



Race Equity and Police Accountability FAQ

Q: What is the demographic make-up of Woodbury Public Safety?

Woodbury Public Safety Department Demographics				
	Male	Female	Non-White	Total #
1968 – Present	78%	22%	7%	152
Current	78%	22%	4%	69
Statewide	88%	12%	*N/A	10,836

*The State of Minnesota reports total number of licensed officers by sex. In order to measure our progress as we work to increase diversity, we track the other measures ourselves. This is why Statewide comparisons are ‘not applicable.’

Woodbury Officers’ Pre-Employment Background				
Part-Time in Woodbury (CSO, Medic, Reserve)	Community Service Officer Elsewhere	Police Officer Elsewhere	Other Public Safety Experience	No Police Experience
37%	4%	37%	12%	20%

Q: What are you doing to increase the diversity of officers within the Public Safety Department?

Over the last five years, we have been building strategies to recruit and hire more diverse candidates for positions across the city. We firmly believe that a diverse workforce creates a better spirit of community, shared ideas and increased creativity. As you can imagine, it will be harder than ever to attract black and brown candidates to wear the uniform, but we know their perspective makes a difference and improves the quality of our public service. We hope that open and inclusive employment practices and policies can help attract and retain talented staff from all groups and help us respond appropriately to changing needs and goals in the community.

Here are some of our efforts related specifically to Public Safety:

- Public Safety Internship – Actively recruit diverse, qualified candidates; adjust qualifications to encourage more applicants and compensate for systemic flaws and bias in education pipeline; offer additional paid positions to provide more opportunities for diverse candidates.
- Community Service Officer (CSO) hiring– Seek and recruit diverse candidates; transition interns to CSO; consider starting a CSO applicant as an intern to provide coaching and mentoring to be better prepared for a CSO position in the future. Give preference points to bilingual candidates.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Academy – Encourage non-white people to gain experience and education in EMS. Consider graduates for paid-on-call fire positions, internships and CSO positions.
- Interview Process - Include interview questions, reviewed by the Multicultural Advisory Committee, that speak directly to experience with race equity and cultural competence. Train hiring panels in implicit bias.
- Recruitment - Post open positions with the Post Board, colleges, government job boards, Indeed.com. Send to professional associations like National Black Police Officers Association of MN and Minnesota Asian Police Officers Association.

Q: How can you ensure that police brutality will not be committed by Woodbury law enforcement officers?

In order to ensure accountability and reduce racial disparities in public safety, the City is committed to hiring the right people, continuing education and training, and stringent documentation, review, and compliance around use of force. The hiring and training standards for Woodbury exceed the standards put forth by the State of Minnesota.

Hiring the Right People

Before hiring, candidates are subject to a rigorous application and vetting process which is followed by an extensive background investigation, physical examination, and psychological examination. The officers that comprise the Woodbury Police Department are well educated; most have a bachelor’s degree, and many have a master’s degree. One of our sergeants earned his PhD and leads citywide efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

Unique to Woodbury, our police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) are combined into one Public Safety Department. Many of our employees serve dual roles such as police officer + paramedics or police officer + firefighter. This experience offers our staff a broader perspective.

Police Training

In Minnesota, police officers must complete a two-year degree and a skills program before they can take an eligibility exam. The state also requires continuing educational requirements in order for officers to be licensed. Our department goes well above and beyond these minimum requirements. New officers attend an academy within our department before they train in the field with an assigned mentor.

We train employees extensively in crisis intervention, mediation, de-escalation, and bias. For the past several years, we have prioritized diversity, equity, and inclusion learning. Course examples include:

- “Knowing Your Muslim Neighbor” (2017) – Provided by The Building Blocks of Islam
- PATROL-On Line training annually related to Implicit Bias

- “Understanding Implicit Bias in Policing” Workshop (2016)
- “Cultural Diversity” Training (Fall 2018)
- “Procedural Justice” Training (Summer/Winter 2018)

Use of Force

Use of force tactics are part of our ongoing curriculum. Beyond just the tactics, we train officers in de-escalation, legal case review, ethics, and professional conduct.

All instances of force are reviewed by supervisors. We are fortunate to have body-worn cameras to aid as evidence, documentation, performance reviews, and training. We began using body-worn cameras with a pilot program in 2017 and implemented fully in 2018. All uniformed sworn officers wear a camera during the course of their shift. Detectives will don one when going out on dynamic situations, such as warrants.

Q: Where can I find more information about race equity, transparency, and accountability in the City of Woodbury?

The **Community Partnership Plan** is a comprehensive description of the City’s efforts to foster a Welcoming and Inclusive Community, which was one of the City Council’s strategic priorities for several years. The Plan is available on the city’s website at www.woodburymn.gov/dei.

Since the mid-1990s, the City of Woodbury has published an annual performance report that provides more than 250 pieces of data on the performance of city services and operations. The **Performance Measures Report** is available at www.woodburymn.gov/departments/administration/performance_reporting.

Q: How has the death of George Floyd and the acceleration of protests and public scrutiny around the world influenced the city’s approach to policing?

In August of 2019, the Woodbury City Council identified three urgent, high priority focus areas. One of these was to “adapt and enhance Public Safety effectiveness.” At that time, they recognized that the City of Woodbury is diversifying and aging, affecting service demands and how services are provided. The public safety environment is also changing and will continue to change due to local demographics, service demands, labor negotiations, City growth and development, how services are funded, City staffing and succession, state and national political influence and more.

Proceeding with public safety as a City Strategic Initiative, especially in light of recent events, will provide the necessary research, detail and focus on these services to ensure the City Council can make informed, long-term and strategic decisions regarding not only the City Public Safety Department, but the public safety of the community. This is an ongoing strategic priority.

More information about this and the other Strategic Initiatives can be found on the city website at www.woodburymn.gov/government/mayor_and_city_council/strategic_initiatives.

Q: A number of strategies to limit police violence have been proposed by community groups, activists, and legislators around the country. One of these is the #8Can'tWait Project. Where is Woodbury at with these 8 strategies?

Strategy	Reason	Where it's at with Woodbury
Ban chokeholds and strangle holds	Allowing officers to choke or strangle civilians, in many cases where less lethal force could be used instead, results in the unnecessary death or serious injury of civilians.	Woodbury department policy already prohibits such action.
Require de-escalation	Require officers to de-escalate situations, where possible, by communicating with subjects, maintaining distance, and otherwise eliminating the need to use force.	De-escalation has been and will continue to be a primary tool of our officers, and there has been a great deal of education on the topic within our department.
Require warning before shooting	Require officers to give a verbal warning, when possible, before shooting at a civilian.	This principle is written into state law as well as our policy.
Exhaust all other means before shooting	Require officers to exhaust all other reasonable means before resorting to deadly force.	State law and Woodbury policy state that force used needs to be in line with the threat presented.
Duty to intervene	Require officers to intervene and stop excessive force used by other officers and report these incidents immediately to a supervisor.	This is already part of our policy and practice and will be reaffirmed through policy updates.
Ban shooting at moving vehicles	Restrict officers from shooting at moving vehicles, which is regarded as a particularly dangerous and ineffective tactic.	This is highly restricted in our policy.
Require use of force continuum.	Develop a Force Continuum that limits the types of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance.	Our department trains and our policy covers the concepts on what techniques should be utilized.
Require comprehensive reporting	Require officers to report each time they use force or threaten to use force against civilians.	Every instance of force is reported and reviewed.