Organizational Assessment

COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Collaborative Reform Initiative

Dearborn Heights Police Department Organizational Assessment Report

October 2024

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CNA

IIR
Institute for Intergovernmental Research

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Letter from the Director of the COPS Office

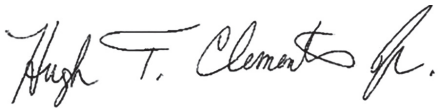
Colleagues:

The Organizational Assessment program is the most intensive form of technical assistance offered under the COPS Office's Collaborative Reform Initiative continuum of services. It involves in-depth assessments and technical assistance on systemic issues that challenge community trust and confidence. For 16 months from June 2023 to October 2024, the COPS Office led a multidisciplinary team of researchers, practitioners, and subject matter experts to evaluate the Dearborn Heights (Michigan) Police Department (DHPD), focusing on areas in which the department could improve and others where it can reinforce its strengths.

The team developed 15 findings and 36 related recommendations for the DHPD to consider, the majority of which are in progress or even completed as of the fall of 2024. This publication outlines those findings and recommendations and the DHPD's efforts to reinforce its relationships with the people of Dearborn Heights and to provide transparency and accountability to the community with routine public reporting. We invite law enforcement agencies to consider the DHPD's Organizational Assessment engagement—particularly agencies that are considering seeking technical assistance from the COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative themselves.

We thank the CNA team and subject matter experts for their work on the Organizational Assessment program with the DHPD, and we look forward to continued productive engagements with other law enforcement agencies under all the programs in the Collaborative Reform Initiative continuum.

Sincerely,



Hugh T. Clements, Jr.
Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Introduction

Background on the Collaborative Reform Initiative

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources. It is committed to ensuring that law enforcement agencies across the nation serve all people with fair, impartial, and effective public safety practices. To that end, the COPS Office offers the Collaborative Reform Initiative continuum of technical assistance services to help law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve in identifying and implementing organizational improvements and reforms through training, consultation, peer-based learning, analysis, and in-depth assessments. The three programs along the continuum offer services that range in time and complexity, all designed to meet the following goals:

- Build trust between police and the communities they serve
- Improve fairness, effectiveness, and efficiency in agency operations
- Enhance officer safety and wellness
- Build capacity for organizational learning and self-improvement
- Promote community policing practices nationwide

The COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative is structured as a continuum of services: Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC), Critical Response, and Organizational Assessment. The **Organizational Assessment** program offers the most intensive form of technical assistance, involving in-depth assessments and technical assistance on systemic issues that challenge community trust and confidence. These engagements are the most comprehensive.

Dearborn Heights Organizational Assessment

On June 15, 2023, the COPS Office announced its partnership with the Dearborn Heights (Michigan) Police Department (DHPD) to conduct a Collaborative Reform Initiative Organizational Assessment (CRI OA) focusing on six areas:

1. Community engagement and problem-solving strategies
2. Accountability and oversight systems
3. Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices
4. Employee safety and wellness
5. Organizational learning and data-informed practices
6. Internal and external communication

Since then, a multidisciplinary team (the CRI OA team) made up of researchers, practitioners, and subject matter experts (SME) has worked with the department to evaluate the DHPD, identifying areas for improvement, reinforcing agency strengths, and assisting with the implementation of reforms expeditiously while providing transparency and accountability with routine public reporting. This team included the following members:

U.S. Department of Justice staff

Matthew Scheider, PhD
COPS Office
Federal site lead

CNA staff

Laura Kunard, PhD
Project director

Chief Hassan Aden (ret.)
Greenville (NC) Police Department
Practitioner site lead

Vivian Elliott
Programmatic site lead

Monique Jenkins
Site coordinating analyst

Subject matter experts

Rania Adwan
Community engagement

Chief Shon F. Barnes
Madison (WI) Police Department
CompStat

Chief Joe McHale (ret.)
Marion (IA) Police Department
Investigations

Director of Public Safety (ret.) Geoffrey Smith
City of Sturgis, MI
Policy & Michigan standards

Christine Townsend
Strategic Communications

Methodology and Approach

The CRI OA team supported the DHPD for a period of 16 months, from June 15, 2023, to October 31, 2024. During this time, the team engaged in the six-step CRI OA approach as outlined in figure 1. A timeline of engagement activities is summarized in figure 2.

Figure 1. CRI OA six-step approach

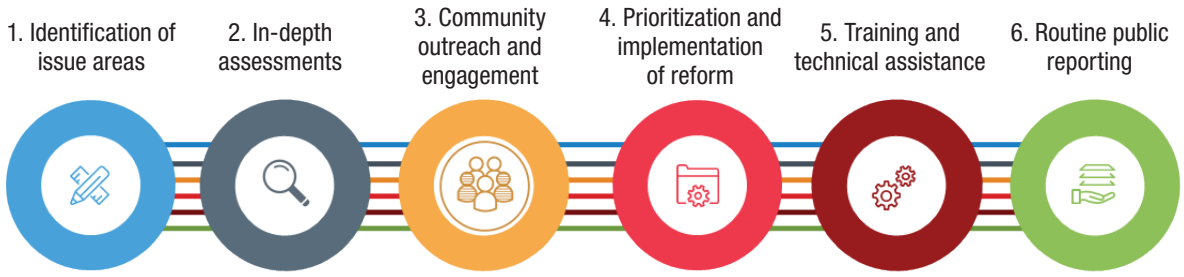
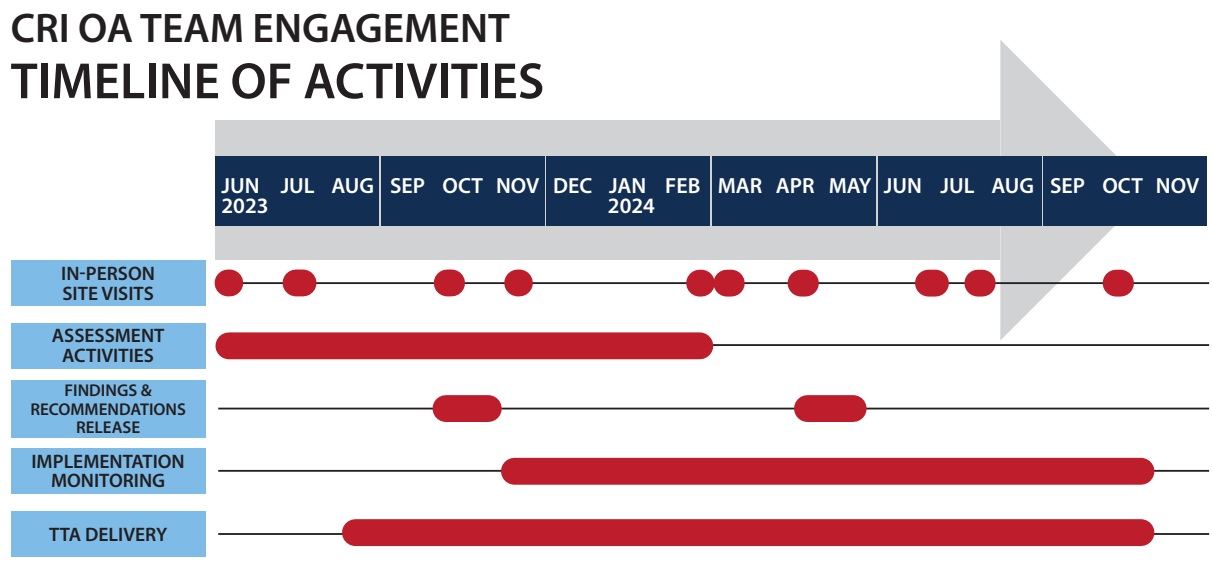


Figure 2. Summary timeline of activities



Step 1. Identification of issue areas

Prior to the official launch of the CRI OA engagement, the team conducted an initial site visit from May 31 to June 1, 2023 and held introductory virtual meetings with the DHPD to identify the six previously noted focus areas for the engagement.

Step 2. In-depth assessments

The CRI OA team's assessment methodology included data and document review, direct observations of DHPD activities and practices (operations, training, tactics, and agency command and leadership), analysis of data and information, interviews, focus groups, and review of research and emerging practices. Throughout the course of their assessment, the CRI OA team members conducted nine site visits to meet with DHPD personnel, including nearly all sworn members of the police department and civilian staff, local and federal partners, key stakeholders, and community members and leaders.

Data and document review

Document review enabled the assessment team to learn about the department's history and operating environment; assess governing documents for clarity, quality, and consistency with accepted standards and practices; and compare policies and procedures with knowledge and practice. Document review began with the DHPD completing a CRI OA site questionnaire, which provided the department an opportunity to self-report information about department community engagement activities, internal and external programs, technology and systems, and crime-fighting strategies. The CRI OA team used this questionnaire to guide the development of a comprehensive data and document request.

To support assessment activities, the team reviewed a number of DHPD documents (e.g., organizational chart, policies and procedures, training information, redacted internal investigations, and collective bargaining agreements), as well as analyzing available agency data (e.g., calls for service, traffic stops, uses of force, and vehicle pursuits).

Direct observations

To supplement the data requested from DHPD, the CRI OA team also collected data and information through interviews, observation of DHPD and partner meetings, and ride-alongs. The team completed more than 70 interviews with DHPD personnel, both sworn and professional staff. The team also spoke with individuals who represented the local courts, the City of Dearborn Heights, regional and federal partners, and surrounding police departments. Interviews were organized in a semistructured format, including questions to guide the conversation with the ability to ask others as new topics emerged.

The CRI OA team observed several internal DHPD meetings, assessing the quality of interactions, communication methods, and information covered. These observations included attending meetings of DHPD's implementation committee, a voluntary group of personnel of various ranks; CompStat and Community CompStat

meetings; and roll call briefings. In addition, the team conducted eight ride-alongs with department members throughout the engagement, observing exchanges between the DHPD and community members during calls for service and gathering feedback on the department in a less structured setting. Further, the CRI OA team sought to explore relationships between the DHPD and external partners through attendance of convenings such as Building Respect In Diverse Groups to Enhance Sensitivity (BRIDGES), a U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO)–led partnership between federal law enforcement agencies and leaders in the Arab American and Middle Eastern communities in the metro Detroit region.

Recurring meetings

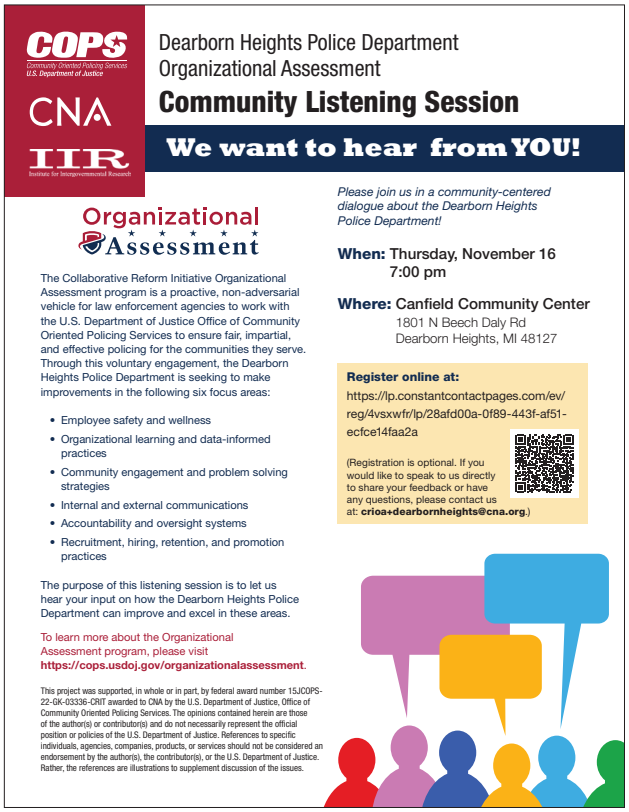
In addition, the CRI OA team engaged in virtual biweekly check-in meetings with the DHPD for the duration of the 18-month engagement to discuss current activities, obtain progress updates, and deliver training and technical assistance (TTA).

Step 3. Community outreach and engagement

Step 3, community outreach and engagement, is critical to the CRI process. In addition to having its own dedicated step, outreach was also a core component of and informed the team's in-depth assessments (step 2), and it will be a mechanism contributing to the success of routine public reporting (step 6). The CRI OA team identified community stakeholders using recommendations from the DHPD, independent outreach, and snowball sampling—a nonprobability sampling technique in which existing study participants offer suggestions from their acquaintance of additional interview subjects.

The CRI OA team conducted 13 individual interviews and a larger stakeholder focus group with Dearborn Heights community members and organizations. These participants included business owners, residents, mental health providers, and school administrators, along with representatives of neighborhood associations and civic organizations.

To obtain further input from members of the Dearborn Heights community, on November 16, 2023, the CRI OA team held a community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Dearborn Heights Police Department
Organizational Assessment
Community Listening Session

We want to hear from YOU!

Organizational Assessment

The Collaborative Reform Initiative Organizational Assessment program is a proactive, non-adversarial vehicle for law enforcement agencies to work with the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to ensure fair, impartial, and effective policing for the communities they serve. Through this voluntary engagement, the Dearborn Heights Police Department is seeking to make improvements in the following six focus areas:

- Employee safety and wellness
- Organizational learning and data-informed practices
- Community engagement and problem solving strategies
- Internal and external communications
- Accountability and oversight systems
- Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices

The purpose of this listening session is to let us hear your input on how the Dearborn Heights Police Department can improve and excel in these areas.

To learn more about the Organizational Assessment program, please visit **https://cops.usdoj.gov/organizationalassessment**.

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Please join us in a community-centered dialogue about the Dearborn Heights Police Department!

When: Thursday, November 16
7:00 pm

Where: Canfield Community Center
1801 N Beech Daly Rd
Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

Register online at:
https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/4vsxwfr/lp/28afd00a-0f89-443f-af51-ecfce14faa2a

(Registration is optional. If you would like to speak to us directly to share your feedback or have any questions, please contact us at: **crioa+dearbornheights@cna.org**.)

Flyer for community listening session held November 16, 2023.

listening session at the Canfield Community Center. The purpose of this session was to gather the experiences and perceptions of community members on a number of topics involving the way the police engage with the community. The session was attended by a dozen community members and (like the interviews) followed a semi-structured format. Following all interactions with the community and officers, the CRI OA team provided participants with an email address specific to the CRI OA engagement with Dearborn Heights to share any additional thoughts or potential interviewees.

Step 4. Prioritization and implementation of reforms

Following continued assessment and community outreach, the CRI OA team developed findings and recommendations for the DHPD to provide the agency and the public with a clear understanding of what the assessment uncovered and how the agency can improve.

The team developed a total of 15 findings, each of which include one or more associated recommendations (a total of 36 recommendations). Recommendations propose organizational reforms to resolve issues, observations, and deficiencies identified in each finding. The complete set of findings and recommendations can be found in appendix B beginning on page 40.

Step 5. Training and technical assistance

To guide the agency in implementing recommendations and addressing gaps identified through the findings, the CRI OA team actively worked with the DHPD to identify and provide TTA to support its organizational change and implementation of reforms. Technical assistance focused on helping the DHPD build its own capacities based on national standards, promising practices, and existing research. It came in various forms, including consultation, peer exchanges, identification and adaptation of practices from other agencies, data analysis, and training. More detailed descriptions of the TTA provided are outlined in both table 1 on page 7 and the section "DHPD activities and accomplishments" beginning on page 10.

Step 6. Routine reporting

The CRI OA team developed internal metrics for the status of each recommendation and monitored the DHPD's progress. The department reported updates to the team, which were corroborated through direct observations of the department's execution of recommendations and review of department-provided evidence of implementation. With a goal of promoting trust, accountability, and transparency through the CRI OA program, the COPS Office posted the findings, recommendations, and the DHPD's progress online at https://cops.usdoj.gov/active-oa-site-dearborn-heights-mi-police-department.

