to take the promotional test but they had concerns with their ability to do well within the promotional process. One of the things said was

“....we as an agency took a black eye in the minority community for not promoting a minority applicant to Lieutenant”.

This and many other statements support the two above concerns expressed by the Asheville Police Department.

The first objective of this consultant is to identify the tools that could be used to improve the working relationship between the Asheville Police Department and the African American community it serves. These concerns were addressed by means of power point presentation and an open dialogue that focused on relationship building (See Power Point attachment #1).

This eight-hour Power point course is part of a Multicultural Community Policing series. The course is designed to help jurisdictions facing the challenges of policing a diverse, changing population. The goal of this course is to help law-enforcement personnel improve the level of service to this population through a better understanding of the following topics:

- A brief overview of community policing.
- Demographic information on the African-American culture nationally and in Asheville
- A historical perspective on the African-American culture in the United States, including major events and legislation.
- The role and structure of the African-American family.
- How culture influences communication.
- Key issues for law enforcement in policing the African-American culture, including those issues associated with culture shock, drug use, gangs, and domestic violence.
- Tips on how to improve law-enforcement services to the African-American community.

The second objective of this consultant is to identify the tools that could be used to improve officer's performance during promotional test and to better leadership skills. This objective was addressed by means of open dialogue and a power point presentation that focused on study habits and leadership skills.

This eight-hour course is designed for officers that have the will and the determination to be promoted to the next level and it also equips them with skills that will help them to be better leaders. The above was accomplished with the following topics:

- Improving study habits
- Importance of study groups and sharing of information
- Time management
- Leadership qualities
- History and characteristics of known proven leaders
- Leading organizational change

Before we could begin to rectify any concerns or issues regarding African American community relations, we first had to take a look at the demographics and history of the Asheville Police Department

## **ASHEVILLE'S DEMOGRAPHICS**

The City of Asheville, North Carolina covers forty-one square miles of land area. Asheville has a total population of 69,446 and, with this figure the City of Asheville is the largest city in Western North Carolina.

The following demographics from the Asheville Metro Business Research Center were provided:

Median Age	39.6	
Median income	\$41,169.00	
Male population	47.1%E	
Female population	52.9%	
African American	17.4%	12083.604
White population	78.3%	54376.218
<u>Other population</u>	<u>4.3%</u>	<u>2986.178</u>
	100%	69,446.00

## **The CITY of Asheville's Workforce Demographics**

The City of Asheville North Carolina has 1,585 employees in various departments within the city and this number, provided by the city, makes it also one of the largest employers in Buncombe County. A more detailed demographic for the city is as follows:

Male	67.4%	1,068
Female	32.6%	517
Whites	83.7%	1,328
African American	14.5%	230
Others	1.7%	27

## **City of Asheville's Police Department Demographics**

The Asheville Police Department is composed of 242 persons, including sworn and non-sworn officers. For the purpose of this consultation the following demographic information, provided by the City of Asheville, will be used:

Males		161
Females		81
Whites	90 %	218
African American	8.67%	21
Other	1.2%	3

The information listed above will be the bases of all recommendations and comments given in this report.

It should be noted that the margin of error allowance .2%



## **History**

In 2003, there was a major issue regarding race relations. At the time there was Chris Rock, a comedy routine, being sent via email between various members of the police department, including high level officials within the Police Department.

From all the reports, this incident caused a negative response from not only the African American community in Asheville, but it also damaged the relationship with the African American officers within the Police Department. Given this information and other incidents like it, such as the allegations of the July 21, 2002 incident of racial profiling and brutality against a former Asheville Police Officer and a youth corrections officer, it is understood that the Asheville Police Department was in need of a change in order to restore order and respect in the police department.

With a change in command, there came a higher level of expectations as it related to race relations. Unfortunately for many, the change has fallen short of reaching its goal. There are two factors that we can equate to this: (1) residuals from past leadership and (2) the lack of relationship building efforts under the new leadership.

## **African American Relations**

During the first power point presentation, we addressed the issues of relationship building within the community. There are many areas in the presentation where questions are raised that serves as a guide to the needs of the Department as it relates to bettering the relationship with the community. Below are a few of the questions asked during the first classroom seating along with the reply given by members of the Asheville Police Department.

