



WORKING FIRE: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF WOMEN FIRE FIREFIGHTERS

HOW TODAY'S LEADERS CAN MAKE FACT-SUPPORTED DECISIONS AND IMPROVE THE FIRE SERVICE

EFO SYMPOSIUM NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY

APRIL 14, 2023

HEATHER MARQUES

DIVISION CHIEF, MEDICAL SERVICES

ALAMEDA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT



- BA, UC BERKELEY: ANTHROPOLOGY
- AS, NAPA VALLEY COLLEGE: PARAMEDICINE
- LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
- MA, NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL: SECURITY STUDIES
- CSFA, CHAIR STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
- 17 YEARS FIRE SERVICE
- BARTENDER 10 YEARS (CODE FOR COUNSELOR, PRIEST, IC, LOGS CHIEF)
- PUBLICATIONS: ALAMEDA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT HISTORY BOOK, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS POLICY, CHALLENGES IN DIVERSIFYING THE FIRE SERVICE , THESIS -WORKING FIRE: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF WOMEN FIREFIGHTERS

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There are three kinds
of lies: lies, damned
lies, and statistics.

Benjamin Disraeli

#hamiltonbooksdaily

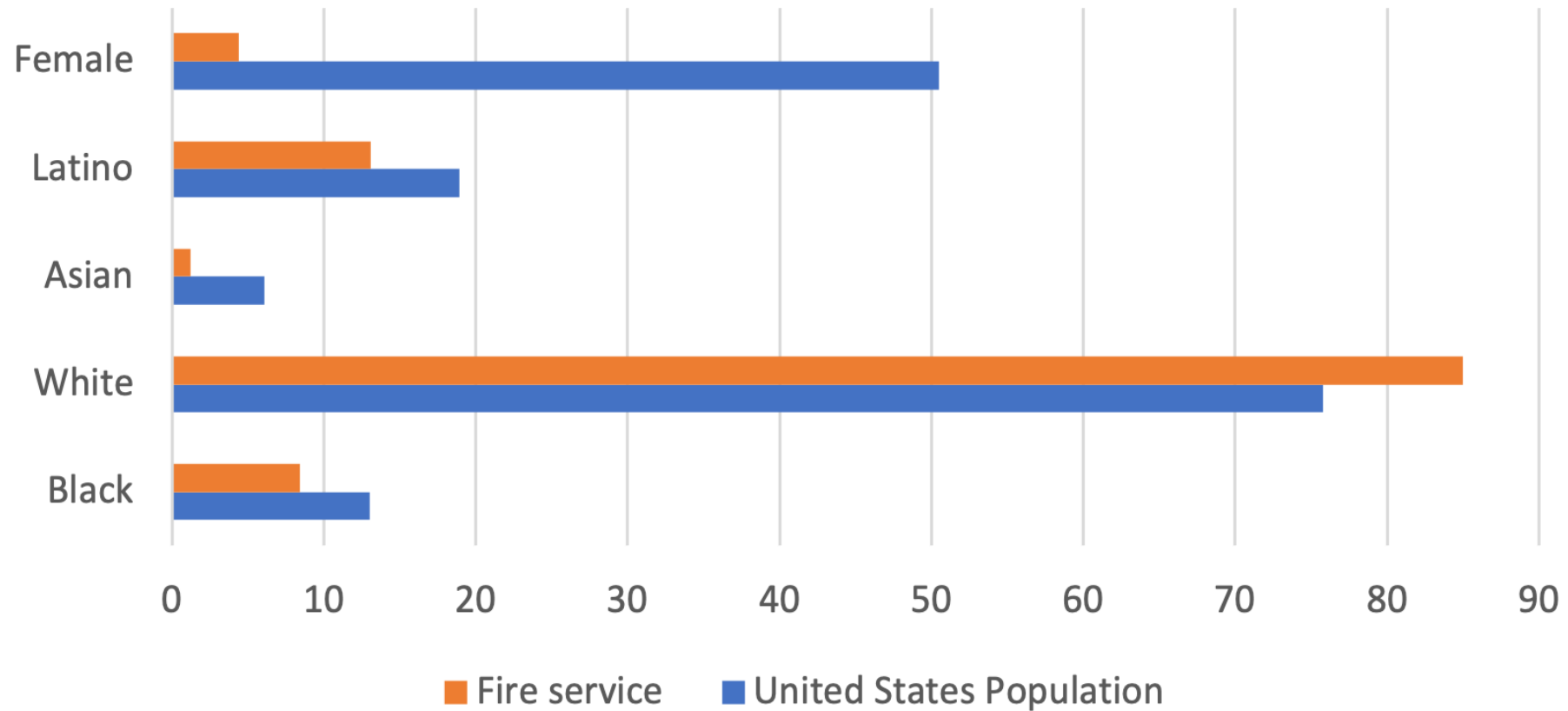


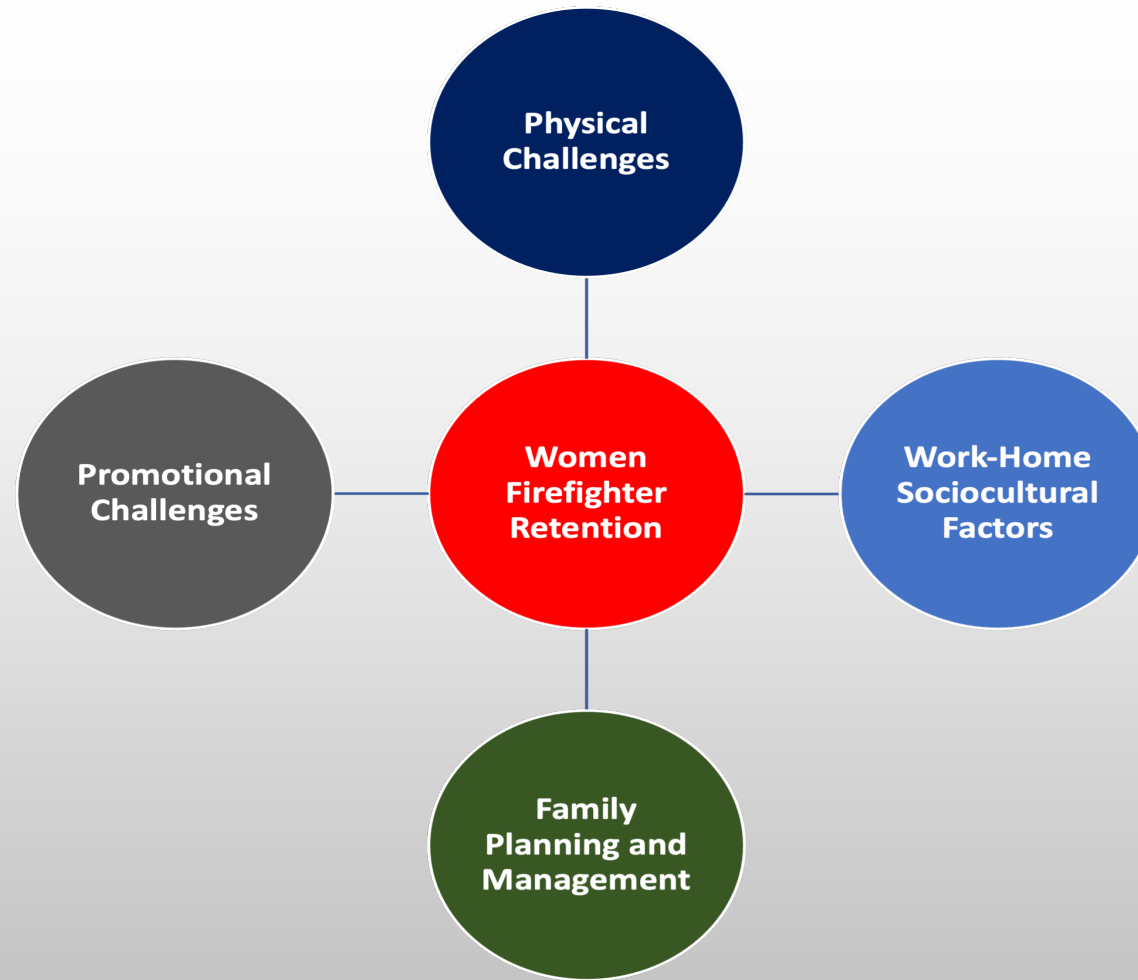
WHY ISN'T RECRUITMENT WORKING?

WOMEN COMPRISE ONLY ABOUT 4.4 PERCENT OF THE US FIRE SERVICE'S CAREER FIREFIGHTING WORKFORCE., THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 14,800 WOMEN, WHILE 380,000 MEN SERVE AS PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS. THESE NUMBERS ARE HIGHER AMONG WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS AND VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENTS, WHILE THE COVETED POSITIONS IN MUNICIPAL CAREER DEPARTMENTS HAVE LONG BEEN A STRONGHOLD OF MEN. IT IS THE MOST GENDER-IMBALANCED INDUSTRY IN THE US.