Table 1. Summary of CRI OA TTA provided to DHPD

TTA description	SME / TTA provider	Focus area
2023 Problem-Oriented Policing Conference	CNA / Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR)	Community Engagement and Problem-Solving Strategies
Investigations Assessment and TA	Chief Joe McHale (ret.)	Community Engagement and Problem-Solving Strategies
Communications Training and TA	Christine Townsend	Internal and External Communications
CompStat Peer Learning	Baltimore City (MD) Police Department	Organizational Learning and Data-Informed Practices
CompStat TA	Chief Shon F. Barnes	Organizational Learning and Data-Informed Practices
Community Engagement TA	Rania Adwan	Community Engagement and Problem-Solving Strategies
Use of Force, Vehicle Pursuits, and Complaints Policy and Procedures TA	Chief Hassan Aden (ret.), Director Geoffrey Smith (ret.)	Accountability and Oversight Systems
Training TA	Laura Kunard, PhD	Recruitment, Hiring, Retention, and Promotion Practices
2024 International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Officer Safety and Wellness Conference	CNA/IIR	Employee Safety and Wellness
Crime Analysis in Residence Program	Bureau of Justice Assistance / CNA	Organizational Learning and Data-Informed Practices
Resource Allocation Training	COPS Office CRI-TAC	Organizational Learning and Data-Informed Practices
Problem Analysis Training	COPS Office CRI-TAC	Community Engagement and Problem-Solving Strategies
Proactive Alliance: Relationship-Based Policing and Community Partnerships Training	COPS Office CRI-TAC	Community Engagement and Problem-Solving Strategies

DHPD CRI OA Engagement

Background on Dearborn Heights

Dearborn Heights, Michigan, is about 15 miles west of Detroit in Wayne County. It is part of the Detroit metropolitan area and is considered a bedroom community. The population is 63,292 per the 2020 census; the largest Dearborn Heights racial/ethnic group is White (83.8 percent), followed by Black (8.5 percent) and Hispanic (5 percent).[1] Notably, the city is home to a growing Arab American population, which is estimated to be about one-third of the local population.[2] Dearborn Heights covers an area of 12.07 square miles. The city government consists of a mayor and a city council comprising seven representatives.

The Dearborn Heights Police Department (DHPD) serves the city of Dearborn Heights and is a full-service law enforcement agency charged with the responsibility of providing 24-hour police services. At the beginning of the CRI OA engagement, the department's authorized strength was 78 sworn police officers and 17 full-time civilian employees. There were also 14 part-time reserve officers to supplement the full-time ranks. As of October 2024, the department has 67 sworn police officers and 21 full-time civilian employees.

The department is headquartered in the Dearborn Heights Justice Center, located at the south/east corner of Michigan Ave. and Beech Daly, which opened in 2003; it currently operates with two divisions: (1) Patrol Services Division and (2) Investigative Division. The DHPD is led by Chief Kevin Swope, Director of Support Services Paul Vanderplow, and Interim Director of Police Operations Hussein Farhat.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Dearborn Heights Police Department's mission is to ensure a welcoming, safe, and secure community for all. We shall perform our duties with a reverence for human life and in partnership with all community members through professionalism, respect, integrity, dedication, and excellence in policing.

VALUES

Trust
Respect
Integrity
Inclusion and Equity
Accountability
Transparency
Service to Community
Operational Excellence

The CRI OA team began its engagement working with Chief Jerrod Hart, who left the department in July 2024. Former Chief Hart initiated the engagement, requesting COPS Office assistance in early 2023 after noting areas for improvement in the department including policy inconsistencies, unbalanced accountability systems, outdated systems and practices, and cultural competency challenges. These challenges

1. "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Dearborn Heights, Michigan," accessed November 19, 2024, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/dearbornheightscitymichigan/PST045223.

2. "Ancestry in Dearborn Heights, Michigan (City)," The Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States, accessed November 4, 2024, https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Michigan/Dearborn-Heights/Ancestry.

were coupled with a concerned and diversifying community actively seeking high quality policing services, several years of police leadership changes (the DHPD had six chiefs from 2018 to 2024), and notable reductions in the police force.

Despite these challenges, DHPD leadership and several members of the department and community embraced the opportunity to work with the CRI OA program to critically examine the DHPD and identify ways to improve public safety in the city. Throughout the CRI OA engagement, DHPD leadership showed continuous commitment and action, which resulted in a number of improvements in each of the defined focus areas, further described later in this report. These changes were exemplified by a commitment by DHPD leadership and the department to ensuring that it had a clear and purposeful vision and values. In 2023, DHPD leadership and employees across the department collaboratively updated its mission and value statements, which are critical for providing a clear, consistent focus for the department and the community.

DHPD activities and accomplishments

This section outlines the CRI OA engagement activities, highlighting findings and recommendations, TTA delivery, and major accomplishments by the DHPD. They are organized by the focus areas of the site's engagement: (1) Community-engagement and problem-solving strategies; (2) Accountability and oversight systems; (3) Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices; (4) Employee safety and wellness; (5) Organizational learning and data-informed practices; and (6) Internal and external communication.

Focus area 1. Community engagement and problem-solving strategies

Findings

- **Finding 1.1:** While the DHPD has increased their community engagement activities, the department does not have a comprehensive or systematic community policing approach.
- **Finding 1.2:** DHPD investigators do not currently engage in systematic victim and witness support.

While the DHPD has an expressed commitment to community engagement and had made strides to conduct community events, the CRI OA team identified a need for it to develop and establish a comprehensive department-wide focus and approach to community policing. "Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public

safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime."[3] In addition, the DHPD does not have a formal and effective avenue for community members to consistently share feedback and recommendations directly with the department. Community members showed interest in the DHPD and shared a variety of recommendations for the department. For example, community members expressed the need for increased traffic enforcement, the importance of mental health response training for officers, concerns about available data, and suggestions for crime deterrence strategies.

In addition, the CRI OA team identified that there are currently no guidelines requiring continued contact with victims and witnesses following an incident. The primary way victims of crimes are notified about the status of their cases or contacted to engage in follow-up investigative work is by telephone. Further, DHPD policy does not require investigators to provide victims and witnesses with information about available resources, and department personnel lacked a detailed understanding of such services.

As a result, the CRI OA made the following six recommendations to the DHPD to improve its community engagement and problem-solving strategies.

- **Recommendation 1.1.a:** Develop a community engagement plan.
- **Recommendation 1.1.b:** Consider ways to promote a culture of community policing across the department.
- **Recommendation 1.1.c:** Following the development of a community engagement plan (recommendation 1.1.a), consider implementing a community advisory committee to give community members voice and opportunities to provide input regarding department policies and practices.
- **Recommendation 1.2.a:** Inventory the resources available to assist victims of crime and conduct department-wide training to educate personnel on these available resources.
- **Recommendation 1.2.b:** Develop or amend policy to reflect additional protocols to communicate with victims of crime.
- **Recommendation 1.2.c:** Establish a working group of internal and external stakeholders to research and build a trauma-informed, victim-centered, and culturally sensitive strategy.

3. *Community Policing Defined* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2012), https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p157.

TTA activities

Upon completion of assessment activities and sharing of its findings and recommendations, the CRI OA team determined that the DHPD should review and enhance its community outreach and engagement practices, standing up new efforts such as establishing a community advisory panel and organizing existing philosophies and values into implementable and actionable practices for community policing. A CRI OA subject matter expert conducted various activities with the department including the following:

- Training both on site and virtually with DHPD leadership and personnel on community engagement strategies and practices
- Facilitating dialogue and meetings with community leaders and members
- Assisting the department in developing the concept and plan to establish the Community Advisory Panel (CAP)
- Providing the DHPD with recommendations on developing a community engagement plan

DHPD accomplishments

As a result of the findings, recommendations, and CRI OA technical assistance, the DHPD has enhanced engagement with the communities it serves and is working to provide opportunities for authentic relationship building. In the summer of 2024, the DHPD hosted its first annual Youth Leadership Experience with two four-day sessions. This program familiarized youth with activities of officers at all levels; allowed them to demonstrate teamwork, integrity, and self-respect; and broadened their understanding of the challenges and skills of police.

The DHPD held a Halloween Trunk or Treat event in October 2023.

Between the summer of 2023 and 2024, DHPD also hosted and participated in more than 40 community events, such as Cops, Coffee and Chrome; Trunk or Treat; and Heroes and Helpers. Several of the DHPD-hosted events had robust attendance by and positive feedback from community members.

Further, in an effort to improve two-way communication between DHPD and the community, in March 2024, DHPD implemented **Community CompStat** meetings the fourth Thursday of most

months to discuss crime statistics and prevention strategies and address community questions and concerns. The department has since held five community CompStat meetings.

The DHPD is also dedicated to ensuring all its members have the tools necessary to properly engage the community they serve. DHPD personnel attended the **2023 Problem-Oriented Policing Conference,** which featured practitioners and academics presenting on introductory, intermediate, and advanced topics in problem-oriented policing implementation. In addition, the DHPD will deliver **community-oriented policing and problem-oriented policing training** from the COPS Office to all members in fall 2024.

The DHPD held a classic car–themed community event in September 2023.

Finally, DHPD leadership and personnel have made a concerted effort to build meaningful relationships with community leaders and partners through one-on-one meetings and participating in community-hosted events (e.g., the Rotary Club of Dearborn Heights, Middle Eastern Law Enforcement Association).

Progress still remains to ensure the department is embracing a community policing mindset through the development and adoption of a community engagement strategy and plan as well as in improving communication and investigative processes for victims and witnesses. Recommendations for moving forward and sustainability are provided later in the Sustainability section beginning on page 28 of this report.

Focus area 2. Accountability and oversight systems

Findings

- **Finding 2.1:** The DHPD does not have standard guidelines or measures for evaluating employee performance.
- **Finding 2.2:** The DHPD does not have clear, standard guidelines or measures for evaluating officer misconduct, nor does it have clear processes for investigations into policy violations or potential outcomes.
- **Finding 2.3:** Though the department receives few complaints from community members, the intake and complainant communication processes should be improved.

- **Finding 2.4:** The DHPD's vehicle pursuits policy and reporting protocols require revisions and updates.
- **Finding 2.5:** DHPD policies and practices related to use of force and review of use of force lack specificity and incorporation of national practices.
- **Finding 2.6:** The DHPD does not currently have an effective Early Intervention System (EIS).

The CRI OA team identified opportunities to improve the DHPD's accountability and oversight systems with respect to policies, procedures, and practices for performance management, officer misconduct, complaints, vehicle pursuits, and use of force.

DHPD policy and procedures outline a performance review process; however, DHPD supervisors have not formally put this process into practice. DHPD personnel said that, though an evaluation is conducted following the end of an officer's probationary period, the department does not conduct regular formal performance evaluations throughout their career. Officers described receiving informal feedback from their supervisors; however, the lack of a formal performance review process can lead to inconsistency in expectations for both officers and supervisors.

DHPD policies and procedures include processes to address officer misconduct. However, these policies and procedures and the subsequent practice of addressing officer misconduct lack detail regarding how and by which measures conduct should be evaluated, leading to unclear or inconsistent understanding among department employees of the standards and systems for accountability and oversight.

The CRI OA team identified areas in which the department could improve and standardize intake, classification, and review of complaints to ensure community members are engaged in a fair, consistent, and clear process as well as provide DHPD opportunities to more efficiently review and respond to complaints.

The CRI OA team analyzed DHPD data on vehicle pursuits from 2022 and 2023, which revealed a high number of pursuits and opportunities to improve pursuit policies and training to ensure safety of DHPD officers and the Dearborn Heights community. Specifically, the DHPD needed to establish specific parameters for which officers are authorized to conduct pursuits; establish appropriate mechanisms for reporting and reviewing pursuits; and provide training for officers on policy, protocols, and safe driving.

A review of DHPD use of force data showed that the DHPD had 143 use of force incidents from January 2022 to September 2023, with primary control methods being verbal direction (88.13 percent), muscling (51.25 percent), taking the subject

to the ground (44.38 percent), and firearm display (27.50 percent). DHPD use of force policies and protocols lacked detail on various force methods, de-escalation, and review and tracking of use of force incidents.

Finally, to close out accountability and oversight, the CRI OA identified that the DHPD uses an element of an existing management system to track sick time, but the department does not have an effective early intervention system (EIS). An EIS is a data-based tool that aids departments in identifying officers who may be displaying concerning behavior and proactively addressing those concerns.

As a result, the CRI OA made the following 10 recommendations to the DHPD to improve its accountability and oversight:

- **Recommendation 2.1.a:** Establish and implement a performance evaluation system that is consistent with the DHPD's mission.
- **Recommendation 2.2.a:** Establish clear policies and processes for misconduct investigations and possible outcomes to increase consistency and accountability.
- **Recommendation 2.3.a:** Expand alternative options for community members to make a complaint.
- **Recommendation 2.3.b:** Update DHPD policy to include clear timelines for contact with complainants.
- **Recommendation 2.4.a:** The DHPD should review its vehicle pursuits data and national practices and policies for vehicle pursuits to ensure proper conduct of and accountability for pursuits. These standards and guidelines should be clearly documented in DHPD's forthcoming revised policy and *Pursuit and Review* form.
- **Recommendation 2.4.b:** The DHPD should provide department members with classroom and hands-on training to properly engage in pursuits.
- **Recommendation 2.5.a:** The DHPD should update its use of force policies.
- **Recommendation 2.5.b:** The DHPD should review and monitor uses of force and establish appropriate accountability systems.
- **Recommendation 2.5.c:** The DHPD should track data on use of force and institute an annual review of use of force trends.
- **Recommendation 2.6.a:** Implement an EIS to increase officer accountability and support.

TTA activities

DHPD leadership quickly acknowledged the gaps and opportunities for improvement in accountability and oversight policies, training, systems, and practices. They readily took opportunities to learn from CRI OA subject matter experts and peer agencies.

The practitioner lead and subject matter expert assisted the DHPD in an in-depth review of its complaint, use of force, and vehicle pursuit policies, providing several recommendations for clarifying language, definitions, and expectations within the policies and procedures. Notably, the experts' technical assistance included a substantial update to department policy 1010 Misconduct Complaints, for which the CRI OA team helped the DHPD update its intake and review process for complaints, as well as several discussions around the DHPD's vehicle pursuit policy and determining when pursuits should be authorized.

The CRI OA team also shared model policies from other agencies and provided the DHPD with guidance on monitoring and tracking of use of force and strategies for EIS as the department looked to acquire a new internal affairs technology platform.

DHPD accomplishments

During the CRI OA engagement, the DHPD thoughtfully aligned modern accountability processes, clear policies, training, and technology to achieve an accountability system that department members, including the bargaining units, view as effective and equitable. This includes updates and enhancements to the following:

- Complaint investigations
- Misconduct and accountability systems
- Vehicle pursuits policy and supervision
- Use of force policy and review

The DHPD plans to adopt the CRI OA team's recommended changes to department policy 1010 Misconduct Complaints and policy 300 Use of Force.

The DHPD has aligned policy 307 Vehicle Pursuits with national standards. The policy provides the following guidelines regarding allowable pursuits: "Pursuits are permitted when the individual officer knows or has reasonable grounds to believe that the person being pursued has committed or attempted to commit a serious felony. A serious felony is one that involves an actual attack or perceived threat that the officer has reasonable cause to believe could result in death or serious bodily injury." The DHPD has also acquired StarChase, a technology that allows officers to remotely attach a global positioning system (GPS) tracker to a fleeing car. This

technology can reduce the need for pursuits, as officers can wait until an individual has stopped to apprehend them. In addition, department members and instructors attended Emergency Vehicle Operations training in summer 2024.

The DHPD also reviewed multiple internal affairs technology platforms and in 2024 acquired Guardian Tracking, a performance management and early intervention tool. The software allows the department to review pursuits and uses of force, conduct internal investigations, track training requests and records, and set parameters for the department's early intervention system.

Focus area 3. Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices

Findings

- **Finding 3.1:** DHPD employees have limited opportunities for professional development and upward mobility.
- **Finding 3.2:** DHPD officers receive a 40-hour annual in-service training that meets basic state requirements but lacks crucial contemporary policing topics. The department is working to restructure and refresh the training moving forward.