Q. What is the public's perception of the Asheville Police Department?

A. "They see the department as the enemy"

Although the reply to my question was a surprise, the simple fact there was no rebuttal from anyone within the class was an amazing. A few statements were given on things that were being done to better this viewpoint of the Police Department. One member of the class said that they had been active in the community by participating in a youth basketball program and there was also a discussion of citizens' police academies. What I found interesting was Chief Hogan was in the class the entire time. In most cases, the Chief would simply send a representative and waits for a report from staff regarding the training.

Q. Who are your leaders in the African American community that can help build a better relationship with the Police Department?

A. "We are working with the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance to build a better relationship with the community".

Shortly after this reply or answer was given by Chief Hogan, a call was placed to members of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance and their interpretation of the relationship building efforts were much different than Chief Hogan's. I was told by one of the Ministers that there was no relationship at all with the Asheville Police Department and he told me that he could only recall two meetings with Chief Hogan and some of the Alliance members. He stated to me that there was little or no dialogue with the Chief at the first meeting and the second meeting was equally as non-productive as the first meeting. He referred to the second meeting as being merely a façade; a parade of 'newly hired' African American officers.

During my conversation with this particular member of the Ministerial Alliance, he expressed frustration with the Asheville Police Department and their inability to work with the African American community and he said he has told his children to consider relocating outside of Asheville for these same reasons. After my conversation with members of the Alliance, it was clear to me that the Asheville Police Department did not have a relationship with the Ministerial Alliance.

Q. Give me a recent situation that reflects your relationship with the community?

A. There was a situation recently where police officers, while patrolling a largely populated minority community, were shot at on two separate occasions.

Out of the many questions this is the one that drew the most responses, until the discussion was abruptly terminated because the case was still under investigation and could not be discussed. Even after I asked the class to simply tell me what was said in the media, not to include any personnel issues, I still got no reply until I had a few private conversations. After the class ended I spoke with many officers regarding the very issue of officers being shot at and it was a highly sensitive subject and rightfully so.

Without discussing the specifics of the case, officers at every level told me that officers had no trust in the command staff to lead them into battle, if needed. I was told that the officers that were shot at were not contacted by any of the command staff (this I find not acceptable). It was also stated that the Chief did not or would not contact the officers on the behalf of the Police Department regarding the concern of their welfare. One of the officers with rank said the reply he was given regarding why the officers were never contacted was that the officers did not get hit. This lack of respect and trust towards the command staff and Chief is seen during a lengthy email conversation that officers and the chief were carbon copied on (See attachment #2). This attachment also shows that it is just not a minority issue regarding the trust and loyalty towards the command staff and the Chief. It appears to be a department wide issue. I was also told of other shootings, some involving officers and some not involving officers where the chief did not take the time to come to the location of the crime. The Officers stated that the Chief's lack of involvement during major incidences brings about a lack of trust from the officers. I did not question nor contact any of the officers that were directly involved in any of the shootings given the Chief's above statement. The content within attachment #2 concerns me, this type of communication is never healthy or productive and it gives a sense of us vs. them mentality.

### The Communities Viewpoint

The response from the community regarding the relationship it has with the Asheville Police Department was consistently at two extremes. The business community in the downtown area had nothing but high regards for the police department. The business community spoke very highly of the services that are provided by the Police. From the handling of the homeless and pan-handlers to the police presence in the downtown area, the business community is very happy with what the police department is doing in their area. However, the African American community had a much different opinion.

After talking to a variety African Americans within the Asheville community, I found that the majority of persons I interviewed were unhappy with the relationship and the service given by the Asheville Police Department (it is not uncommon for communities with high crime to have such a viewpoint of the police department). Ranging from government workers to persons living in the West Riverside area, I was alarmed at the number of persons who emphasized the lack of respect and the mistreatment of persons by the Police Department in the minority community.

From alleged verbal abuse to physical abuse; the complaints kept coming. Once the community learned of this consultant's presence, the calls were nonstop even until the eleventh hour.