Demographics of US Populations vs Fire Service Populations (BLS, 2021)





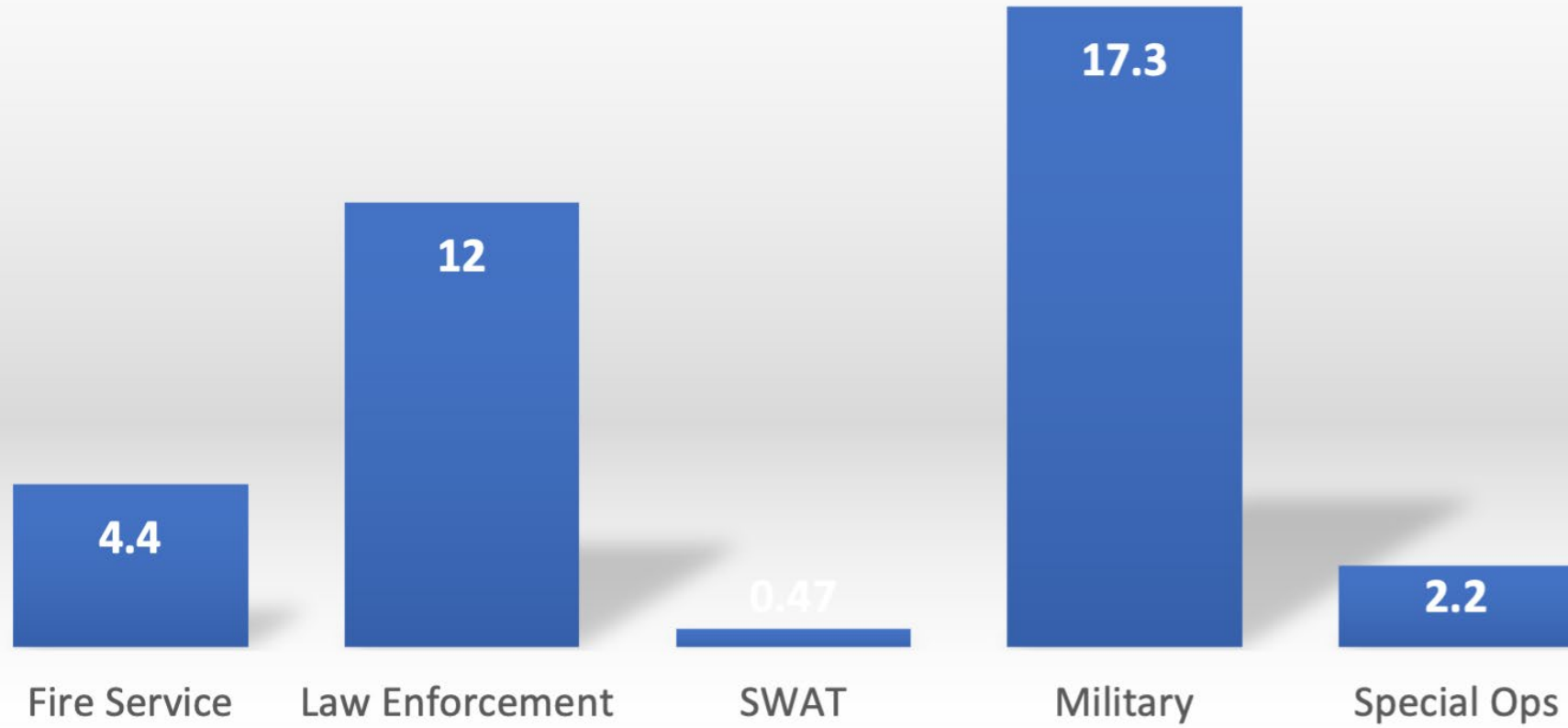
THE FOUR GATES FOR THE FEMALE FIREFIGHTER

THE PHYSICALITY GATE

- THE FIRST POINT OF ELIMINATION FOR FEMALE CANDIDATES
- ATTRIBUTED AS THE PRIMARY REASON NUMBERS ARE HISTORICALLY LOW
- INACCURATELY COMPARED TO LE AND MILITARY DESPITE “EQUALIZERS”

LAW ENFORCEMENT, LIKE THE MILITARY, CAN EQUALIZE THEIR FORCE USING FIREARMS AND WEAPONS, MECHANIZED TOOLS, AND TECHNOLOGIES. A FEMALE FIGHTER PILOT HAS HER AIRCRAFT, A PATROL OFFICER HAS HER GUN AND TASER, BUT A FIREFIGHTER HAS A COMBINED WEIGHT ON HER BODY OF APPROXIMATELY 100-130 POUNDS INCLUDING HER PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) AND SCBA, AND ON A THREE-PERSON ENGINE COMPANY MAY BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THROWING A 28' LADDER, RETRIEVING A 60LB SET OF EXTRICATION SPREADERS, CARRYING GENERATORS, FANS, EXTINGUISHERS, AND ADVANCING CHARGED HOSE LINES . RAW PHYSICAL STRENGTH IS AN INEXORABLE COMPONENT OF FIREFIGHTING.