Prior to the CRI OA's team engagement with DHPD, organizational changes and departures of staff resulted in the diminishing of various specialty units (e.g., traffic bureau, special investigations) and roles in the department to ensure patrol functions are properly staffed. As a result, opportunities for lateral and upward mobility were reduced, though some opportunities did remain for task force officer positions (e.g., Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force and Auto Theft Task Force). Some DHPD personnel had expressed interest in these opportunities, as well as in skill building and professional development through training. Several employees noted the department had been supportive of these efforts, though understanding of availability and accessibility of professional development opportunities varied across personnel.

Prior to 2024, DHPD members received a 40-hour block of annual in-service training. DHPD policy 203 Training states that the department "shall administer a training program that will meet the standards of federal, state, local and the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) training requirements." This training meets minimum state requirements; the CRI OA team identified several crucial topics missing from officers' regular training. Particularly, trainings lacked emphasis on policing responsibilities such as constitutional policing, crisis intervention teams (CIT), community policing and problem solving, cultural

awareness, procedural justice, and de-escalation. As a result, the CRI OA made the following six recommendations to the DHPD to improve its recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices:

- **Recommendation 3.1.a:** Conduct analyses of the DHPD's calls for service and overall DHPD staffing workload to better understand the functions and staffing needed for DHPD operations.
- **Recommendation 3.1.b:** Upon completion of calls for service and staff analysis (recommendation 3.1.a), identify appropriate positions and units/structures needed to accomplish organizational objectives.
- **Recommendation 3.1.c:** Establish career development plans at all levels and positions of the department.
- **Recommendation 3.2.a:** Provide additional training to the Training Sergeant and all supervisors responsible for unit-specific training on effective instruction.
- **Recommendation 3.2.b:** Update in-service training and expand training topics included to ensure their relevance to modern policing.
- **Recommendation 3.2.c:** Collaborate consistently with community organizations, criminal justice partners, and other local stakeholders to develop and conduct training.

TTA activities

The CRI OA team determined that the DHPD should bolster its training plan and opportunities. A subject matter expert conducted multiple working sessions with the DHPD's training sergeant to discuss structural concepts such as adult learning models, instructional design, and curriculum development. In addition, the team provided the DHPD with sample training plans that can be adapted for the department's needs and discussed the value and development of a long-term training plan.

DHPD accomplishments

Throughout the CRI OA engagement, DHPD leadership expressed a desire to update the department organization to allow for additional specialty units and positions. This restructuring would bring additional opportunities for professional development and upward mobility, which several DHPD employees expressed were important to them. To make such changes possible in the future, since 2022, the DHPD has prioritized recruitment, hiring, and retention to ensure it has a properly staffed workforce. The DHPD established an eight-member recruitment team that developed new recruiting flyers, as seen in figure 3, and shared them on social media and at recruiting events. The recruitment team attended seven events from spring

2023 to 2024 to attract applicants for dispatch, officers, and cadets. These events included hiring expos, university presentations, and partnerships with local training academies. This and other strategies have allowed the DHPD to make nearly 60 hires throughout the department since 2023.

Figure 3. Dearborn Heights Police Department recruiting flyer

In addition, the DHPD has focused on improving training and professional development for department personnel. In 2023, it designated a sergeant to oversee training. Training improvements include development of a long-term training plan, which included revamping the DHPD's traditional two-week in-service training to a monthly training cadence to promote continuous development and learning. Training also covers expanded topics to ensure personnel are receiving interactive, comprehensive training that supports policing operations and community engagement. In 2024, the DHPD trained personnel on crime scene investigations, cultural diversity, de-escalation strategies and critical decision-making, defensive tactics, emergency vehicle operations, mental and physical wellness, response to active shooters, search and seizure, and traffic accident investigations. The department has also

increased access to external training opportunities to foster professional development, recognizing that advanced training, adoption of best practices, and investment in skills development ensure the workforce is always at the forefront of public safety and service. For example, in October 2023, DHPD members from supervisory and command ranks attended a week-long training aimed at developing and bolstering leadership skills.

Focus area 4. Employee safety and wellness

Findings

- **Finding 4.1:** Department personnel believe they are adequately equipped with resources to perform their duties; however, personnel shared there are limited resources to support their wellness.

DHPD officers affirmed that they have the basic equipment and tools necessary to do their jobs effectively, including new technologies (e.g., body-worn cameras and department-allocated wireless phones). These were among 50 support services projects DHPD leadership was committed to for enhancing the tools and resources for employees. However, the CRI OA identified a lack of resources and support for DHPD employee wellness. Several DHPD personnel (including officers and dispatchers) shared that they are experiencing low levels of mental, emotional, and physical wellness and welcomed more support from the department in these areas.

Employee safety and wellness is critical to all agencies, including the DHPD. Thus, the CRI OA made the following two recommendations to DHPD for improvement in this area:

- **Recommendation 4.1.a:** Find opportunities to improve employee morale, such as acknowledging and sharing the accomplishments of DHPD employees and providing employee recognition and awards.
- **Recommendation 4.1.b:** Develop additional employee wellness programming, with opportunities for input from all employees, sworn and civilian.

TTA activities

In March 2024, the COPS Office sponsored four DHPD members to attend the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Officer Safety and Wellness Conference. The conference included sessions and resources about topics such as building resilience, financial wellness, injury prevention, peer support programs, physical fitness, proper nutrition, sleep deprivation, stress, mindfulness, and suicide prevention.

DHPD accomplishments

In fall 2023, the DHPD began an Employee of the Month program, acknowledging individuals for their outstanding service related to community engagement, enforcement, administration, supervision, and dispatch. For example, in November 2023, the DHPD recognized an officer who made a number of Operating a Vehicle while Intoxicated arrests. In March 2024, the DHPD recognized an officer who organized reading events at schools in honor of National Reading Month. The department has also made sure to include civilian personnel, such as dispatchers, in these recognitions. Since the program's inception, seven DHPD members have been recognized, including one officer as Officer of the Year. The department plans to continue this program in collaboration with the mayor's office, including members of both the police and fire departments.

The DHPD recognizes the unique challenges that members of law enforcement face and values personnel wellness, understanding that a healthy, supported police force is fundamental to quality of service. At the beginning of and throughout the CRI OA engagement, DHPD leadership named employee safety and wellness as a priority and shared various ideas for improving this area (e.g., developing a wellness room in department headquarters, improving workout facilities, re-establishing peer support programs, hosting debrief meetings following critical incidents). As previously noted, in March 2024, the DHPD took advantage of an opportunity recommended by the CRI OA team to attend the IACP Officer Safety and Wellness Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, to learn promising practices and programs from other law enforcement agencies across the country. Also in 2024, to better help support employee workloads, the DHPD implemented a new payroll system that more effectively manages employees' hours worked on duty, overtime, and accrued leave balances. It also partners with the City and "People.Health" to offer health screenings to city employees and residents. The department and community will benefit from these and other initiatives that should be prioritized to support the health, safety, and well-being of DHPD employees moving forward.

Focus area 5. Organizational learning and data-informed practices

Findings

- **Finding 5.1:** The DHPD has begun to develop crime analysis capabilities; however, crime analysis is not yet integrated into standard departmental operations.

DHPD leadership recognize the value of crime analysis and has dedicated personnel resources to build this capacity for the department. In 2023, the DHPD hired a crime analyst, who began helping DHPD leadership with basic crime analysis functions (e.g., compiling daily crime statistics) and ad hoc analyses (e.g., exploring trends in a recent uptick in Unlawful Driving Away of Automobile crimes in accordance with the policy). At this time, during the CRI OA's assessment phase, DHPD leadership shared plans to use crime analysis for a newly implemented CompStat meeting. While DHPD leadership's commitment to and focus on crime analysis was strong, several department employees said they were unaware of how to use crime analysis in their regular functions. Others expressed that they were uninterested in doing so and would rather rely upon traditional policing strategies. The CRI OA emphasized that it is important for the DHPD to educate its employees on the utility of crime analysis as it can be a valuable tool to help the department more effectively prevent and respond to public safety problems.

As a result, the CRI OA made the following four recommendations to DHPD to improve its organizational learning and data-informed practices:

- **Recommendation 5.1.a:** As the DHPD builds its crime analysis capabilities, it should identify and provide training and skill development opportunities for crime analysis staff.
- **Recommendation 5.1.b:** Engage department employees in discussions to determine the primary objective(s) or functions of crime analysis and to increase understanding of the value and supports of crime analysis.
- **Recommendation 5.1.c:** Assess data and technology requirements to meet the identified objectives and function of crime analysis.
- **Recommendation 5.1.d:** Learn about CompStat principles, practices, and models to inform the implementation of CompStat for the DHPD.

TTA activities

The CRI OA team recommended the DHPD apply for the Bureau of Justice Assistance Crime Analyst in Residence (CAR) Program. Using a hybrid approach of onsite and virtual technical assistance, this program aims to help law enforcement agencies in integrating tailored crime and data analysis practices, products, tools, and

information more fully into their daily operations and crime reduction efforts. The DHPD was accepted and began engaging with intensive, tailored technical assistance in February 2024. The engagement concluded in fall 2024.

The CRI OA team also determined that DHPD should align its CompStat with a more formal structure, rooted in accountability and action. The CRI OA team shared tailored and national resources related to CompStat's purpose and function and connected the DHPD with a peer agency to observe their CompStat firsthand. Because of the DHPD's interest and effort to develop its own CompStat / problem-oriented policing approach, the CRI OA team also provided DHPD SME assistance. The SME conducted an onsite working session with DHPD leadership to help them determine patrol strategies and measurements to incorporate into CompStat.

DHPD accomplishments

The DHPD demonstrated its dedication to continuous learning and implementation of data-driven policing practices to predict, analyze, and respond to crime more effectively, ensuring its strategies are informed, proactive, and community-focused. The DHPD has participated in the Bureau of Justice Assistance's CAR program, bolstering its crime analysis capacity. Through the program, the department improved support to the Detectives Bureau, implemented a crime analysis policy, developed new crime analysis reports (such as a repeat incident / calls for service report and a juvenile arrestee bulletin), and built relationships with crime analysts from surrounding police departments. The CAR team and DHPD analysts are also working to improve automation for analytic reports, build skills on link analysis, and determine analytic supports to aid in identifying and monitoring of trends and patterns or in response to requests from department personnel.

In addition, DHPD began internal CompStat meetings in fall 2023, which were open to all department employees to attend. These meetings initially focused on DHPD leadership sharing general department updates, as well as leadership and the crime analyst briefing on crime and public safety trends (e.g., violent crime, stolen vehicles, larcenies from automobiles, retail fraud, car crashes, and Operating a Vehicle while Intoxicated incidents). The meetings sometimes also included updates on response efforts and outcomes from the analysis. After several meetings and following additional recommendations from the CRI OA team, DHPD leadership is in the process of refining CompStat meetings to focus more on problem solving and accountability.

Focus area 6. Internal and external communications

Findings

- **Finding 6.1:** The DHPD has gone through several structural, operational, and policy changes in the past year. DHPD employees expressed that these changes have resulted in a lack of clarity about the department's overarching mission, goals, and practices currently and in the future.
- **Finding 6.2:** DHPD employees would benefit from more frequent in-person communications and interactions with DHPD executive leadership.
- **Finding 6.3:** Partnerships between the DHPD and local criminal justice stakeholders are lacking in quantity and depth.

The DHPD executive leadership team had taken notable strides the year prior to the CRI OA engagement to align the agency's administration and operations with modern promising practices. However, members of the department did not always understand or recognize the purpose of these efforts and changes, nor the leadership's overall mission and vision for the department moving forward. Department employees also said changes have occurred frequently, resulting in a sense of uncertainty. DHPD leadership were not effectively and regularly communicating department-wide on why and how changes occurred. Furthermore, the CRI OA team identified a need to improve the quality, depth, modes, and frequency of leadership communication to department personnel and local criminal justice stakeholders.

As a result, the CRI OA made the following eight recommendations to the DHPD to improve its internal and external communications:

- **Recommendation 6.1.a:** Develop a change management plan to outline the vision, outcomes, goals, strategies, and actions for the department in the near term (next 6–12 months).
- **Recommendation 6.1.b:** Document recent DHPD improvements and successes achieved and share and celebrate them internally and externally.
- **Recommendation 6.1.c:** To enhance communication and engagement with department employees in various positions and ranks, introduce a formal means of participation in decision-making and change management through a task force or a steering committee.
- **Recommendation 6.2.a:** Improve internal communication within the police department by developing and implementing transparent, frequent communication that promotes positive change and articulates policies, processes, and decision-making.

- **Recommendation 6.3.a:** Consider establishing recurring meetings between senior DHPD leadership, senior personnel at the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, and the City Attorney's Office.
- **Recommendation 6.3.b:** Establish a quarterly meeting between DHPD leadership, the DHPD Task Force Officers (TFO), and their associated task force supervisors to report back to the agency on the work being performed by the group and the assigned TFO.
- **Recommendation 6.3.c:** DHPD leadership should communicate or meet with all federal agencies quarterly, at a minimum, to build relationships that leverage the assets of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); U.S. Marshals Service (USMS); and U.S. Attorneys' Offices (USAO) to further the DHPD's criminal investigations.
- **Recommendation 6.3.d:** Consider ways to expand relationships with local, neighboring law enforcement agencies.

TTA activities

The CRI OA team determined that the DHPD would benefit from a Public Information Officer (PIO) Unit to improve information sharing both internally and externally. Throughout 2024, a CRI OA SME provided comprehensive TTA to the DHPD in the following areas:

- Onsite and virtual training sessions with DHPD leadership and PIOs
- Development of a comprehensive communications strategy
- Sharing of resources and guidance information (e.g., media release form, key themes and messages, media handling guide, example media reporting template for critical incidents, and more)
- Revisions to and development of media-related policies
- Preparation working sessions for and conduct of inaugural Media Meet and Greet

DHPD accomplishments

During the CRI OA engagement, the DHPD prioritized improving its external communication functions with the media, community, and criminal justice partners.

To improve communication with the media and the community, in early 2024 the department established a Public Information Officer (PIO) Unit. While its composition is subject to changes based on the collective bargaining agreement and other factors, the unit currently consists of a sergeant and two officers. PIOs received specialized training from a CRI OA SME covering the roles and responsibilities

of the PIO, communication strategies, media relations, social media engagement, advance interview skills, and ChatGPT and artificial intelligence tools. The CRI OA team also developed a customized communications strategy for the DHPD outlining media handling guides, social media management protocols, and key message alignment across platforms as well as focusing on enhancing transparency, community engagement, and media relations. The DHPD also developed and updated policies related to media use, including an updated department media policy, new on-call PIO standard operating protocols, social media comment moderation guidance, and a policy on the personal use of social media for DHPD personnel on and off duty. Finally, a critical component of the DHPD's enhanced communications strategy was a media meet and greet in July 2024, organized to introduce Chief Swope as the new Chief of Police. This event was designed to set the tone for future media relations under the new leadership. Four media outlets attended the meet and greet, as did the Dearborn Heights City PIO and a PIO from a neighboring city. The event was a positive opportunity for the DHPD to work with the media to establish what would make their work easier, and a number of suggestions were offered by attendees to improve their collaboration and communication with DHPD. One of the attending media wrote an article about the event.[4]

To improve communication and collaboration with local, state, and federal law enforcement partners, in 2024 the DHPD has expanded its participation in meetings and engagement in several ways. DHPD leadership now actively participates in monthly meetings with Western Wayne County Chiefs of Police, and the DHPD's Detective Bureau joined and now meets with detectives across the county through the Western Wayne County Detectives Bureaus. The DHPD has strengthened its relationship with the Eastern District of Michigan U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) and has begun to attend quarterly Federal Law Enforcement Council meetings, which include law enforcement stakeholders across the area. As a result of enhanced relationships, the DHPD participated in training initiatives led by USAO and the DOJ's Community Relations Service, such as *United Against Hate: Identifying, Reporting and Preventing Hate Crimes*. Finally, the DHPD is also working to build stronger relationships for task force officers with its federal partners.

4. Sue Suchyta, "Heights Introduces New Police Chief, Public Information Officers," Times-Herald Newspapers, last modified July 30, 2024, https://www.downriversundaytimes.com/2024/07/30/heights-introduces-new-police-chief-public-information-officers/#google_vignette.

Lessons Learned

The following are lessons learned from the DHPD's organizational assessment engagement relevant to other law enforcement agencies engaging in organizational change and improvements or interested specifically in the COPS Office's CRI OA program.

