VALOR

PUBLIC SAFETY CONSULTING, LLC

THE VALOR STANDARD

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER 2026 | VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC | RECRUITING & RETENTION STRATEGIES

Why Good Officers Leave, and What Leaders Can Do About It

Officers rarely leave the profession. They leave departments. Nearly every reason is a leadership, culture, or policy problem, and those are exactly the problems that can be fixed.

Ask a room of chiefs what keeps them up at night and staffing comes up first. Agencies across the country are recruiting hard, yet experienced officers continue to walk out the door. When departing officers explain why, the answers are remarkably consistent: poor supervision, a lack of recognition, limited opportunity for growth, discipline that feels unfair or inconsistent, and schedules that burn people out. Pay matters, but it is seldom the whole story, and it is rarely the first reason given.

The cost of that turnover is easy to underestimate. Recruiting, academy training, and field training for a single replacement officer represents a major investment of public funds, and the judgment that leaves with a ten year officer cannot be replaced on any schedule. Every departure also lands on the officers who remain, in overtime, in workload, and in morale.

> Retention is not a mystery. It is a leadership outcome. The departments that keep good people treat retention as a daily supervisory responsibility, not an annual human resources project.

The good news is that the drivers of retention sit within a chief's control. Four practices show up again and again in agencies that keep their people:

- **Invest in frontline supervisors.** Officers experience the department through their sergeant. Trained, supported first line leaders prevent more resignations than any signing bonus.
- **Recognize good work on purpose.** Consistent, specific recognition costs nothing and compounds. Silence from leadership is read as indifference.
- **Make discipline fair and predictable.** Officers can accept accountability. What drives them out is inconsistency, where the same conduct draws different consequences depending on who commits it.

- **Show people a future.** Clear paths to specialty assignments, training, and promotion give good officers a reason to build a career where they are.

Valor works with agencies on retention assessments, supervisory development, and the policy and culture reviews that sit behind them. We will take this topic head on at our January leadership class in Aurora, with a full session on leading people through exactly these pressures. Details are in the events box below, and our team is available year round for agency consultations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Executive Leadership & Mentorship

Tuesday, January 12, 2027, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Heritage Eagle Bend Golf Club, Aurora, Colorado

An eight hour executive level class for command staff and aspiring leaders, led by retired Chief Scott Sedgwick. Lunch is included. Registration is $150 per person and seating is capped at 30. Agencies registering three or more paid attendees receive one additional seat at no charge.

Register at pci.jotform.com/form/262804518650054 or through the Upcoming Events page at valorpublicsafetyco.org.

Now scheduling: 2027 on site leadership training and agency consultation dates are open. Contact us to reserve your agency's dates.

PARTNERSHIP THANK YOUS

Emergent Enforcement Solutions. Our thanks to Russ Sarpy and the EES team for a partnership that is putting proven speed safety programs to work for small communities across Colorado and the region. Together we are helping towns slow traffic and save lives on their most dangerous corridors.

Heritage Eagle Bend Golf Club. Thank you to Jennifer Stoneking and the Heritage Eagle Bend team for hosting our January leadership class and for the first class venue support behind it.

And to every chief, sheriff, and town leader who has taken a meeting, returned a call, or opened a door for Valor this fall: thank you. This company grows on trust, and we work to earn it daily.

ADVERTISE IN THE VALOR STANDARD

A limited number of sponsor placements are available in each monthly issue for businesses that serve the public safety community. The Valor Standard reaches chiefs, command staff, sheriffs, and municipal leaders across Colorado and the surrounding states, in inboxes and on social media. To reserve a placement in an upcoming issue, contact us at ssedgwick@valorpublicsafetyco.com or (303) 941-5220.

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