Women in Fire, LE, and Military





THE SOCIO- CULTURAL GATE

- OUT-GROUPING AND “OTHERING”
- LACK OF SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP
- FAILURE TO TAKE COMPLAINTS SERIOUSLY RESULTING IN DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, ASSAULT, AND RAPE CASES BEING UNREPORTED OR UNPUNISHED
- REFUSAL TO WORK WITH OR FOR A FEMALE COLLEAGUE
- DENIAL OF BIDS
- EXCLUSION FROM SPECIAL TEAMS, ACTIVITIES, AND TRAININGS
- THE WRONG-WAY TROUT





Female firefighters at Leduc Fire Department allege 'culture of abuse' in lawsuit

Published Mar 09, 2022 • 4 minute read

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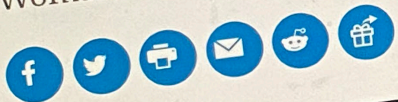
NEWS > CRIME AND PUBLIC

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San Jose firefighter spent years painting swastikas in city's fire department

Woman dreamed of rising to battalion chief, lawsuit



Male Iowa City firefighter files suit alleging discrimination and harassment

well heard 'sexually inappropriate comments nearly every day for 10 years, suit states

Women At Los Angeles Fire Department Say Harassment And Retaliation Keep Them Quiet About Abuse

The women who fight fires for the city of Los Angeles say abuse is part of department culture and reporting it can be "career-ending."

Libby Denkmann
 ublished Oct 15, 2021 7:00 AM

We need to hear from you

id NPS email

NEWS & ANALYSIS




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RESCUE 1
BY LEXIPO

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INTRODUCING THE SMART eDRAULIC® 3.0 RESCUE TOOLS

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Topics > Female Firefighters

Topics > Female Firefighters

Female firefighter suing fire dept. over sexual harassment

...alleges equipment tampering, clothing destruction, gender-related

...ations

the lawsuit alleges equipment
s and denial of promotions

lawsuit alleges discrimination and denial of promotions.

015

— A female firefighter is suing her fire department, claiming she's a longtime victim of sexual harassment. She has been subjected to equipment tampering, clothing destruction and gender-related slurs.

reported that Amie Morningstar, with the Circleville (Ohio) Fire Department, alleges she has been subjected to higher training and work standards than her male counterparts and was denied promotions.