- Leadership vision and buy-in is vital to the success of organizational change and improvements. Even with leadership transition and other external challenges, positive changes can be realized with a commitment by leadership.
- Data-driven problem-solving approaches can help focus a department's resources as it goes through change. Investing in analytics / crime analysis is important.
- The Dearborn Heights community is invested in public safety and the DHPD. Thus, relationship building with partners, community engagement, and investment in PIO functions are critical for the department and can bring added value and resources.
- Learn from other agencies; there is no need to reinvent the wheel.
- Losing key positions and department restructuring can be difficult and impact morale. Agencies should be mindful to work through challenges in a positive manner to effectively help maintain progress and implement achievable recommendations.

Sustainability

One of the CRI program's goals is to build agency capacity for organizational learning and self-improvement, which should continue beyond the agency's engagement with the OA program. Organizational improvements and reforms should be substantiality focused on embedding change so that changes survive over time and continue to produce desired or better than expected outcomes.

Sustainability in some instances can be organic, but in many cases, organizational change is a result of planned and deliberate actions. These actions can be in the form of training, working groups, routinization, communication, collaboration, or regular progress tracking. The CRI OA team met with DHPD personnel for a final site visit in early October 2024 to provide and discuss concrete, specific sustainability actions in each of six focus areas. The CRI OA team encourages the DHPD to review these actions and develop its own sustainability strategy. This strategy should include defining what success is for the DHPD in these areas, finding champions, developing and monitoring specific actions and timelines, collaborating with stakeholders, measuring outcomes, talking about accomplishments, and demonstrating value.

It is also important to note that sustainability does not mean that a change must survive forever. Critical to sustainability is continuous improvement. It means a law enforcement agency will continue to learn, adapt, and innovate as needed. The DHPD should retain principles and practices shared by the CRI OA related to organizational learning (focus area 5) and continuous improvement and keep them as a focus moving forward.

Focus area 1. Community engagement and problem-solving strategies

The CRI OA team recommends that the DHPD continue to prioritize the development and implementation of a community engagement plan. It is important that DHPD leadership document this plan and instill a culture of community engagement across the entire department. This culture can be instilled in a variety of ways, through formalized systems, training, processes, accountability, communication, and more. The plan should also include continued focus on developing relationships with key community stakeholders (e.g., homeowners associations, business associations, and local schools) and holding and participating in community and partner meetings (e.g., community CompStat, community and school events). Finally, it is important that the DHPD focus on its policies and procedures for engaging with victims of crime as noted in recommendations 1.2.a–c.

Focus area 2. Accountability and oversight systems

The CRI OA team recommends that the DHPD finalize its draft updated complaint investigations and use of force (response to resistance) policies. It will be critical that the changes in these policies, and the recently updated vehicle pursuit policy, be thoroughly communicated to staff, including specific guidance and training for supervisors. In addition, DHPD staff should also be informed of changes to related procedures, practices, technologies, and systems for these three policies. As these updated policies are put into practices, the DHPD should also establish measures for accountability through tracking and review of trends and patterns for complaints, use of force, and vehicle pursuits. Finally, the CRI OA team had the opportunity to learn more about the DHPD's jail operations and encourages the department to engage in an in-depth review of its jail, possibly through the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Jails and Justice Support Center.

Focus area 3. Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices

The DHPD is on the right track to expand and improve its annual training in support of skill building and professional development for its personnel. The CRI OA team recommends that ideas and plans for comprehensive training be formally documented in a written multiyear department training plan. This plan should be shared and made available to department personnel so they have a clearer understanding of the goals, purposes, and activities related to training. The DHPD should also continue to leverage external partnerships and resources from the Federal Government (e.g., USAO, COPS Office) to support its training needs. Finally, the CRI OA team encourages the DHPD to take action on recommendation 3.1.c to develop career development plans at all levels and positions of the department.

Focus area 4. Employee safety and wellness

The DHPD needs to further demonstrate its commitment to employee safety and wellness through concrete actions to establish programs, resources, and proper supports for its staff. The department has discussed and learned various approaches to doing so, and the CRI OA team strongly encourages that they prioritize small wins and actions in this area (e.g., reinvigorated peer support program, creation of a wellness room, ready access to mental health services for staff). Sustainability for this focus area should also include continued recognition for both internal and external achievements of DHPD employees, which can be given by the city, the department, or even DHPD peers.

Focus area 5. Organizational learning and data-informed practices

As noted earlier, promoting a culture of organizational learning and continuous improvement is important to sustainability as well as to policing services and operations. The CRI OA team encourages the DHPD to embrace problem-oriented policing and to continue to invest in crime analysis and integrate it into its daily operations. Finally, the DHPD has made important strides in establishing a CompStat meeting, which can be further enhanced with more focus on problem-solving, accountability, and the presentation of relevant actionable information.

Focus area 6. Internal and external communications

With its new PIO unit, the DHPD now has a strong foundation to enhance internal and external communications. The CRI OA team recommends the DHPD continue to develop, integrate, and build out its PIO function and has provided PIOs with several specific sustainability actions. While the PIO has expanded the DHPD's communication capacity, some DHPD employees the CRI OA team met with during its final site visits said communication by department leadership could still be improved. As such, recommendations 6.1.a–c are still very applicable and should be a priority for leadership moving forward. In addition, the CRI OA team recommends that the DHPD continue to partner and communicate regularly with local criminal justice stakeholders, including the USAO, Wanye County, BRIDGES, Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust, neighboring police agencies, and federal law enforcement agency partners.

Appendix A. Additional Useful Resources and TTA Contacts

The DOJ has a variety of national programs that offer free TTA to law enforcement agencies. This appendix describes available TTA programs, topic areas serviced by the programs, program websites, and links to request TTA. It also includes additional useful online resources.

COPS Office and Problem-Oriented Policing Guides

COPS Training Portal

The COPS Training Portal provides a convenient, no-cost platform for law enforcement practitioners and community partners to access interactive online training and resources in emerging public safety topics and community policing. Suggested courses for DHPD include the following:

- **Changing Perceptions: A Fair and Impartial Policing Approach**
  https://copstrainingportal.org/project/changing-perceptions-a-fair-and-impartial-policing-approach
- **Community Policing: Improving Police Efficacy and Building Trust**
  https://copstrainingportal.org/project/community-policing-improving-police-efficacy-and-building-trust
- **Contemporary Approaches for Responding Effectively to Community-Defined Disorder**
  https://learn.copstrainingportal.org/enrol/index.php?id=173
- **Crime Reduction: Enforcement and Prevention Strategies**
  https://learn.copstrainingportal.org/enrol/index.php?id=175
- **Ethical Considerations for Asset Forfeiture**
  https://learn.copstrainingportal.org/enrol/index.php?id=161
- **Expert Insights: Testifying in Court as a Drug Recognition Expert**
  https://learn.copstrainingportal.org/enrol/index.php?id=176
- **Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement**
  https://copstrainingportal.org/project/advanced-roadside-impaired-driving-enforcement-aride-refresher
- **The Call: Serving Those with Behavioral and Cognitive Disabilities**
  https://learn.copstrainingportal.org/enrol/index.php?id=169

COPS Office Problem-Oriented Policing Guides

The COPS Office's Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) Guides are resources that help law enforcement agencies identify, analyze, and respond to problems that lead to crime and disorder in a community. Suggested POP Guides for DHPD include the following:

- **Analyzing and Responding to Repeat Offending**
  https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/analyzing_and_responding_to_repeat_offending.pdf
- **Asset Forfeiture**
  https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/asset_forfeiture.pdf
- **Enhancing the Problem-Solving Capacity of Crime Analysis Units**
  https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/enhancing-problem-solving-capacity-crime-analysis-units
- **Identifying and Defining Policing Problems**
  https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/identifying-and-defining-policing-problems
- **Implementing Responses to Problems**
  https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/implementing-responses-problems
- **Partnering With Businesses to Address Public Safety Problems**
  https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/tool-guides-partnering-businesses-address-public-safety-problems-0
- **Researching a Problem**
  https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/tool-guides-researching-problem-0

COPS Office Grant Programs

The COPS Office administers several grants and other funding opportunities to aid law enforcement in various community policing and public safety efforts. Suggested funding opportunities for DHPD include the following:

- **Community Policing Development: Accreditation**
  https://cops.usdoj.gov/accreditation
- **Community Policing Development: Implementation of De-escalation Training Act Program**
  https://cops.usdoj.gov/de-escalation_training_act
- **COPS Hiring Program**
  https://cops.usdoj.gov/chp

Training and Technical Assistance Programs

Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC)

The Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC) provides critical and tailored technical assistance resources to state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies on a wide variety of topics. It features a "by the field, for the field" approach, delivering individualized technical assistance using leading experts in a range of public safety, crime reduction, and community policing topics. CRI-TAC is a public service and offered at no cost to the requesting agency.

- **Topic areas.** For law enforcement, including specific topics for sheriffs' offices and tribal agencies. See here for a full list: https://cops.usdoj.gov/collaborativereform#areas_menu
- **Website.** https://cops.usdoj.gov/collaborativereform
- **Request TTA.** https://cops.usdoj.gov/collaborativereform#request_menu

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC)

BJA's NTTAC connects state, local, and tribal justice agencies in need of assistance with specialized national experts to help address those needs. The justice agencies BJA NTTAC assists range from prosecutors' offices to police departments to city and county commissioners to corrections departments. Its goal is to provide these agencies the resources needed to reduce violent and drug-related crime, support law enforcement, manage offenders, and combat victimization.

To achieve this goal, BJA NTTAC provides no-cost training and specialized guidance (https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/about/service-areas)—also known as technical assistance—both in-person and virtually on a wide variety of criminal justice topics (https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/justice-topics/overview) ranging from crime prevention to mental health to adjudication. We take the time to understand the specific justice-related need of the agency requesting help and match that need with the right expert to provide the training or specialized guidance.

- **Topic areas.** Adjudication/courts, corrections, crime prevention, justice information sharing, law enforcement, mental health, substance abuse, tribal justice, capacity building

- **Specialized programs.**
  - **Crime Analysis on Demand TTA Program**
    https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/sites/default/files/Crime%20Analysis%20on%20Demand%20TTA%20Program%20Flyer-508.pdf
  - **Prosecution Assessment TTA Program**
    https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/sites/default/files/Prosecution%20Assessment%20TTA%20Program%20Flyer_508.pdf
  - **Technology Initiatives TTA Program**
    https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/sites/default/files/Technology%20Assessment%20TTA%20Program%20Flyer_508.pdf
- **Website.** https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/
- **Request TTA.** https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/working-with-nttac/requestors

Violence Reduction Response Center (VRRC)

VRRC was established to connect state, local, and tribal justice agencies with violent crime reduction TTA resources offered by the DOJ. By providing direct referrals to DOJ crime reduction publications, grant opportunities, and TTA, VRRC serves as a one-stop shop to connect individuals to the most appropriate resources available. After the initial contact, VRRC staff guide users to training and grant funding opportunities, or they can put them in touch with peers and subject experts to learn about and discuss violence-reduction strategies. VRRC staff make sure users receive resources tailored to their specific needs and will facilitate access to those resources, saving time otherwise spent searching.

- **Topic areas.** Law enforcement investigations
- **Website.** https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/content/violence-reduction-response-center
- **Request TTA.** ViolenceReduction@usdoj.gov

National Resource and Technical Assistance Center for Improving Law Enforcement Investigations (NRTAC)

The NRTAC (https://centerforimprovinginvestigations.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/NRTAC-Fact-Sheet.pdf) will deliver specific technical assistance to eligible departments on a wide range of topics directly related to conducting high-quality investigations. This assistance is available free of cost to individuals and departments seeking to improve investigations ranging from homicide to computer crime investigations. To see examples of technical assistance or projects that the NRTAC can assist with, please see their resources page (https://centerforimprovinginvestigations.org/resources).

- **Topic areas.** Law enforcement investigations
- **Website.** https://centerforimprovinginvestigations.org/
- **Request TTA.** https://centerforimprovinginvestigations.org/training-technical-assistance/

Body-Worn Camera TTA Program

BJA launched the Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program (BWCPIP) in FY 2015 to assist law enforcement agencies with the implementation or expansion of body-worn camera (BWC) initiatives. Since 2015, BWCPIP has provided more than $86 million in funding to 420 law enforcement agencies across the country to support BWC initiatives. The primary goals of BWCPIP are to improve public safety, enhance the evidentiary value of BWC footage, and improve public trust between police and the communities they serve.

The goals of the BWC TTA program are to assist site-based grantees in implementing their programs to learn about progress and activities regarding BWC implementation, identify opportunities for TTA, and provide TTA in efficient and effective manners. Although site-based awardees are prioritized, TTA is available to all law enforcement and criminal justice agencies looking to implement or improve BWC technology, policy, practice, or research.

- **Topic areas.** All areas related to body-worn camera implementation (legal, policy, privacy, procurement and budgeting, research, stakeholders, technology, and training)
- **Website.** https://www.justicestrategies.com/body-worn-camera
- **Request TTA.** https://www.justicestrategies.com/body-worn-camera/request-tta

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) TTA Program

The BJA Sexual Assault Kit initiative (SAKI) provides funding through a competitive grant program to support the comprehensive reform of jurisdictions' approaches to sexual assault cases resulting from evidence found in sexual assault kits (SAK) never submitted to a crime laboratory.

The SAKI National Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Program provides direct assistance to jurisdictions that receive funding through SAKI as well as other jurisdictions engaged in reform efforts. TTA is provided to assist jurisdictions in establishing sustainable change in practices, protocols, and policies relating to untested SAKs and sexual assault response.

- **Topic areas.** For law enforcement, including specific topics for sexual assault investigations, practices, protocols and policies
- **Website.** https://www.sakitta.org/
- **Request TTA.** https://www.sakitta.org/effective-practices

VALOR Officer Safety and Wellness Program

The Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative is an effort to improve the immediate and long-term safety, wellness, and resilience of law enforcement officers. Through a multifaceted approach that includes delivering no-cost training and professional education, conducting research, developing and providing resources, and establishing partnerships that benefit law enforcement officers, VALOR seeks to provide our nation's law enforcement officers with innovative, useful, and valuable resources.

- **Website.** https://www.valorforblue.org/
- **Clearinghouse.** The VALOR Clearinghouse offers a vast set of resources on topics related to officer safety and wellness. Search the library of materials by several different parameters. Save them to a Collection to share and download for later use. https://www.valorforblue.org/Clearinghouse
- **eLearning dashboard.** The eLearning dashboard houses all of VALOR's on-the-go learning opportunities. Online training topics include active shooter, ambush awareness, casualty care and rescue tactics, health and wellness, professionalism, and more. https://www.valorforblue.org/eLearning
- **Law Enforcement Officer Safety toolkit.** This toolkit hosts a wide array of resources to educate and prepare law enforcement for some of today's most pressing officer safety concerns. Agencies can use the materials in this toolkit to build staff skill sets or enhance agency training programs. https://www.valorforblue.org/Toolkits

- **VALOR Officer Safety app.** This app promotes mental and physical preparation to help agencies successfully meet the needs of the communities they serve. https://www.valorforblue.org/VALOR-App

OVC TTAC (Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center)

OVC TTAC is the gateway to current TTA for victim service providers and allied professionals who serve crime victims. OVC TTAC draws on the expertise of a network of consultants and seasoned victim service professionals with firsthand experience in designing and delivering customized responses to satisfy a variety of TTA needs. From this comprehensive database of experts, it can provide developmental support, mentoring, and facilitation to assist in program design and implementation, strategic planning, program management, evaluation, quality improvement, collaboration, and community coordination.

OVC TTAC is committed to building the capacity of those who work with victims across the country. Its no-cost tools and resources are designed to enhance skills and knowledge, better equipping agencies to assist victims of crime.

- **Topic areas.** Human trafficking, legal assistance for crime victims, mass violence and terrorism, sexual assault nurse examiners and sexual assault response teams, tribal victim assistance, and vicarious trauma.
- **Website.** https://www.ovcttac.gov/
- **Request TTA.** https://www.ovcttac.gov/HowWeCanHelp/

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) TTA

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. A major component of these efforts is the provision of training and technical assistance resources that address the needs of juvenile justice practitioners and support state and local efforts to build capacity and expand the use of evidence-based practices. A directory of OJJDP TTA providers dedicated to delivering targeted TTA to policymakers and practitioners is located at Access Provider Directory (https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/TTA-Provider-Directory-March-2019.pdf).