One of the persons indicated that her then fourteen year old son and her eighteen year old nephew had an altercation with the Asheville Police Department at the Asheville Mall a year ago. During this altercation with the police department this particular person's nephew was left with a black eye, allegedly

given to him by officers working off-duty at the mall. Obviously this information is hearsay, but what is shocking is that this same individual had a chance to tape record a conversation she had with the Lieutenant assigned to the Internal Affairs Division where the Lieutenant made comments such as "these new young officers attitude sucks"(copy of tape on request) . This comment by the Lieutenant was said to the complainant as she voiced her concern about the disrespectfulness and mistreatment of her nephew by the officers. The view point of this Lieutenant is or was that the officer's attitude sucks and the viewpoint of the community is the same. I was contacted also by a former Asheville Police Officer whom said that he was assaulted by Asheville officers and won a lawsuit against the City of Asheville regarding the assault in 2002. This consultant was contacted by a current police officer that stated during a recent pursuit of a suspect a Sergeant fired shots at the suspects car (deadly force) and after the car was stopped a police officer removed the suspect out of the car and began hitting the suspect (less lethal force) resulting in the police officer being investigated for unnecessary use of force. The officer's issue with the last scenario is that the officer is being investigated for hitting the suspect but yet the Sergeant that shot at the suspect's car is not being investigated. It is stories like this that hinders the command staff from building a relationship with the community and the officers.

Another powerful source of information regarding the total community's viewpoint of the Asheville Police is the website [www.Topix.net](http://www.Topix.net) (see attachment #3) key word "gunman injures 3 at community center". The comments on the above topic are wide in range but what is understood from reading all of the messages on the message board is that Asheville is a small city with big city problems.

## **Promotional Concerns**

During the second power point presentation to address the issue of minority's willingness to not only take the promotional test but to do well within the promotional process there were also a number of lively conversations, but these conversations were done outside the classroom.

A few of the statements from the Asheville Police Department staff as it relates to these sensitive issues are as follows:

"We have also lost 6 African-Americans in the last 2 years"

"Some of our minority officers will tell you that their education level is weak due to the grades that were given for how they did on the basketball court or football field"

"There were also some social promotions (as one of our minority Sergeants described his promotion to Sergeant) which affected the department in the past and our current opportunities for command positions for minority officers currently."  
(See attachment #4)

Many of the minority officers I was able to speak with regarding some of the issues contradicted the above statements. Officers said that they did not wish to be a part of a leadership team that disrespected them and that was the reason why they were not taking the test for promotions. Officers said that they did feel their educational level was equal to other co-workers and their education has nothing to do with their performance in sports.

I was also able to talk to the Sergeant that was described as a social promotion. The Sergeant indicated that he went through the same process as everyone to get his current position and he did not view his promotion as a social promotion given the fact that he earned it (it should be noted that there was another minority officer promoted at the same time as the above Sergeant but this minority Sergeant is no-longer with the department). The above Sergeant's statements were supported by a retired Police Captain that was a part of his promotional process. It was said that the Asheville Police Department wanted to promote qualified minority officers but when given an opportunity to have their senior Sergeant, who happens to be a minority, serve in a selected role as an acting Lieutenant, the Asheville Police Department chose to select a much less seasoned Sergeant. Many Police Departments select acting positions from their senior personnel to avoid any perception of unfairness.

Another officer walked away from the Asheville Police Department and became the Chief of the local ABC. He said he did this as a direct reaction to the continuous mistreatment of him by the Police Department. The ABC Chief stated that he was looked over for promotions and assignments and, therefore, saw no reason to stay with the Asheville Police Department.



## **Recommendations and Comments**

Regarding the first matter of the Asheville Police Department's relationship with the African American Community, we should start with some supporting numbers. Let's take a look at just one of the communities that meet the above profile.

The West Riverside Community area is made-up of mostly all African Americans and the crime rate in this area as it relates to the entire city of Asheville is 85% higher. Calls for service in the West Riverside area are 50% more likely to involve a gun or other dangerous weapons. Drug-related calls for service are 170% higher in the West Riverside area than the remaining areas of Asheville.

With even this small amount of information, one can come to the conclusion that much of the total services provided by the Asheville Police Department are utilized within the African American community. With the above facts in place we can also come to the realization that without a good working relationship between the police department and the minority community, Asheville will continue to have random acts of violence such as the gunman entering into a community center a few blocks from the Police Department, during daytime hours and opening fire on persons inside the building. Without a working relationship with the community you cannot expect the community to help solve this or any crime. Community involvement is a vital part of information gathering on crime within the city so it is in the best interest to have established a working relationship with the community before crime occurs. It is impossible for any police department to provide a standard level of protection to the community without the community involvement.