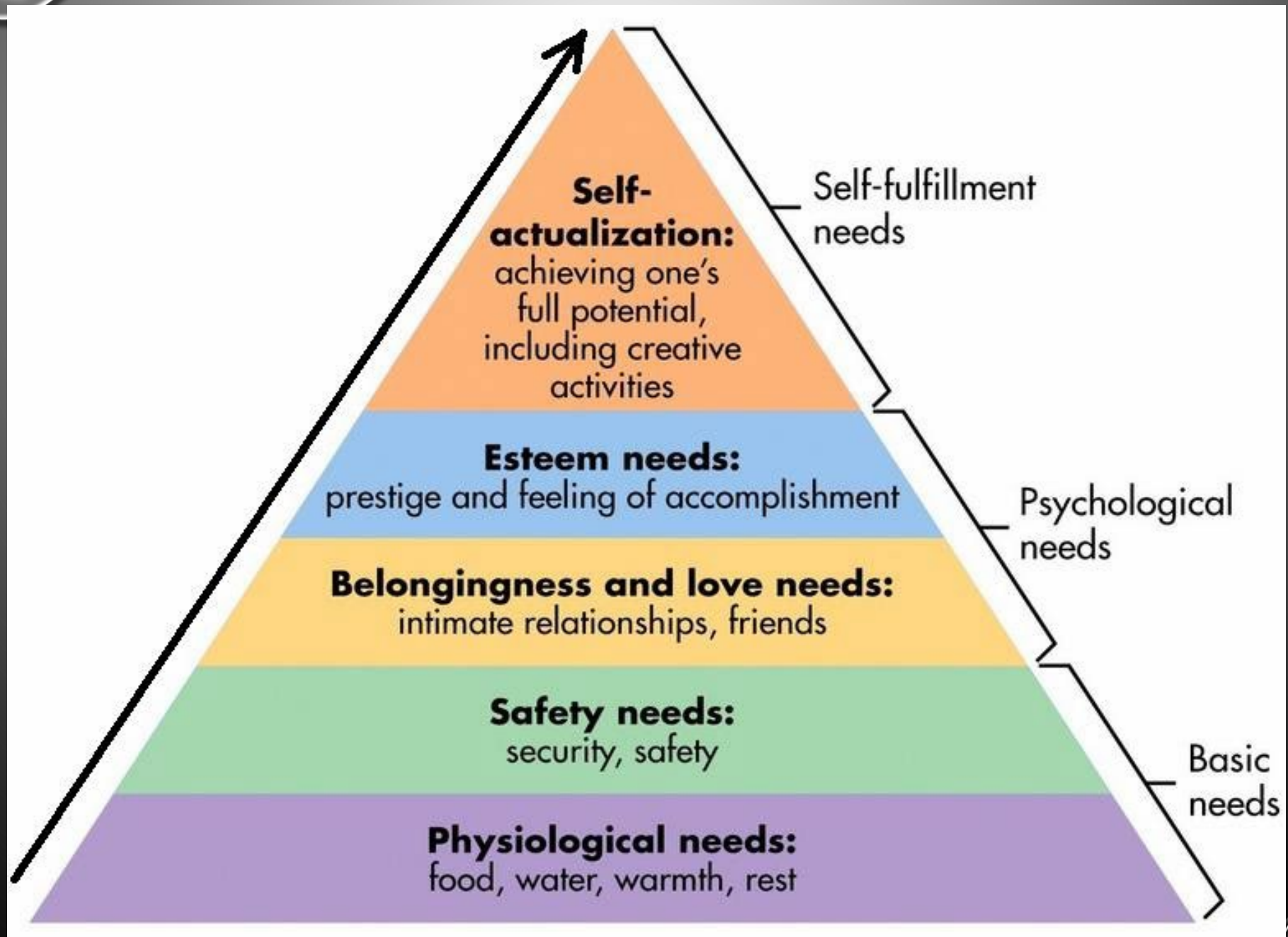
and it to her superiors, according to the report.

Someone urinated in her shampoo bottle, placed a cigarette in the firehouse bunk and cut holes in her

MEN FIREFIGHTERS FILE \$10M RACE AND GENDER SUITS AGAINST DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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THE PARENTING GATE

- REPRODUCTIVE THREATS WITH TOXIC EXPOSURES, HIGH INCIDENCE OF INFERTILITY AND MISCARRIAGE
- LACK OF MATERNITY LEAVE AND PREGNANCY POLICIES
- LACK OF POST-PARTUM CARE AND CONSIDERATION (LIGHT DUTY, PT, RECOVERY TIME)
- ACCOMMODATIONS FOR BREASTFEEDING (LACTATION SPACES, MILK STORAGE)
- CHILDCARE WITH SHIFT WORK REQUIRES A ROBUST PERSONAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF EXTENDED FAMILY, PAID HELP
- COST TO SUPPORT MOTHERS IS MINOR WHEN CONSIDERING IT WILL BE A FRACTION OF AN ALREADY SMALL POPULATION. DO YOU HAVE A MATERNITY LEAVE PLAN?

Researchers Studying Stress, Cancer Risk and Reproductive Toxicity in Women Firefighters

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

A \$1.5 million FEMA grant is funding a University of Arizona Health to study the occupational health risks to female firefighters