- **Topic areas.** Offers a broad array of services and support to build knowledge among practitioners and stakeholders in the juvenile justice and child victimization fields.

- **Website.** https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/2019-NTTAC-Brochure.pdf
- **Request TTA.** https://tta360.ojjdp.ojp.gov

Law Enforcement Mental Health Learning Sites

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, with assistance from a team of national experts and BJA, created national Law Enforcement Mental Health Learning Sites to assist and enhance relations between law enforcement and people with mental health needs. BJA selected 10 learning sites that represent a diverse cross-section of perspectives and program examples and are dedicated to helping other jurisdictions improve their responses to people who have mental health needs. The learning sites provide peer support through guidance, resources and strategic planning through email, conference calls, or onsite assistance. Technical assistance is provided to law enforcement agencies at no cost. The only potential associated cost is for travel, if the technical assistance provided includes a site visit or other in-person assistance. Supplemental funds may be available on a case-by-case basis.

- **Topic areas.** A wide range of expertise related to law enforcement-mental health collaborations involving crisis intervention training, co-responder models with follow-up teams, comprehensive dispatcher training, embedded mental health professionals, and police officers trained as mental health liaisons.
- **Website.** https://csgjusticecenter.org/projects/police-mental-health-collaboration-pmhc/law-enforcement-mental-health-learning-sites/

Other Useful Online Resources

National Public Safety Partnerships (PSP) Clearinghouse

The PSP Clearinghouse was launched in 2017 to provide a single point of access to DOJ violence reduction and public safety resources for the criminal justice field. A public online tool serves as a one-stop shop for violence reduction and public safety resources from the DOJ and other federal entities. The clearinghouse includes an online catalog for users to browse, search, and build a custom toolkit of resources, which can be downloaded in one package and shared with others for future access.

The clearinghouse has 17 topic areas and contains hundreds of trainings, technical assistance opportunities, publications, lessons learned, webinars, programs and practices, and other resources publicly available to any jurisdiction in the criminal justice field. Each topic has question-style sub-filters to allow the user to refine the resource list further.

- **Topic areas**
  - Community policing
  - Corrections
  - Crime analysis
  - Crime prevention
  - Domestic violence
  - Drug crime
  - Gang violence
  - Homicide
  - Human trafficking
  - Intelligence/Information sharing
  - Officer Safety/Wellness
  - Prosecution
  - Sex crimes
  - Social media
  - Technology
  - Victim/Witness assistance
  - Youth violence
- **Website.** https://www.nationalpublicsafetypartnership.org/clearinghouse/

CrimeSolutions

CrimeSolutions is a central resource to help practitioners and policymakers understand what works in justice-related programs and practices. Its purpose is to assist in practical decision making and program implementation by gathering information on justice-related programs and practices and reviewing evaluation and meta-analysis research against standard criteria.

- **Website.** https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/

The Office of Justice Program's Funding Resource Center

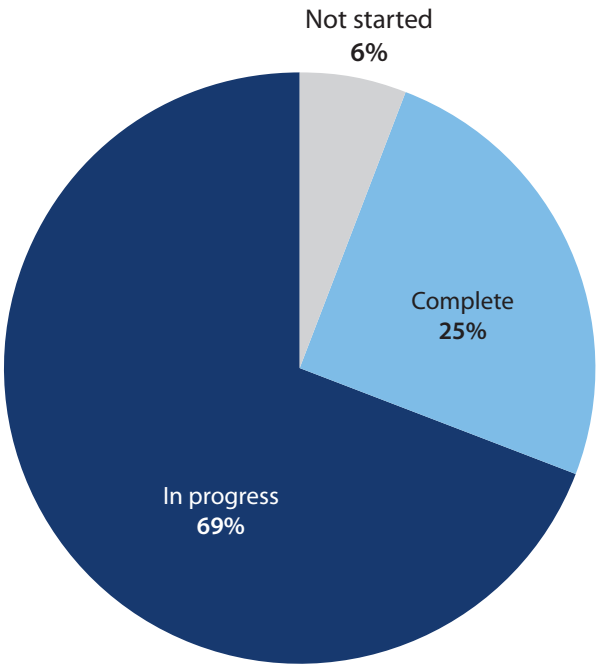
The center provides access to information about funding opportunities and an overview of OJP's grant process.

- **Website.** https://www.ojp.gov/funding

Appendix B. Findings & Recommendations

The findings and recommendations in this section were provided to the DHPD during its CRI OA engagement. As of October 2024, as shown in figure 4, nine recommendations are complete, 25 recommendations are in progress, and two recommendations are not started. We commend the department on its dedication to continuous learning and improvement.

Figure 4. CRI OA recommendations status October 2024—Dearborn Heights Police Department



Focus area 1. Community engagement and problem-solving strategies

Finding 1.1: While the DHPD has increased their community engagement activities, the department does not have a comprehensive or systematic community policing approach.

Throughout 2023, the DHPD has engaged in multiple outreach activities aimed at building relationships with the communities it serves. These activities have included DHPD-organized events where community members socialize with DHPD personnel, such as Heroes and Helpers (https://www.instagram.com/dearbornheightspolice/p/C07nwkQMfEt); Cops, Coffee, and Chrome (https://www.instagram.com/p/CxTnIG9Rrn0); and Trunk or Treat (https://www.instagram.com/dearbornheightscityhall/p/DBhsWCkMiKI). These events have generally been

well-attended and received. DHPD leadership and personnel also attend community meetings led by local organizations and neighborhood associations. During the CRI OA team's review, community members reported inconsistent engagement from the DHPD for some events. For example, the DHPD does not attend some community meetings as engaged participants or partners and does not attend some others at all. Another example a community member described was a positive initial contact during a neighborhood association meeting, culminating in department leadership promising to share data. However, the community member said, the department did not follow through on this assurance. Law enforcement organizations may have reasonable explanations for not sharing specific data; however, without follow-up communication acknowledging a request and the reasons that it may or may not be granted, the DHPD may undermine its efforts and strain relationships it has fostered.

While these community events are important and should continue, true and effective community engagement and community policing cannot be isolated to community events or delegated to specific people; everyone in the department, sworn and civilian, plays an important role. "Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime."[5] The DHPD does not have a comprehensive department-wide focus and approach to community policing.

In addition, the DHPD does not have a formal and effective avenue for community members to consistently share feedback and recommendations directly with the department. The DHPD uses social media, public events, and a quarterly city newsletter to share some information about its current initiatives and practices. DHPD's social media (Facebook) is managed by the city. The department is looking to expand its public information function and presence on social media in the future. However, there are limited opportunities for productive two-way exchanges of information. Before staffing levels required that many DHPD officers in specialty positions be moved to patrol, the department had a Crime Prevention Officer who served as a point of contact for community members to reach out to with concerns. This officer also conducted business checks, led awareness campaigns, and attended community meetings. During the CRI OA team's interviews and a community listening session, community members showed interest in the DHPD and shared a variety of recommendations for the department. For example, community members expressed the need for increased traffic enforcement, the importance of mental health response training for officers, concerns about available data, and suggestions for crime deterrence strategies.

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5. COPS Office (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services), *Community Policing Defined* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014), https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p157.

Recommendation 1.1.a: Develop a community engagement plan.

The DHPD should work to develop a culture in which all members of the department understand that service to and engagement with the community is central to its mission and values. A community engagement plan is an important first step to becoming an effective community policing agency. The DHPD may first consider developing a short-term (six- to 12-month) community engagement plan, which can later be refined and enhanced. The department should consider including the following components:

- Clearly defined goals and objectives for community engagement that align with the department's mission and values
  - Key messaging points
  - Relevant policies and training
- Specific proposed outreach activities, such as
  - nonenforcement community engagement activities for officers;[6]
  - partnerships and collaborations with other agencies, organizations, businesses, and community groups and leaders;
  - community outreach events that are conducted on a regular basis;
  - opportunities for the community to have a voice regarding DHPD policies,[7] strategies, or efforts (see recommendation 1.1.c)
- Communication strategies, including data and information to be shared internally and externally and methods to ensure the closure of feedback loops
- Risks, challenges, mitigation strategies
- Desired outputs and outcomes

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6. Pillar One: Building Trust and Legitimacy of the *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* notes, "Law enforcement agencies should also proactively promote public trust by initiating positive non-enforcement activities to engage communities that typically have high rates of investigative and enforcement involvement with government agencies." Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p311.

7. Pillar Two: Policy and Oversight of the *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* emphasizes that department policies should reflect the values of the community, recommending that police collaborate with all communities, especially those that are subject to the highest levels of crime. Example policies that should include community input include officer deployment strategies, community collaboration, and crime reduction initiatives. Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report* (see note 5).

- Roles and responsibilities of department personnel (officers, investigators, supervisors, executive leadership, analyst, civilian staff) and community
- Timeline
- Evaluation methods

The DHPD should also look to relevant research and resources about community engagement and the philosophy of community policing to direct its plan and actions. In addition, the department should identify internal champions to aid in implementation efforts. Some department personnel attended a problem-oriented policing conference in August 2023. This conference served as an opportunity to empower officers to identify and collaboratively work to solve problems, which can be replicated as a component of the plan.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 1.1.b: Consider ways to promote a culture of community policing across the department.

Authentic and effective community policing requires all department personnel, not just patrol officers, to be community-focused in their daily activities. In addition to specific activities that officers may engage in, the DHPD may consider the following as examples of ways to further institutionalize community policing:

- Setting the expectation that a portion of discretionary time during a shift be dedicated to meaningful nonenforcement activities, such as problem solving, situational prevention, and community collaboration
- Requiring demonstrated competency in community policing for promotion (such as the ability to form productive partnerships or the completion of a successful problem-solving project)
- Developing awards to commend officers who perform exceptionally in areas related to community engagement and problem solving
- Revising the performance evaluation system to incorporate community engagement and problem-solving performance criteria
- Expanding external communications to promote collaborative and interactive community engagement with community members by sharing positive stories and encouraging community input
- Updating relevant policies to include community policing elements, as possible

Status: In progress

Recommendation 1.1.c: Following the development of a community engagement plan (recommendation 1.1.a), consider implementing a community advisory committee to give community members voice and opportunities to provide input regarding department policies and practices.

Community advisory committees[8] are valuable because they build trust, communication, and transparency between the police and civilians. They allow community members to have voice and input into department efforts, as well as providing a forum for police to convey information and build trust.

Committee membership should be as diverse and inclusive as possible to reflect the demographics of Dearborn Heights. Committees often include representatives or leaders of the business community, faith-based groups, marginalized groups, local government, youth, and community service providers. Some communities use private, third-party organizations to select members for their committees. For example, some departments use an existing local organization of stakeholder engagement and communication professionals to help identify the most appropriate individuals to serve on their community advisory committees. This input from outside organizations can remove potential bias, real or perceived, from the selection process.

Community advisory committees can vary in level of input and engagement but work best when they have specific areas of focus and clearly identified goals and objectives. Example areas include policy development, community outreach and engagement, new technology use and deployment protocols, problem solving to address chronic safety problems, and training programs. Committees often meet on a regular basis to hear from department leadership on current and planned initiatives and to develop agendas and goals.

The department may also consider existing current city entities, such as the Community & Cultural Relations Commission, to gather input regarding department operations and priorities.

Status: In progress

8. For a detailed report about Community Advisory Councils, see Julian Clark and Barry Friedman, *Community Advisory Boards: What Works and What Doesn't* (New York: NYU School of Law Policing Project, 2020), https://www.policingproject.org/cab.

Finding 1.2: DHPD investigators do not currently engage in systematic victim and witness support.

Policy 600 Investigation and Prosecution states that officers responding to a crime "shall make reasonable attempts to locate, identify and interview all available victims, complainants, witnesses and suspects." In interviews with investigative personnel, many reported that witness and victim contact information collected by responding patrol officers was not always accurately reflected in the related offense report.

Policy 600 also states that investigators "shall attempt to make contact with a victim within 24 hours of receiving the report." However, there are currently no guidelines requiring continued contact with victims and witnesses. The assessment SME asked how victims of crimes were notified about the status of their cases or contacted to engage in follow-up investigative work and were unanimously told the only method of contact was through the telephone. One community member said they witnessed a crime but did not feel the responding DHPD officers took it seriously or conducted appropriate follow-up until months later, when a similar crime was committed. While it is certainly not possible that an investigation will always come to a quick conclusion, lack of clear communication throughout likely affects the community's trust and confidence in the department.

In addition, policy 600 does not require investigators to provide victims and witnesses with information about available resources. DHPD personnel lack a detailed understanding of what services can be directed to victims of crime.

Recommendation 1.2.a: Inventory the resources available to assist victims of crime and conduct department-wide training to educate personnel on these available resources.

The department should work with other community organizations, service providers, city departments, and possibly the Wayne County Attorney's Office to compile a list of resources available to assist victims of crime. An individual should be assigned responsibility for keeping this resource up to date and distributing updates to officers. All officers should be trained and familiar with the resources that are available, and updates should be provided to them on a regular basis during roll calls. Officers should be provided with easy-to-access materials (brochures, resource cards, flyers, etc.) in multiple relevant languages to provide to crime victims. These materials should be provided in accessible formats to community members. They should also receive training on trauma-informed, victim-centered, and culturally sensitive approaches (e.g., training on how to speak to victims regarding the resources that are available to them and conducting trauma-informed interviews).

Status: In progress

Recommendation 1.2.b: Develop or amend policy to reflect additional protocols to communicate with victims of crime.

Policies should be developed or amended to outline these modes of communication and accountability mechanisms to ensure personnel follow through and do so in a victim-centered, trauma-informed manner. Serious crimes, such as homicides, nonfatal shootings, domestic violence, and sexual assaults should be given special attention by the agency through tailored policies and procedures. The DHPD should consider the following additional methods to communicate with crime victims and their family members:

- Victim services resource letters (from detectives) and flyers (patrol handouts) with investigator and responding officer contact information
- Personal visits to interview and follow up with victims in the field
- Email or texting
- Advocacy outreach to garner victim and witness cooperation
- Homicide support groups or similar models to support survivors or secondary victims of crime[9]

Status: In progress

Recommendation 1.2.c: Establish a working group of internal and external stakeholders to research and build a trauma-informed, victim-centered, and culturally sensitive strategy.

A victim-centered approach or strategy means that investigators or department personnel prioritize victims' needs and interests. Such an approach respects victims' dignity and provides them with nonjudgmental assistance. It also focuses on ensuring victims are safe and supported, understand their rights, and receive services to rebuild their lives.

Members of this working group should include DHPD personnel from the patrol and detective bureaus, along with representatives from the Wayne County Prosecutors' Office, advocacy organizations, and service providers.

Status: Not started

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9. More information about homicide support groups can be found at CNA, *Engaging Survivors of Crime with Empathy and Compassion: A Toolkit for Establishing Homicide Support Groups* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2023), https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-r1129; Keri Richardson et al., *Supporting a Safer Community in Richmond: Secondary Victims and the Beginning of Homicide Support Groups* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2020), https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-w0914; and Benjamin Carleton and Rodney Monroe, *Supporting a Safer Community in Charlotte: Secondary Victims and the Beginning of Homicide Support Groups* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2020), https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-w0913.

Focus area 2. Accountability and oversight systems

Finding 2.1: DHPD does not have standard guidelines or measures for evaluating employee performance.

DHPD Policy 1001 Performance Evaluations notes that the department shall use two types of evaluations: regular and special evaluations. The policy further states that regular evaluations are to be conducted at "regular intervals," but does not specify at what frequency, by the employee's immediate supervisor. DHPD procedure 1001 Performance Evaluation Procedures notes that the evaluation frequency should be "at least once every year on the anniversary of the employee's date of appointment or hire." Per DHPD policy, a special evaluation can be completed at any time when deemed necessary due to less than standard performance. The policy also outlines performance rating criteria (outstanding, exceeds standards, meets standards, needs improvement, and unsatisfactory), and requires that supervisors review and document.

