

**Edison Public Service Academy/SLC,  
The Minneapolis Community Service  
Officer Program  
And Proposed Public Service  
Officer Program**

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## **Background**

In late 1998 and early 1999, the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) embarked on a recruiting and training program, the Community Service Officer (CSO) pilot project, designed to provide an alternate avenue of entrance to the MPD for persons with an interest in a policing career. A driving force for this initiative was a MPD/City goal to develop a more diverse workforce that reflected the community served.

It had become clear to the leadership of the MPD that in order to achieve a diverse workforce of police officers, a proactive investment program (the CSO pilot) would need to be developed and implemented. Supporting this conclusion was a report produced by the Minnesota Post Board in 1999 on law enforcement graduates from the Minnesota College System. This report confirmed that the majority of graduates (95 % plus in law enforcement) were Caucasian and that diverse populations were not being trained in law enforcement and therefore would not be eligible to apply for the Minneapolis Civil Service Classification of Recruit Police Officer. The pilot model embraced an apprenticeship design of academic and on the job training, including educational requirements specified by state statute to be a Minnesota Peace Officer. The organizing goals of the CSO Program included the following:

- To develop and implement an apprenticeship law enforcement program (CSO pilot) that could recruit participants from the community and Minneapolis High School system.
- To develop a CSO learning environment that would facilitate understanding and opportunities in government and policing operations.
- To develop a large and diverse pool of trained CSO's that would be eligible to promote to the Civil Service classification of Police Recruit Officer.

The program developed, utilized and redesigned the previous classified position title of Community Service Officer (CSO). An existing FTE allocation of six was converted into ten part time positions. The positions were redesigned to provide real police oriented paid work experience and educational opportunity for achievement. Educational costs for classes and educational materials were incorporated into the new CSO program design. Prior to the development of this entrance opportunity to the MPD, entry into a career in law enforcement required a two/four year college degree. This new avenue has allowed MPD recruiting efforts to focus on graduating high school students and community members who may not have had the vision or the financial resources to plan for or pursue educational career dreams. The former Cadet Program requirements were also incorporated to include eligible participants into this new program.

Since the inception of the pilot program, seventy-three (73) CSOs, have been selected, trained and prepared or are being prepared for careers in law enforcement. The program has promoted forty-nine (49) candidates, who were eligible for hire, to Academy Recruit position. With successful results experienced of the CSO pilot, the MPD has invested resources to develop successful recruitment strategies targeted at the community, the high schools and four-year graduates. The current class of sixteen (16) CSOs, are represented by a diverse group of individuals, with 33% female and 37% from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Budget cuts and hiring freezes, beginning in 2000, has prohibited the program from realizing its full potential.

**Edison High School: Public Service and Education A Small Learning Community (SLC)**

Another initiative that will serve to increase diversity in the City of Minneapolis is the Edison partnership; developed with the City of Minneapolis as part of the “High School Reform” movement and was facilitated by representatives from Minneapolis Police, Fire, Public Works and Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP). It began as a recruiting venture for city representatives to build pathways for student internships and future employee recruitment.

The Minneapolis High School “Reform Movement” identified the need for high schools to develop, implement and be associated with Small Learning Communities (SLC) in each high school within the city. The development of SLC’s in each high school mirrors a growing national trend in education with proven results for students. Studies have demonstrated that the graduation rates, in the existing Minneapolis Academy’s, to be an impressive 85-96%. A similar experience is being reported across the country. When compared to the traditional high school curriculum, without an associated SLC, some Minneapolis High Schools have realized graduation rates as low as 47% with similar outcomes across the country.

Under the previous Minneapolis School Superintendent, all Minneapolis High Schools, beginning in 2002, were required to select a Small Learning Community (SLC) to be associated with the high school. The existing Magnet/Academy model was converted to the SLC model. Edison High School selected the “Education and Public Service SLC”.

Since September of 2003, approximately 40 students have been full time at the Edison High School Education and Public Service SLC. This is clearly an historic opportunity for the city to tap into a widely diverse student population and bring talent from our inner city neighborhoods into entry-level jobs and life-long careers in teaching and public service. The Edison High School program is the only Small Learning Community (SLC) in Minneapolis centered on ““Education and Public Service.” The goals of the partnership espouse the following:

- Increase the graduation rates at Edison by creating a vision and opportunities for a career in “Public Service and Education”.
- Develop a graduate pool of civic minded youth with an interest in pursuing a career in “Public Service and Education”
- Develop and teach a relevant Public Service curriculum with work readiness skills and understanding using summer internships and hands on learning opportunities.
- Create post-secondary academic opportunities for high school graduates including college and trade oriented degree programs.
- Develop a pool of future government (starting with the City) “Public Service” employees, from diverse backgrounds, that will reflect the populations being served within the city.

Along with this effort is the Explores Program. It is a volunteer program in which young adults gain a working knowledge of the Police Department through hands-on experience. Activities cover accident investigation, police tactics, street patrol, etc. Explorers demonstrate their skills by competing in conferences at regional, state and national levels. They must also assist in local community and civic events. Explores gain training that is provided by the. Candidates must be 14-21, possess good moral character, pass background check and maintain a 2.0 GPA. The MPD operates this program out of and part of the PAL Program.

### **Proposed Public Service Officer (PSO) Program**

The new partnership with Edison High School provides an opportunity for the City to assist in the development, preparation and recruitment of existing student residents as potential future employees of the city. The development of a PSO Training Program, parallel to the CSO program and drawing from the Edison High School program and elsewhere, would provide a proactive and direct employee recruiting campaign at the community level. Such a program could be constructed utilizing the following goals:

- In a city wide effort to achieve a diverse employee base of employees that reflect the population being served in Minneapolis, consider developing a city wide apprenticeship and training pilot program that prepares and promotes program participants into existing city positions for planned goal achievement.
- Utilizing the MPD CSO model, identify, define and develop a group of city wide Public Service Officer (PSO) classified positions and connect the created PSO positions, via promotional opportunities, to available positions that become vacant as a result the retirement of current employees.
- Fund the future PSO program positions by identifying and converting existing service contracts dollars and department entry positions into PSO training opportunities.
- Work closely with the Edison High School partnership to further develop a learning curriculum that would augment the desired goals of the PSO program.

The chart below represents a visual depiction, for discussion purposes, of items identified in this in this document.

## CSO/PSO/Edison (OJT) Training Programs