3-YEAR FEMA STUDY REVEALS HIGH RISKS

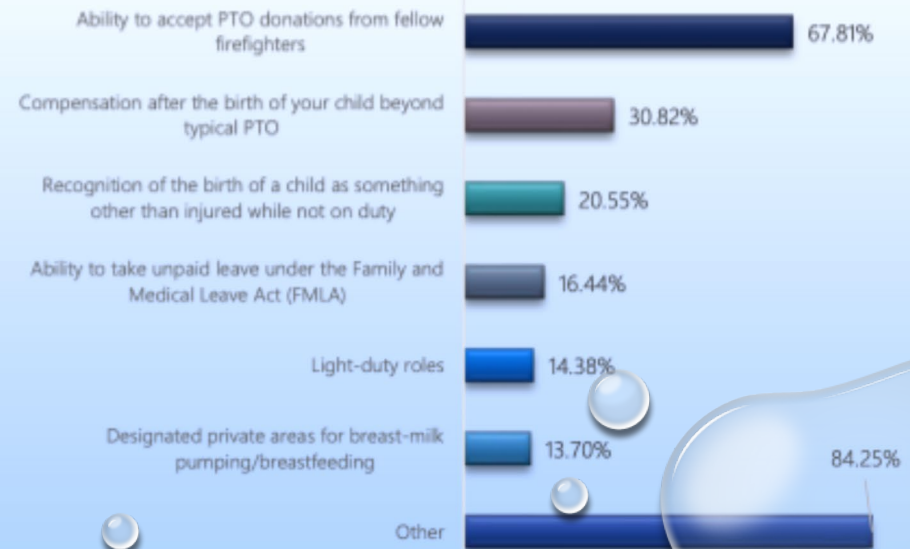
- THE RESEARCH REVEALED THAT FOR FEMALE FIREFIGHTERS, 27% OF PREGNANCIES ENDED IN MISCARRIAGE. THE RATE IS HIGHER THAN THE PUBLISHED RATE FOR PREGNANCIES IN THE LITERATURE, WHICH WAS 13.5%. ADDITIONALLY, RATES OF PRE-TERM BIRTH WERE 11.6%-16.7%, WHICH IS HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 10%.F

Pregnancy Policies

If your child/children were born while you were a member of a department, did the department have written policies to address the pregnancy of a member?



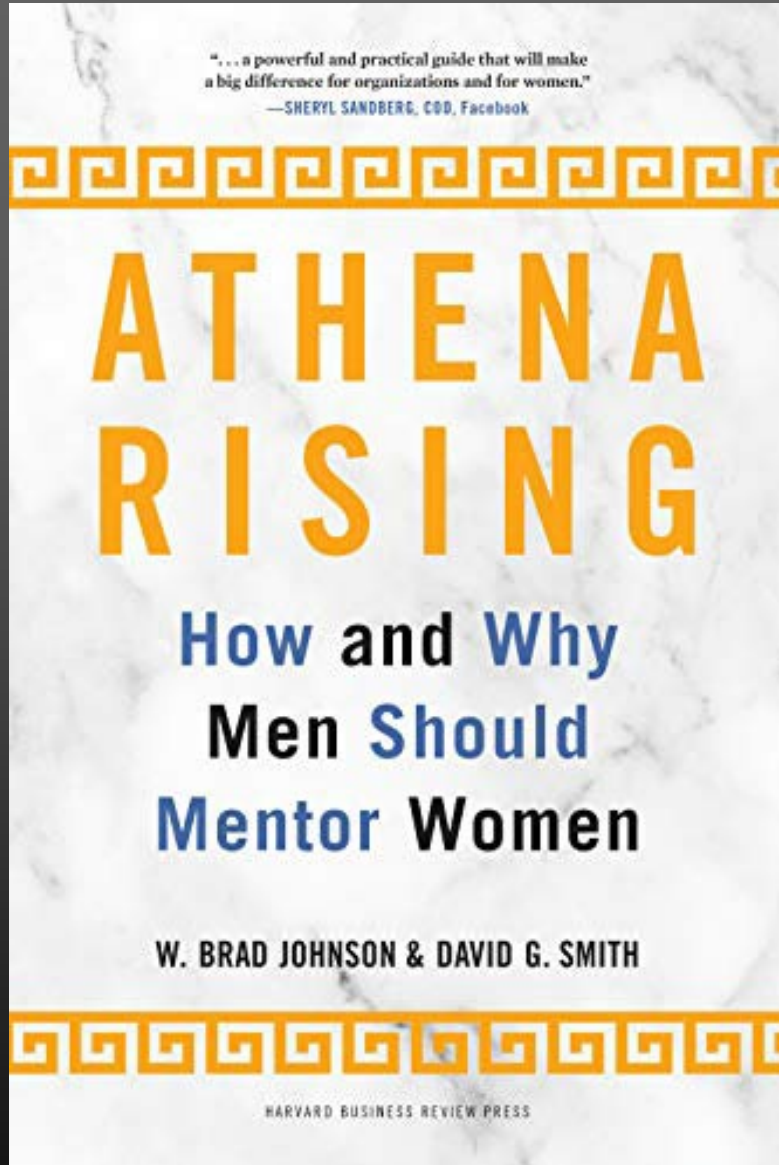
What did the written policies include? (select all that apply)



THE PROMOTIONAL GATE

- UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND NORMALIZATION OF MISOGYNY
- MISTRUST OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN COMMAND ROLES (THE BATTLEFIELD PARABLE)
- FAILURE TO NURTURE FEMALE TALENT
- LACK OF MENTORSHIP. WOMEN NEED MALE MENTORS
- FOCUS ON GROWING AND RETAINING YOUR WOMEN