While DHPD policy and procedures outline a performance review process, DHPD personnel shared that, though an evaluation is conducted following the end of an officer's probationary period, the department does not conduct regular formal performance evaluations throughout their career. Officers described receiving informal feedback from their supervisors; however, the lack of a formal performance review process can lead to inconsistency in expectations for both officers and supervisors. For example, some department employees expressed that some supervisors valued enforcement activities over community interactions and vice versa. Insufficient and inconsistent feedback within DHPD can hinder department employees' professional development and growth. Regular formal assessments also provide opportunities for positive feedback and morale building among employees.

Recommendation 2.1.a: Establish and implement a performance evaluation system that is consistent with DHPD's mission.

The system should clearly define expectations of employees and the competencies by which they will be evaluated, as well as integrate both quantitative measures (e.g., crime data) and qualitative measures (e.g., efforts to engage members of the community and the partnerships they build). It should also highlight strengths, identify areas of improvement, and establish short- and long-term goals appropriate to the employee's position, along with strategies to achieve those goals. Additionally, DHPD should consider how the system is linked with other processes and databases within the department, such as disciplinary actions, promotions, training, or career development (see recommendation 5.1.c). The system should also set clear guidance

and expectations for supervisors regarding how to conduct and report on employee evaluations including their frequency and the documentation required. Executive leadership should seek input of employees in developing this system.

Status: In progress

Finding 2.2: DHPD does not have clear, standard guidelines or measures for evaluating officer misconduct, nor does it have clear processes for investigations into policy violations or potential outcomes.

DHPD policies and procedures include information regarding processes to address officer misconduct. However, these policies and procedures, and subsequent practice of addressing officer misconduct, lack detail regarding how and by which measures conduct should be evaluated. The CRI OA team identified and reviewed relevant policies and procedures related to officer misconduct, specifically covering personnel complaints and bias-based policing.

DHPD policy 1010 Personnel Complaints and procedure 1010 Personnel Complaint Procedure articulate the process through which complaints are reviewed and investigated, types of informal corrective actions that may be used, and responsibilities of those involved in the review. Policy 1010 notes in section 1010.10 the department's authority to discipline, noting that it "will act in a fair, consistent, and equitable manner." The policy also describes that if disciplinary action is initiated, "the criteria and procedures for such action are outlined in the applicable current collective bargaining agreement". However, the collective bargaining agreement for officers does not include such criteria, simply stating, "Both the City and Union agree in the concept and use of Progressive Discipline when determining if the discipline is just. The progressive discipline shall include verbal warnings, written warnings, written reprimands/probation, suspension, and termination depending on the nature of the offense." The collective bargaining agreement for supervisors has similar language regarding discipline only for just cause but no further information on how discipline is measured. As such, current policy, procedures, and agreements lack details regarding specific acts of misconduct and respective disciplinary or corrective actions that should be taken.

According to DHPD employees, the commanding officer in Internal Affairs conducts the review and investigation of complaints. They provide the directors with a finding and, if necessary, recommendations for discipline, but the final decision is ultimately made by the chief. If there is a recommendation for suspension or higher, one director will meet with the officer to discuss the implications. The officer can then request a hearing in front of the other director or appeal through the union to the act 78 commission.

DHPD policy 401 Bias-Based Policing states that "supervisors should monitor those individuals under their command for compliance," including conducting periodic reviews of mobile audio and video recordings, portable audio and video recordings, Mobile Data Computer data, and any other available resources used to document contact between officers and the public. The policy then states a supervisor should then initiate an investigation and take prompt and reasonable steps to address misconduct; however, it does not specify what "reasonable" steps would be.

Interviews with DHPD employees also revealed that internal processes, standards, and systems for accountability and oversight (e.g., disciplinary actions, supervision) are unclear to employees. DHPD employees also expressed mixed feedback about whether they believe these systems and decision-making processes are fair. Furthermore, due to the lack of standards and system, individuals conducting misconduct reviews have historically lacked training on how to appropriately do so. However, the CRI OA team learned that department members at the lieutenant level had recently participated in an external disciplinary training that covered how to conduct complaint investigations, interview techniques, and the role of the collective bargaining unit.

Recommendation 2.2.a: Establish clear policies and processes for misconduct investigations and possible outcomes to increase consistency and accountability.

Procedures could include a disciplinary model[10] or matrix for which noncompliance would be evaluated against. Many agencies use accountability and discipline matrices that outline specific behaviors and the graduated discipline based on their nature and frequency. These models promote consistency in the application of discipline and accountability.

Status: In progress

Finding 2.3: Though the department receives few complaints from community members, the intake and complainant communication processes should be improved.

The DHPD reported that it had received 51 community complaints in 2022 and 27 in 2023. Of those, six were sustained in 2022 and two were sustained in 2023. The majority of DHPD complaints from the community are about officer conduct.

10. "Chapter 4. Alternative Models for Police Disciplinary Procedures," in *Coping with Police Misconduct in West Virginia: Citizen Involvement in Officer Disciplinary Procedures*, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, accessed November 13, 2024, https://www.usccr.gov/files/pubs/sac/wv0104/ch4.htm.

The DHPD receives external complaints in writing or by phone. To make a complaint, community members are encouraged to go to the police department, request a physical complaint form, and return it by fax, by mail, or in person. The police department will also take complaints via phone. Complainants are then contacted by an investigating supervisor, as required by policy. Procedure 1010 Personnel Complaint Procedure states that this initial contact should be made within 24 hours. However, DHPD Internal Affairs leadership said that they require this contact to be made within six days. The policy also states that within three days of assignment, the complainant should be informed of the investigator's name and the complaint number. However, DHPD Internal Affairs leadership indicated that they had instituted a complaint numbering system in the last year, so historically, this policy was not being followed. While investigations are required to be completed within 90 days, the DHPD communicated that most investigations of external complaints are resolved within two weeks. However, there is no requirement to contact the complainant again until the conclusion of the investigation, when they are again contacted by phone and told the outcome of the investigation. The DHPD also mails a letter to the complainant, but only in the event that a complaint is unsubstantiated.

Recommendation 2.3.a: Expand alternative options for community members to make a complaint.

The DHPD should expand accessibility and ways in which community members can make a complaint. This includes offering individuals the option to file an anonymous complaint, accepting complaints in other formats than the formal complaint form, and making the paper form available at alternative locations from the police department headquarters (e.g., libraries, houses of worship, and community centers). The department should also develop a fillable electronic version of its complaint form. The department should work with City IT personnel to upload the form to the website. Ideally, the website would allow for submission of complaints. However, if an interim solution is needed, the DHPD should provide an email address where complaint forms or narrative complaints can be submitted.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 2.3.b: Update DHPD policy to include clear timelines for contact with complainants.

Community complainants should be contacted within 24 hours of the initial complaint filing and regularly thereafter until the conclusion of their investigation. The communication to the complainant about the assigned investigator and case number should be sent via letter or email and should also outline an expected timeline for the investigation.

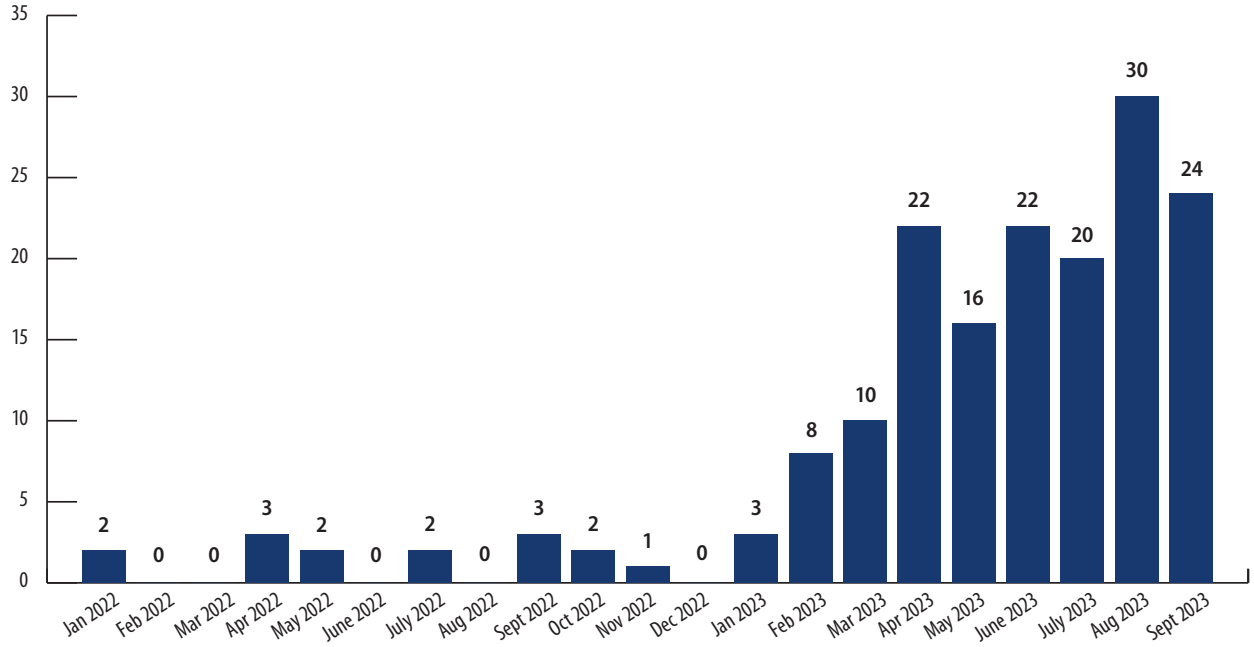
Status: In progress

Finding 2.4: DHPD's vehicle pursuits policy and reporting protocols require revisions and updates.

DHPD Directive 307, Vehicle Pursuits, outlines the department's policy for "vehicle pursuits in order to protect the safety of involved offices, the public, and fleeing subjects." In an effort to expand proactive policing, the DHPD updated its vehicle pursuits policy in January 2023. The policy authorizes officers to "initiate a pursuit when it is reasonable to believe that a suspect, who has been given an appropriate signal to stop by a law enforcement officer, is attempting to evade arrest or detention by fleeing in a vehicle." The policy provides details on officer and supervisor responsibilities, factors to consider for initiating and terminating a pursuit, pursuit driving, and more.

The CRI OA team conducted a review of DHPD vehicle pursuit data from 2022 and 2023 to better understand pursuit activity in Dearborn Heights. Between January 2022 and September 2023, the DHPD conducted a total of 170 approved vehicle pursuits (six pursuits were terminated by supervisors during this period). See figure 5. An increase in pursuits occurred beginning in February 2023, when the DHPD changed the pursuit policy. The average number of pursuits each month from June 2022 to January 2023 was 1.4, and this increased by a factor of 13.8 to an average of 19.0 pursuits each month from February 2023 to September 2023.

Figure 5. Number of pursuits initiated by Dearborn Heights Police Department by month, January 2022–September 2023 (n=170)



The majority (52.4 percent) of these pursuits were for traffic violations, while 28.2 percent were pursuits that involved felonies and 12.4 percent were pursuits that involved misdemeanors. A large amount of missing information was noted for the start and top speeds of pursuits. While it is not possible to assess the average speed of these pursuits by type, it is worth noting that maximum start and top speeds (110 mph and 140 mph, respectively) were the highest for pursuits that were initiated for traffic violations. Pursuits that were initiated for felonies had similarly high maximum start and top speeds (90 mph and 129 mph, respectively). Pursuits for misdemeanors did not have high maximum start speeds (43 mph), but at least one misdemeanor pursuit had a maximum top speed of 109 mph.

Of all 170 pursuits, 26 resulted in medical treatment (15.3 percent), 14 of which were a result of the suspect's vehicle having a collision. Arrests occurred in 58 of the 170 pursuits (34.1 percent), with the most common arrest scenario being the driver or suspect stopping their vehicle (37 pursuits), followed by pursuits ending because the suspect's vehicle had a collision (16 pursuits). Uses of force occurred in 26 pursuits (15.3 percent), 24 of which involved an arrest as well. While nine uses of force occurred after a suspect vehicle collision, 17 were noted for pursuits that had ended when the driver or suspect stopped their vehicle.

It should be noted that while the Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT maneuver) is generally allowable in policy, the department has temporarily banned its use because more than half of DHPD officers are not trained to conduct this maneuver. Many department members have also not received recent Emergency Vehicle Operations (EVO) training.

Vehicle pursuits are a long-standing and complex issue. While they are, at times, necessary to apprehend those disobeying the law, pursuits can also be dangerous for officers, those they are pursuing, and the public. This analysis of vehicle pursuits for the DHPD emphasizes the importance of the department's carefully considering when pursuits are necessary; developing specific parameters for which officers are authorized to conduct pursuits; establishing appropriate mechanisms for reporting and reviewing pursuits; and providing training for officers on policy, protocols, and safe driving.

For these reasons, moving into 2024, DHPD leadership has prioritized reviewing and updating its policy and Pursuit Report and Review form. This is a notable and important decision for ensuring the safety of officers and the DHPD community.

Recommendation 2.4.a: The DHPD should review its vehicle pursuits data and national practices and policies for vehicle pursuits to ensure proper conduct of and accountability for pursuits. These standards and guidelines should be clearly documented in DHPD's forthcoming revised policy and Pursuit and Review form.

The department should identify goals for pursuits, review their outcomes, and discern whether those goals are currently being achieved. This review includes examining and understanding the safety risks and dangers of PIT maneuvers for officers, drivers, passengers, and bystanders. Following this exercise, the department should update its pursuit policy, paying careful attention to the circumstances for authorized vehicle pursuits, limits on pursuits (e.g., top speeds and number of vehicles that can be involved), safety of PIT maneuvers, use of force following a pursuit, and when pursuits should be terminated. Further, the DHPD may consider alternatives to pursuits that may still aid them in achieving their goals. A 2023 COPS Office publication, *Vehicular Pursuits: A Guide for Law Enforcement Executives on Managing the Associated Risks*,[11] has helpful suggestions and national perspectives. The agency should also monitor the numbers of pursuits that officers are engaging in and follow up with officers who are engaging in large numbers of pursuits to ensure that they are conducting them in accordance with department policies.

Status: Complete

11. PERF (Police Executive Research Forum), *Vehicular Pursuits: A Guide for Law Enforcement Executives on Managing the Associated Risks* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2023), https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-r1134.

Recommendation 2.4.b: The DHPD should provide department members with classroom and hands-on training to properly engage in pursuits.

Some training topics to consider are as follows:

- Revised policies
- Review of national promising practices
- Revised Pursuit Report and Review form
- PIT maneuvers (if allowable)
- EVO
- De-escalation
- Supervision/accountability measures
- Fourth Amendment implications and obligations

Status: Complete

Finding 2.5: DHPD policies and practices related to use of force and review of use of force lack specificity and incorporation of national practices.