The real solution to Asheville's problems is real relationships. I suggest a survey of the community during town-hall style meetings to include questions regarding the problems and suggested solutions to the problems to start with. Persons that need to be at these meeting are, The Chief, The Commanding officer of the area that the meeting is being held and the beat officer of that same area. There should be a meeting in each of the district. Large church congregations would also be a place where I would suggest that the Asheville Police Department start relationship building. A church would provide a community environment and a church is considered a sacred place by the community so persons are more likely to be respectable during heat discussions. The Asheville Police Department can not provide good customer service without this relationship. To gauge the successfulness of any Police department you can simply gauge the relationship its has with the community its serves.

Brainstorming sessions with community groups have done wonders in the relationship building process and through these same sessions has come lasting solutions to the community's issues. This relationship must come from Chief Hogan, himself. There must be healthy and productive dialogue between the Police Department, the officers within that Department and the Community.

I also suggest the police department aggressively recruit minority officers. For the best results in recruiting minorities the recruiter should be a minority officer and given the totality of the circumstance I would make this a priority. It is hard for me to imagine that the Police Department can fix any of the community's problems with race relations and not fix it own issues first. The City of Asheville's population as it relates to African Americans is 17.4%, but yet the Police Department's population of African Americans is 8.67%. The closer these two numbers can be to each other the better the police department can mirror the

community it serves and this will help with the community's viewpoint of being alienated from the department. It is the industries standard to emulate the communities demographics. It would also be to the benefit of the Police Department to assign more minority officers in the street level narcotic unit. At this point there is only one minority officer working in the street level narcotic unit (if there have not been any recent changes in the last 60 days) and with the majority of this unit's workload being in the African American community it should have a diverse look to it. If you can recall the drug related calls are 170% high in one of the African American communities then in all of Asheville.

This police department lost six African American officers in two years and even with today's numbers as it relates to percentages, six African American officers would be 30% to 50% of that population.

To lose such a large percentage of any population is shocking and it should promote questions of why. It was told to me that exit interviews were done on these officers. I would ask that the Asheville Police Department review these interviews and use that information to rectify its retention issue.

Another resource to help with retention is the African American officers still working within the department. After asking could I talk to the African American officers that are with the police department and some of the African American persons that have left the department in recent years, this consultant was told:

"It is going to be hard to set something up with everything we already have going on this week including the community policing class, the promotion class, a Citizens Police Academy Graduation, and firearms training going on this week along with other special assignments that have popped up. I think everyone of our black officers is scheduled for one of the two classes".

During the two classes this consultant saw a total of five African American Officers in the classroom. It should be noted that it was not hard for this consultant to contact and meet with not just the five African American officers in the class but this consultant was able to contact the majority of the African American officers within the department. This consultant was also able to contact many former African American Officers with a few simple phone calls. These same officers had many complaints from their daily treatment being less than their co-workers, unattractive work assignment and issued equipment, to name a few of their complaints. 86% of the African American officers I talked to said that they had thoughts of terminating their employment with the Asheville Police Department due to the unfair treatment of African Americans. By making the welfare of the African American officers a priority, I was able to contact many of them and this is what the Asheville Police Department needs to do and that is make this issue a priority.

As it relates to the promotional process, I would suggest that the "leadership profile" be eliminated. Although this leadership profile is great in theory in that it allows officers to be apart of the selection process in choosing their leaders, it can not work without equality on all sides. If the Asheville Police Department was represented equally by all nationalities the leadership profile stage of the promotional process would be the best tool to select leaders. Given the fact that the Asheville Police Department, like most Police Departments is not represented equally by all nationalities the "leadership profile" will not work. I would suggest an outside consultant group such as Fields Consultant Group (<http://www.fields-consulting-group.com/services.html>) whom will customize an assessment center and test for your organization. The positive view point is that Chief Hogan respects his troops to the point that he would allow them to have a say in who leads them but given the totality of the circumstances the current

promotional process would not bring about equilibrium to the department's racial inequalities.

In conclusion I do agree that there are some major issues that need to be addressed within the Asheville Police Department. Even with efforts that are now being lead by Lt. Gary Gudac in the area of recruitment and Chief Hogan's willingness to bring in outside help for training, there is still much work to be done. With every organization, the leadership must be the driving force behind any change. From town hall meetings to better the relationship with the community, to positive interactions with officers to build a healthy working atmosphere, relationships and respect building needs to start sooner then later. The Asheville Police Department needs to aggressively confront the above issues with tonicity, to do anything less will be detrimental to not only the police department but to the entire City of Asheville. To continue down this same path would spell destruction to the tourism revenue in the city. The City of Asheville's crime rate will always be a direct reflection of it relationship with the community good or bad.