THE IMPORTANCE OF MALE MENTORSHIP





Intelligence Quotient

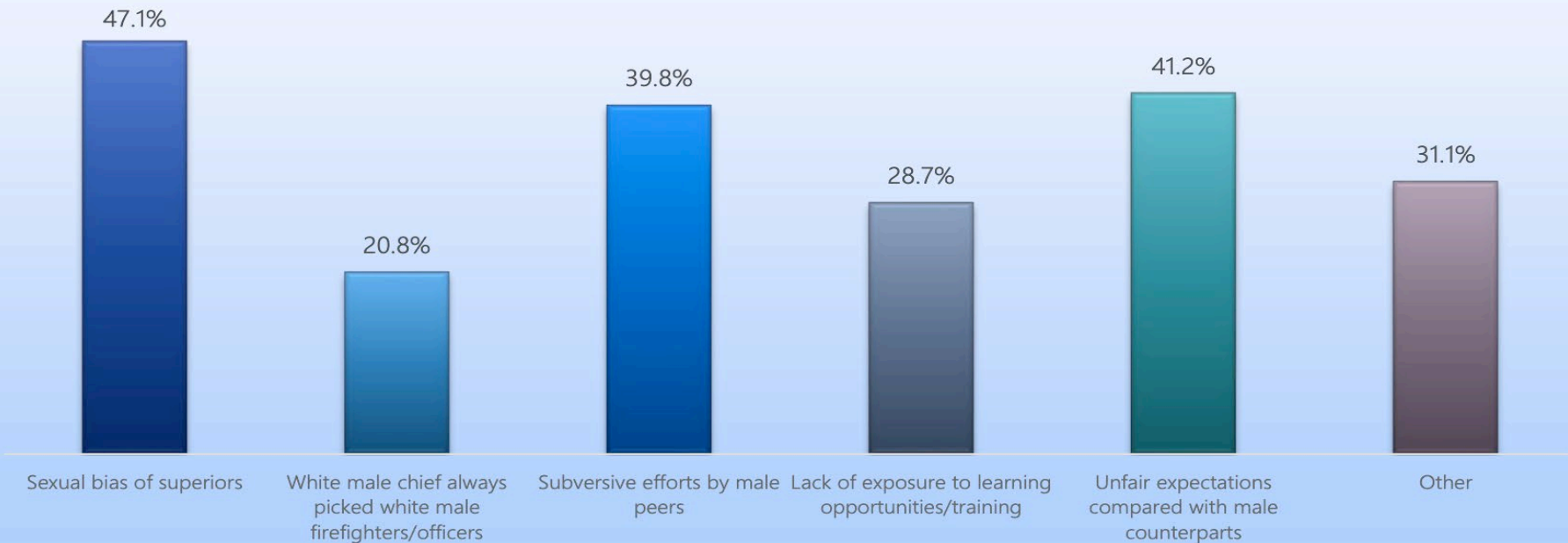
Emotional Quotient

Social Quotient

Resiliency Quotient



What barriers to promotion did you encounter? (select all that apply)