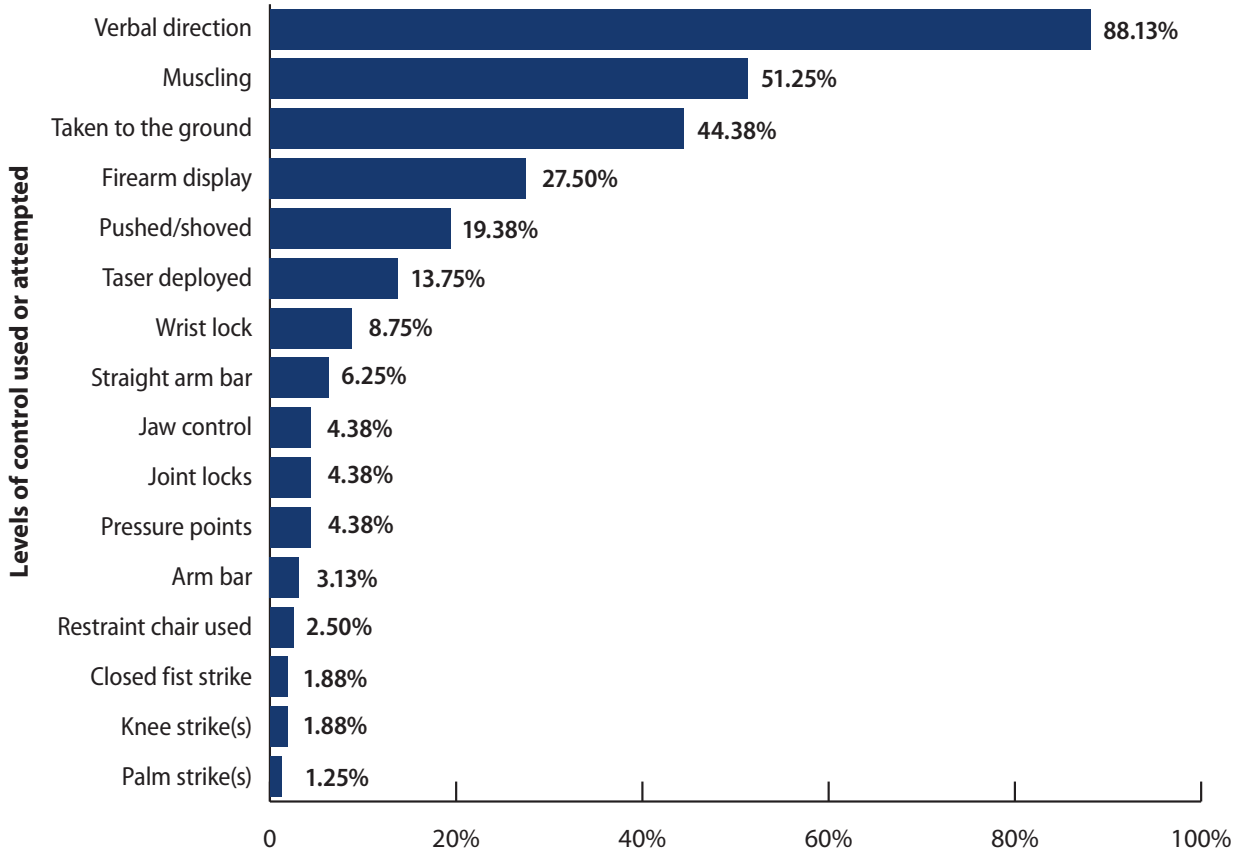
DHPD policy 300 Use of Force was last published in 2021. This policy provides overarching guidelines applicable to all forms of force; however, it lacks specifics related to various forms and levels of force (e.g., deadly force versus less lethal force, firearms, oleoresin capsicum [OC] devices and sprays [pepper spray], electronic control weapons [ECW] such as Tasers, impact weapons). Further, critical principles of de-escalation, sanctity of human life, and duty to provide medical assistance are minor components of the policy. Per policy 300, DHPD officers are required to report and document any use of force promptly, completely, and accurately in an appropriate report. The DHPD uses a computer-based reporting form provided by an outside vendor. The form includes several checkboxes for the member to report data on the officer and person(s) involved, reason for contact, type of video, use of restraint, reason for restraint, control methods, and more. The form limits an officer's ability to include a detailed narrative regarding the use of force incident, including de-escalation tactics used.

The department also has limited guidelines and protocols related to the review of use of force. Policy 301 Use of Force Review states that the department "will objectively evaluate the use of force by its members to ensure that their authority is used appropriately and consistent with training and policy." It does not elaborate on the extent of the review, review processes, or disciplinary guidelines or corrective actions. The department also lacks data and mechanisms for tracking of uses of force to inform trends and patterns related to use of force that may be addressed by further training or discipline.

To better understand the nature and extent of officers' interactions resulting in the use of force, the CRI OA team conducted a review of DHPD use of force data from January 2022 to September 2023. During this period of time, 68 DHPD members were involved in 143 use of force incidents. These incidents corresponded to 306 use of force reports. A total of 160 community members were involved in these use of force incidents.

Officers expressed lawful orders to the vast majority (92.5 percent) of the 160 community members who experienced a DHPD use of force from January 2022 to September 2023. Lawful orders were not given to 3.1 percent of community members who experienced a use of force, and that was primarily because it was impractical or unsafe to do so. The officers primarily relied on verbal direction during uses of force, with 141 community members (88.1 percent) being verbally directed on what to do (see figure 6). A total of 82 community members (51.3 percent) had control methods associated with muscling applied to them, while 71 community members (44.4 percent) were brought to the ground. The officers displayed their firearms to slightly more than 44 of the 160 community members (27.5 percent) and deployed Tasers with 22 community members (13.8 percent).

Figure 6. Dearborn Heights Police Department use of force control methods against community members, January 2022–September 2023 (n=160)



Recommendation 2.5.a: The DHPD should update its use of force policies.

The DHPD should revise policy 300 Use of Force to emphasize critical principles of de-escalation, sanctity of human life, and duties to intervene and provide medical assistance. The department should include detailed, specific guidance on levels of force (e.g., deadly force versus less lethal force), types of force options (e.g., firearms, OC spray, Tasers/ECW, impact weapons, canines), and special circumstances (e.g., fleeing persons). Policies should be consistent with Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) requirements, MCOLES, and Michigan state laws and should be reviewed regularly to incorporate promising practices and developments in applicable laws. Department members should also be trained on revisions to policy.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 2.5.b: The DHPD should review and monitor uses of force and establish appropriate accountability systems.

DHPD officers who engage in force should be able to demonstrate that the force they used complied with policy. The DHPD should update its use of force reporting form to require officers to report and describe any reportable use of force. The form should include a narrative that describes with specificity the incident, subject's actions, other circumstances for why force was needed, the officer's response, and de-escalation tactics considered or used. The DHPD should also develop and document in policy its formal review processes to ensure use of force incidents are objectively reviewed in a timely manner, including standards for when supervisors must respond to the scene of a use of force. This should include how use of force incidents are reviewed, by whom, and disciplinary guidelines or corrective actions.

The DHPD should document these revised requirements and processes in appropriate policies. It should also train employees on revisions to policies, processes, and reporting requirements.

Finally, the DHPD may consider developing a force review board to review use of force incidents. This board could also be used to assess pursuits that result in injuries (related to finding 2.4).

Status: In progress

Recommendation 2.5.c: The DHPD should track data on use of force and institute an annual review of use of force trends.

Rates of use of force are not expected to be completely static. However, it is important for the DHPD to explore the causes of dramatic increases in uses of force. The department should review trends annually, at a minimum, paying close attention to these trends' implications on, among other things, training, accountability, community trust, police legitimacy, and officer wellness.

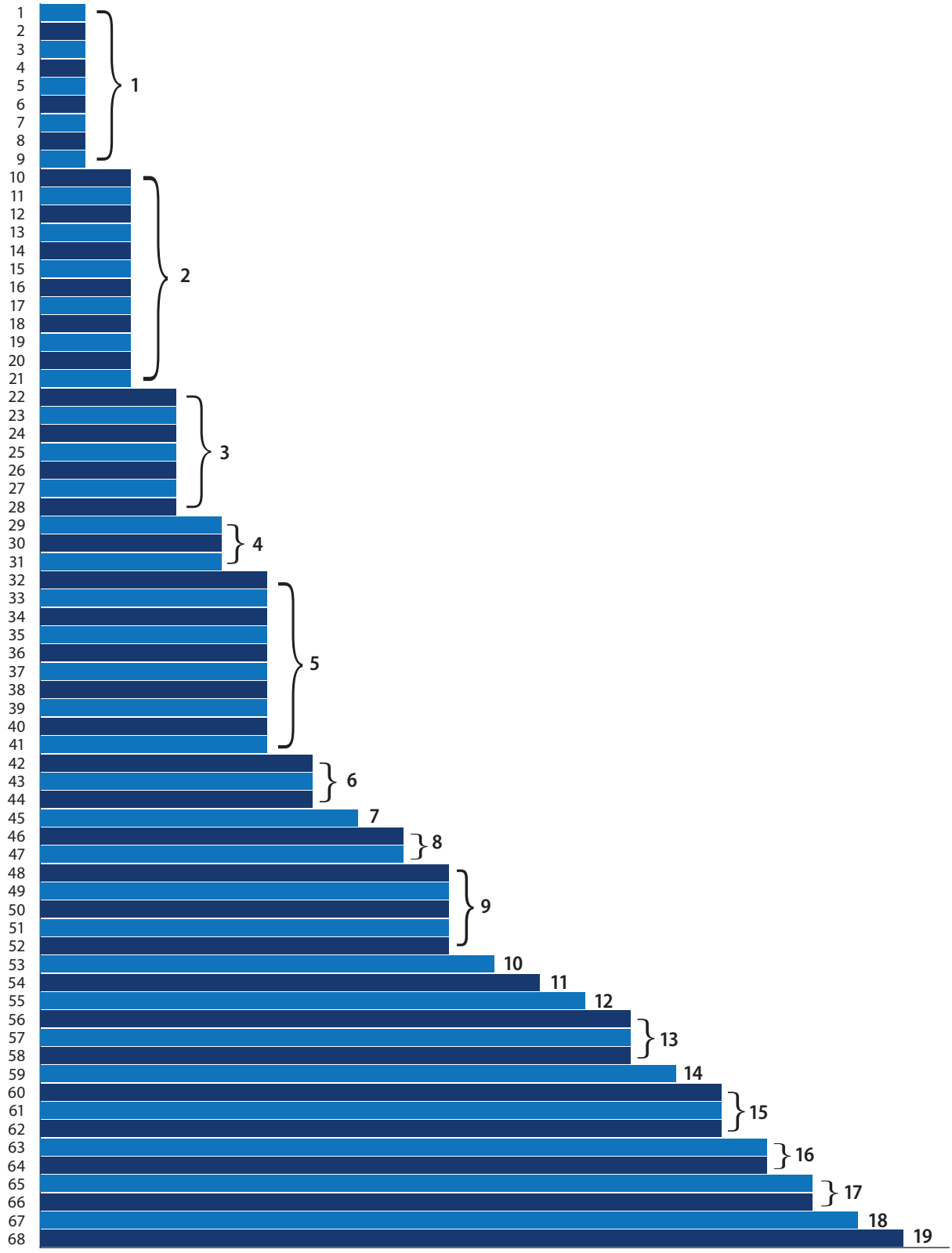
Status: Complete

Finding 2.6: The DHPD does not currently have an effective Early Intervention System (EIS).

Currently, DHPD uses an element of an existing management system to track sick time, but the department does not have a true EIS. An EIS is a data-based tool that aids departments in identifying officers who may be displaying concerning behavior and proactively address those concerns. The systems use a wide range of data sources to identify outliers. Such sources may include uses of force, vehicle pursuits and traffic collisions, misconduct complaints, injuries, secondary employment, attendance or absenteeism, overtime, member behavior, missed court appearances, or training history.

An example of data an EIS may monitor is repeated uses of force. For DHPD, from January 2022 to September 2023, a total of 68 Dearborn Heights police officers were involved in 143 use of force events. The average number of use of force events among these officers was 6.4 during this period, although 16 officers (23.5 percent) were each involved in 10 or more use of force events (see figure 7). While such uses of force may be within policy and should all be reviewed, their frequency can be one indicator that an EIS would assess. It is important for the DHPD to consider implementing a tool that can assess officers holistically and provide support.

Figure 7. Use of force events by 68 DHPD officers, January 2022–September 2023 (n=143)



Recommendation 2.6.a: Implement an EIS to increase officer accountability and support.

The DHPD should review its current management system to determine whether it has the capability to integrate measures other than potential abuse of sick time. If not, the department should explore more effective tools. A useful resource the DHPD can reference is the National Policing Institute's *Best Practices in Early Intervention System Implementation and Use in Law Enforcement Agencies*.[12] The department should ensure feedback and involvement from all affected stakeholders, particularly the collective bargaining units.

Status: Complete

Focus area 3. Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices

Finding 3.1: DHPD employees have limited opportunities for professional development and upward mobility.

Many officers and sergeants expressed interest in learning skills in addition to patrol and are unsure if opportunities to do so will arise within DHPD. Recent organizational changes and departures of staff have resulted in the diminishing of various specialty units (e.g., traffic bureau, special investigations) and roles within the department in order to ensure patrol functions are properly staffed. As a result, opportunities for lateral and upward mobility have been reduced, though some opportunities do remain for task force officer positions (e.g., Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force and Auto Theft Task Force). Of note, some challenges are outside of the department's control. For example, the officers' contract restricts the amount of time that an officer below the sergeant rank can spend in the Detectives Bureau, preventing a permanent assignment.

Officers interviewed by the CRI OA team also stated that they would like to have wider access to training and development opportunities around topics such as community policing, officer mental health, leadership training, and tactical training (e.g., de-escalation, active shooters, and traffic stops). Perceptions vary as to the availability and accessibility of professional development opportunities. Many staff stated that opportunities are regularly provided to them, often in the form of in-person and virtual external trainings or conferences, while others stated that they are largely in charge of facilitating their own professional development. This is especially true among supervisors as there is no standardized or required training upon promotion.

12. Karen L. Amendola, PhD Chief Behavioral Scientist Robert C. Davis, *Best Practices in Early Intervention System Implementation and Use in Law Enforcement Agencies* (National Police Foundation, 2018), https://www.policinginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/EarlyInterventionSystem_10.26.pdf.

Although staffing is a major concern for all members of DHPD, officers generally feel that leadership would support their requests to be away from regular duties for training and development activities. Compounding the limited opportunities for professional development is the lack of performance evaluations (see finding 2.1) meaning that staff may not have a complete understanding of expectations of their current role or a defined promotional path.

Recommendation 3.1.a: Conduct analyses of the DHPD's calls for service and overall DHPD staffing workload to better understand the functions and staffing needed for DHPD operations.

The DHPD should consider broad aspects, such as minimums mandated by the department or labor agreements, the budget of the department, and overall crime levels. In addition, the department should examine productivity of various roles, along with their required tasks. The DHPD should also specifically analyze current data to understand the nature of calls for service (frequency of various calls, average time spent on calls, location of calls, etc.) to anticipate its future needs.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 3.1.b: Upon completion of calls for service and staff analysis (recommendation 3.1.a), identify appropriate positions and units/structures needed to accomplish organizational objectives.

These positions should be articulated in the department's change management plan (recommendation 6.1.a), so that department personnel understand hiring priorities, promotional opportunities, and selection processes.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 3.1.c: Establish career development plans at all levels and positions of the department.

Plans should focus on the knowledge, skills, and abilities employees should bring to their individual assignments, duties, and responsibilities, as well as guide employees in career advancement. They can also articulate training, counseling, on-the-job learning, and other professional development opportunities to assist individuals in choosing, preparing for, and progressing in job assignments and specialties, as well as individual professional growth opportunities to promote positive job performance and satisfaction.

Status: In progress

Finding 3.2: DHPD officers receive a 40-hour annual in-service training that meets basic state requirements but lacks crucial contemporary policing topics. The department is working to restructure and refresh the training moving forward.

Each year DHPD members receive a 40-hour block of annual in-service training. DHPD policy 203 Training states that the department "shall administer a training program that will meet the standards of federal, state, local and the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) training requirements." Required topics are enumerated in DHPD procedure 203 Training Procedures and include ethics; bias-influenced policing; hazardous materials awareness; use of force policy; subject control, defensive tactics, and less lethal weapons; firearms and qualification; interacting with people with mental illness; care and supervision of detainees; emergency vehicle operations; and response to active shooters or active assailants. The frequency of these trainings is also described, detailing which topics will be covered in initial training, annually, biennially, and triennially. In March 2023, the 40-hour in-service training covered the following topics: clocks and reports, AB3[13] and ARX,[14] ordinances, first aid, animal control, technology updates, legal updates, families against narcotics or Narcan training, and autism awareness. DHPD personnel described this training as somewhat informative and helpful.

The DHPD's current training is missing several crucial topics. Particularly, there is a gap in trainings emphasizing policing responsibilities such as constitutional policing, crisis intervention teams (CIT), community policing and problem solving, cultural awareness, procedural justice, and de-escalation. Similarly, some community members expressed that some DHPD officers lack interpersonal and conflict resolution skills, particularly when responding to calls for service involving community members with mental health concerns. Training could help to address this gap and improve relationships with the Dearborn Heights community. In addition, officers interviewed by the CRI OA team said they would like to have more interactive training that focuses on exercising practical and tactical skills (e.g., de-escalation, active shooters, and traffic stops).