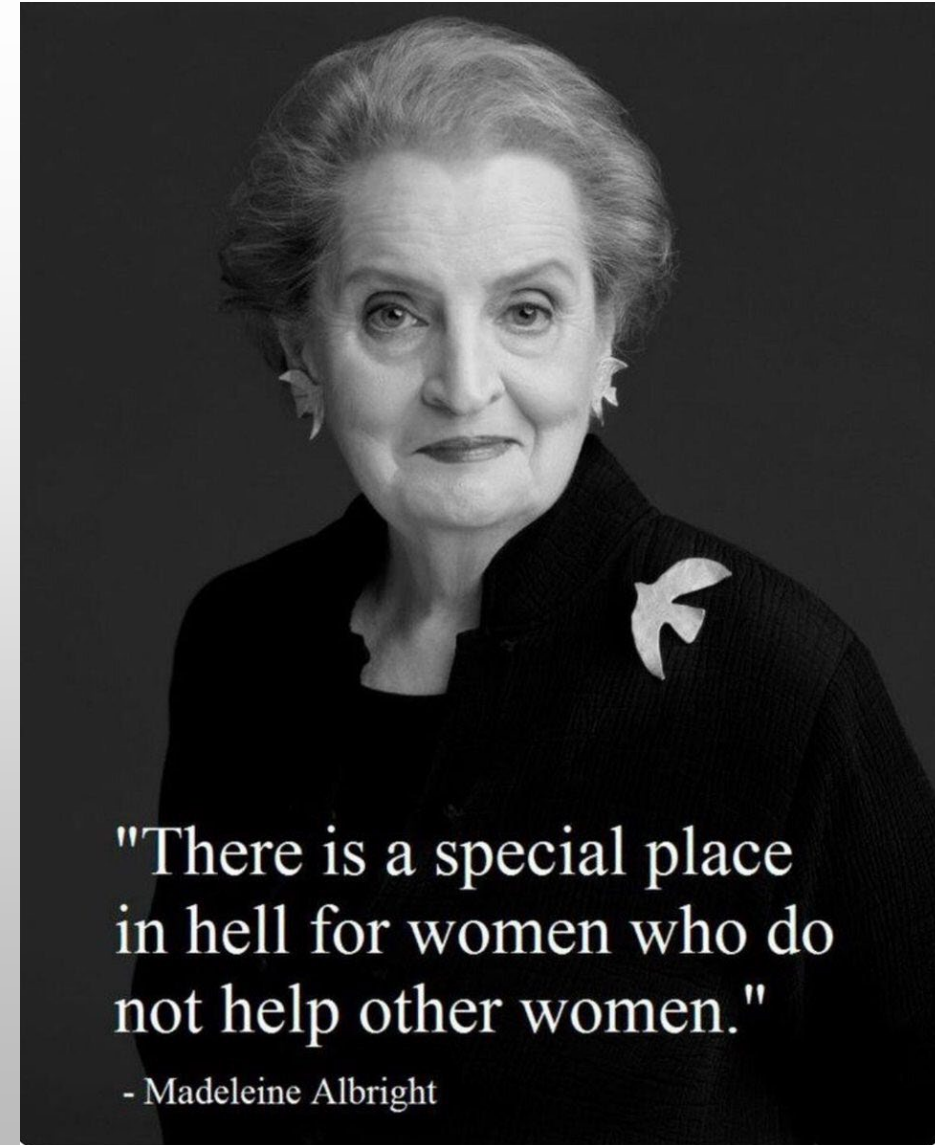


FIREHOUSE Women Officers in the Fire Service Survey

KEYS TO SUCCESS FOR WOMEN LEADERS

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT
WOMEN IN CHIEF OFFICER ROLES
(ESTIMATED AT LESS THAN 200 IN
CAREER FIRE IN US) HAVE A
“COMBINATION OF GRIT AND A
GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR.”

(CONTURSI, 2019)



"There is a special place
in hell for women who do
not help other women."

- Madeleine Albright

REIMAGINING YOUR FIREHOUSE

- IS YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT A FAMILY OR A TEAM?
- IF IT IS A FAMILY, DO YOU HAVE ROOM FOR THE MOTHERS AND SISTERS, THE ELDERS AND THE YOUNGERS? DO YOU KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORS AND TRIBALISM?
- IF IT IS A TEAM, CAN WE MAINTAIN VARSITY-LEVEL STANDARDS?
- MAKING YOURSELF ATTRACTIVE TO FEMALE CANDIDATES AND UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS: GET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOCUS IS THE KEY TO RETENTION

- TAKING AFFIRMATIVE STEPS TOWARD CHECKING IN, MONITORING THE MESSAGES, AND MAKING SURE YOUR TEAM IS SAFE
- PEOPLE NEED TO BE HEARD. LISTEN.
- PRIORITIZE KINDNESS AND COMPASSION AND REWARD POSITIVE LEADERSHIP
- DISCIPLINE AND REDIRECT UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS
- THE LAW OF ATTRACTION STATES “LIKE ATTRACTS LIKE”. CREATE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACT HEALTHY PEOPLE.



Eating Together at the Firehouse: How Workplace Commensality Relates to the Performance of Firefighters

Kevin M. Kniffin, Brian Wansink, Carol M. Devine, and Je
Cornell University

Cooperative activities among coworkers can provide valuable group-level benefits. Previous research has often focused on artificial activities that require extraordinary effort at the worksite. We investigate organizational benefits that firms might obtain through encouraging coworkers to engage in commensality (i.e., eating together). We conducted field research at firehouses in a large city to explore the role that interacting over food might play in work performance. Using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, our field research found a significant positive association between commensality and work-group performance. These findings provide a basis for research and practice that focuses on ways that firms can enhance performance by leveraging the mundane and powerful activity of eating.



Heather Marques
Heather.marques@acgov.org
510-693-3406



Thank you.