DHPD leadership have recognized the need to improve training for department personnel. In 2023, they identified a sergeant to lead the Training Division who is actively engaged in improving department training. The Training Sergeant has provided more training opportunities for personnel in the past year. The sergeant also plans to update the in-service training content and structure. Moving forward, the department will provide approximately 80 hours of in-service training each year by

13. Body-worn camera software used by the department

14. Internal Affairs software used by the department

shifting away from a one-week "block" structure toward monthly training throughout the year. This training includes refreshed topics for early 2024, including crime scene investigations, de-escalation strategies and critical decision-making, accident investigations, and mental and physical wellness.

Further, the DHPD is expanding partnerships that may bolster its training efficacy. The department has partnered with a local autism advocacy organization and a local Arab American museum in the past for training, but many more opportunities remain. The CRI OA team spoke with a local school district that said it had invited the DHPD to participate in an Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (ALICE) active shooter preparedness training, but the department did not take part. A local mental health organization said the DHPD had allowed representatives to introduce themselves in a roll call and leave resource materials. However, they hoped to partner on a more structured training about available resources and how to refer community members. In addition, community members in interviews were not able to recall any opportunities to provide feedback on DHPD training.

Recommendation 3.2.a: Provide additional training to the Training Sergeant and all supervisors responsible for unit-specific training on effective instruction.

Additional training can be provided to support and enhance the efforts of the Training Sergeant and other supervisors responsible for training. This training should include basic structural concepts such as adult learning models, instructional design, and curriculum development. There should also be opportunities for these individuals to develop further subject matter expertise that they may share with their supervisees.

Because of the specialized skills required for training and curriculum development, the DHPD may also consider seeking outside assistance (e.g., bringing expert trainers to the DHPD or contracting a part-time curriculum developer or writer).

Status: Complete

Recommendation 3.2.b: Update in-service training and expand training topics included to ensure their relevance to modern policing.

The department should use internal and external feedback, department data, direct observations, and national trends to identify training topics that will be more beneficial to the department and its personnel. Some topics to consider include the following:

- De-escalation
- Active bystander
- Constitutional policing
- Crisis intervention teams
- Tactical training
- Diversity and cultural awareness
- Procedural justice
- Community engagement
- Investigations
- Supervision
- Court testimonies
- Report writing

Status: Complete

Recommendation 3.2.c: Collaborate consistently with community organizations, criminal justice partners, and other local stakeholders to develop and conduct training.

The DHPD should solicit feedback about areas in which community members and partners have identified possible training gaps based on interactions with DHPD personnel. The department should use this input to guide training topics for a set number of hours within their discretionary training time. The department should also set aside time consistently (on a weekly or monthly basis) to include community partners in roll calls. In addition, DHPD should identify opportunities to co-train with other local law enforcement agencies.

Status: In progress

Focus area 4. Employee safety and wellness

Finding 4.1: Department personnel believe they are adequately equipped with resources to perform their duties; however, personnel shared there are limited resources to support their wellness.

DHPD officers affirmed that they have the basic equipment and tools necessary to do their jobs effectively. Some cited recent technology improvements, such as the department's acquisition and implementation of body-worn cameras in early 2023 and the issuance of work phones to make job functions more efficient (e.g., tagging of evidence). In addition, some department employees shared there have been recent efforts to acquire new patrol vehicles and decommission older ones. However, others shared frustrations around the lack of properly functioning vehicles on any specific day (e.g., challenges with mobile data terminals [MDT] or internet connection). The department has identified 50 support services projects to enhance tools and resources for employees. Projects completed to date include improving building lighting and landscaping. Other projects currently in progress include updating the evidence processing remove, acquiring a virtual training machine, completing a full inventory of equipment, replacing evidence cameras, updating the shooting range and training facilities, and more.

For employee wellness, DHPD personnel are provided access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and an onsite fitness center, yet few individuals noted use of these resources. DHPD leadership has expressed that employee safety and wellness are a top priority and shared with department employees several months ago they planned on improving the fitness center and creating a wellness space for officers to unwind during their breaks; however, these plans have not come to fruition. A previous peer support program was disbanded as DHPD employees departed the organization. There are no other department-level resources to promote wellness.

Employee safety and wellness is critical in all agencies, and notably important for DHPD where recent dramatic decreases in staffing levels have created staffing challenges and impacted employee morale. While there is no singular cause for this decrease in staffing, department personnel highlighted a factor being the initial compensation at DHPD being lower than departments in surrounding areas, which has required compensation through other benefits, such as retirement and overtime. Contract negotiations are currently underway regarding the base salary for officers. The reduced staffing has implications for all department employees, but its effects are felt pointedly by officers of lower seniority who can be required to work overtime if the department falls below minimum staffing levels on any given shift. These officers said that they are experiencing lower levels of mental, emotional, and physical wellness. Dispatchers in the department are also understaffed and face a tremendous amount of stress and high workloads. Furthermore, several interviewees described

other factors impacting their wellness and morale, including the ongoing officer contract negotiations and the uncertainty of the department's future (see findings 3.1 and 6.1).

Recommendation 4.1.a: Find opportunities to improve employee morale, such as acknowledging and sharing the accomplishments of DHPD employees and providing employee recognition and awards.

The DHPD should consider awards that highlight both internal and external achievements—for example, awarding excellent report writing or attendance, along with awards which recognize outstanding community interactions or firearm and controlled substance seizures. The DHPD should also consider enabling employees at various levels of the organization to recognize fellow personnel. These can include peer-, supervisor-, and executive leadership–initiated commendations. They may also include awards among a specific unit or group, such as field training officers or detectives. Further, the department should encourage supervisors to provide informal positive feedback to employees, where applicable.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 4.1.b: Develop additional employee wellness programming, with opportunities for input from all employees, sworn and civilian.

Wellness programs should include features that address all facets of personnel health: physical, emotional, psychological, etc. The DHPD should work with employees to better understand which of their wellness needs are currently being addressed and which may need additional supports. A peer support program may be of particular interest to the department. However, the DHPD should ensure there are policy and budget guidelines, clear guidance on confidentiality requirements, and initial and ongoing training to the team. The department can also consider additional wellness supports such as the following:

- Direct access to paid mental health services for personnel, both current and retired, along with their families
- A chaplaincy program that serves officers of various faiths
- Access to trainings on critical incident stress, stress management techniques, financial management, family support, time management, and health and wellness

Status: In progress

Focus area 5. Organizational learning and data-informed practices

Finding 5.1: DHPD has begun to develop crime analysis capabilities; however, crime analysis is not yet integrated into standard departmental operations.

Crime analysis is a valuable tool to law enforcement agencies as it equips agencies in identifying emerging trends, allocating resources, and planning crime prevention or public safety strategies. As a department builds its crime analysis capacity, there are several components it should consider, including (1) personnel with appropriate skills, knowledge, and abilities; (2) a defined goal and purpose of crime analysis; and (3) appropriate data, technology, and tools to support systematize processes and robust analysis.

DHPD executive leadership recognize the value of crime analysis and has dedicated personnel resources to build this capacity for the department. In May 2023, the DHPD increased its crime analysis capabilities, though it does not yet have analytical models, standardized procedures, or processes to consider how data analysis and findings should direct field operations and decision-making. The development of such resources would aid the department in properly educating the DHPD personnel responsible for collecting, maintaining, analyzing, and reporting on data in necessary skills and through potential unit expansion and personnel movement.

With regard to the goal and purpose of crime analysis for the department, DHPD policy 800 Crime Analysis outlines the general purpose, data sources, crime analysis factors, and dissemination guidelines for the crime analyst. The purpose is stated as "to utilize crime analysis as a tool in crime control and prevention efforts. This entails gathering, analyzing, and correlating data to effectively deploy the resources of this department." The DHPD's current crime analysis tasks include compiling daily crime statistics and ad hoc analyses, such as exploring trends in a recent uptick in Unlawful Driving Away of Automobile crimes in accordance with the policy. The department also plans to utilize crime analysis for a newly implemented CompStat meeting. Several department employees shared that they were unaware of how to use crime analysis in their regular functions. Others expressed that they were uninterested in doing so and would rather rely upon traditional policing strategies. It is important for DHPD to educate department employees on the utility of crime analysis as it can be a value tool to help the department more effectively prevent and respond to public safety problems.

Recommendation 5.1.a: As DHPD builds its crime analysis capabilities, it should identify and provide training and skill development opportunities for crime analysis staff.

Per the CRI OA team's continuous engagement with the DHPD in this assessment, the chief has already applied to participate in the Crime Analyst in Residence program. Using a hybrid approach of onsite and virtual technical assistance, this program aims to help law enforcement agencies in integrating tailored crime and data analysis practices, products, tools, and information more fully into their daily operations and crime reduction efforts.

Other training resources include topic-specific conferences, publications, and hands-on training (especially for software and other tools accessible to the analyst). The International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA) (https://www.iaca.net) provides several educational resources. Additional useful, free resources can be found through the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing (https://popcenter.asu.edu) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Analysis Toolkit (https://bja.ojp.gov/program/it/analysis-toolkit). In addition to IACA, other relevant associations or listservs of interest include the following:

- **National Policing Institute**
  https://www.policinginstitute.org
- **Urban Institute Justice Policy Center**
  https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/justice-policy-center
- **Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy**
  https://cebcp.org

Status: Complete

Recommendation 5.1.b: Engage department employees in discussions to determine the primary objective(s) or functions of crime analysis and to increase understanding of the value and supports of crime analysis.

The objectives and function of crime analysis can be multifaceted, from supporting patrol functions to addressing persistent crime concerns to developing long-term prevention and reduction strategies. Determining the initial need and desired function of crime analysis for the DHPD will help inform the level of engagement the analyst should have with different units or positions and the type of products the analyst should develop. DHPD leadership and the analyst should spend time discussing how crime analysis can be used with personnel across DHPD to inform decision of span of control of influence for crime analysis. In addition, to further build awareness across the department of the value and utility of crime analysis, the analyst can also make a concerted effort to show how analysis products are helpful to patrol officers and

detectives. This can be done by creating sample products and participating regularly in roll calls, detective meetings, and ride-alongs regularly to maintain rapport with end users and to market abilities of the analyst. Finally, DHPD leadership should consider training supervisors on crime analysis. This can be accomplished by bringing in outside crime analysis subject matter experts or reviewing resources such as the Crime Analysis for Executives webinar (https://www.nationalpublicsafetypartnership.org/Webinars-And-Podcasts/crime-analysis-for-executives). The webinar provides insight on how a crime analyst can support executives or managers with strategic or tactical decision making. Topics include what to expect from a crime analyst; how to make effective use of crime analysis; supporting and managing crime analysts; and more.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 5.1.c: Assess data and technology requirements to meet the identified objectives and function of crime analysis.

Data and technology play a critical role in ensuring that crime analysis is timely, relevant, and actionable for decision-makers. Once the DHPD has defined the primary objective(s) and functions of the crime analyst, it should assess and acquire access to necessary data sources (crime and non-crime) to allow them to generate a comprehensive understanding of community safety issues in Dearborn Heights. Timely access to data is critical and should not be reliant on making outside requests to data, but rather through direct access to source databases. Such data sources may be calls for service, reported crime records, intelligence records, traffic crash or citation records, census, business licensing or permitting, public records, and more. In addition to data, the DHPD should examine the technology required to support the collection, storage, management of analysis of data. This includes analytic software (e.g., SPSS, Qlik, Power BI, Tableau, ArcGIS), as well as hardware, such as workstations with sufficient processing capacity and memory.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 5.1.d: Learn about CompStat[15] principles, practices, and models to inform the implementation of CompStat for the DHPD.

CompStat provides the DHPD a performance management tool to consider information in a timely manner while also increasing accountability and information sharing across the department. It can increase understanding and analysis of the crime and disorder problems occurring in Dearborn Heights and should incorporate problem-oriented policing principles and practices. As the DHPD develops and

15. CompStat (also written as COMPStat, CommStat, ComStat, and other variations in different agencies) stands for "computer statistics," which is a performance management tool used in police departments to track and reduce crime and achieve other department goals.

implements its new CompStat process, those involved should explore and observe CompStat models from other agencies and related informational resources to develop an approach appropriate to the public safety issues and priorities relevant to the DHPD and its community.

Status: In progress

Focus Area 6. Internal and External Communications

Finding 6.1: The Dearborn Heights Police Department (DHPD) has gone through several structural, operational, and policy changes in the past year. DHPD employees expressed that these changes have resulted in a lack of clarity about the department's overarching mission, goals, and practices currently and in the future.

Dearborn Heights Police Department (DHPD) executive leadership team has taken great strides over the past year to align the agency's administration and operations with modern promising practices. For example, the department executive leadership has taken steps to fill previous gaps within the department, such as hiring a sergeant to improve training and recruitment processes. Further, they have acquired several new patrol vehicles to enhance officer safety, reliability, and functionality. In addition, the executive leadership has worked to gather, properly organize, and secure critical files and evidence.

However, the purposes for these changes, as well as the leadership's overall mission and vision for the department moving forward, have not always been well understood and recognized by department members. Department employees shared that changes have occurred frequently, resulting in a sense of uncertainty. Further, they described having few opportunities to provide input on changes. Moreover, department employees expressed that DHPD leadership should improve communications regarding why and how changes occur. For example, recent staffing needs have required assignment changes for various department employees. Leadership has worked within the confines of the current union contract to inform personnel about these changes. However, since these changes have been made piecemeal, employees expressed that it would be helpful to have an understanding of all expected reassignments so they can not only properly prepare but also have an overall understanding of new department structure.

Recommendation 6.1.a: Develop a change management plan to outline the vision, outcomes, goals, strategies, and actions for the department in the near-term (next 6-12 months).

Executive leadership should collaborate with department employees in developing this plan to demonstrate fairness, voice, transparency, and impartiality in decision-making (also known as internal procedural justice [https://cops.usdoj.gov/proceduraljustice]). They should also track implementation of the plan and review progress to assess opportunities for continuous improvement.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 6.1.b: Document recent DHPD improvements and successes achieved and share and celebrate them internally and externally.

Sharing the accomplishments from the past year will aid in creating a positive path forward for change and in ensuring every level of the organization feels the support of leadership. This messaging should be consistent with the department's mission and change management plan, so department members understand they are working towards the same goals. The DHPD should continue to share these messages regularly to help ensure a cohesive workforce that is focused on shared values and goals. Messages can be shared through various methods, such as in-person roll call meetings, a chief's video blog, news releases, social media, email and more (see Recommendation 2a for more on department communication).

Status: Complete

Recommendation 6.1.c: To enhance communication and engagement with department employees in various positions and ranks, introduce a formal means of participation in decision-making and change management through a task force or a steering committee.

DHPD leadership has made important efforts in the past month to improve communication and give department employees voice in decision-making. For example, the chief recently established an Implementation Committee with the purpose of enhancing communication, soliciting feedback, and providing DHPD personnel the opportunity to advise on decision-making and change management within the organization. The committee plans to meet monthly and commenced its first meeting in September 2023.

Status: In progress

Finding 6.2: DHPD employees would benefit from more frequent in-person communications and interactions with DHPD executive leadership.

Some department personnel reported the primary form of executive leadership communication is email. Some noted this communication is informative and adequate for departmental updates. However, many DHPD employees shared that some information, especially surrounding policies and procedures, would be more effective if initially communicated verbally with additional background and context. Some officers noted that executive leadership has attended roll call meetings recently to share information about procedural changes and felt more of that would be helpful. Department supervisors reported they have limited in-person communication with DHPD executive leadership and expressed that in-person meetings and interactions should have a clear purpose and be productive.

Recommendation 6.2.a: Improve internal communication within the police department by developing and implementing transparent, frequent communication that promotes positive change and articulates policies, processes, and decision-making.

Executive leadership should make a concerted effort to regularly and personally interact with as many department personnel as possible in the agency (e.g., through holding formal meetings, attending roll calls, conducting ride-alongs, connecting with officers when responding to a scene, and having informal one-on-one exchanges).

Status: In progress

Finding 6.3: Partnerships between the DHPD and local criminal justice stakeholders are lacking in quantity and depth.

While two DHPD officers are currently serving on task forces in the area—the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) task force and a regional automotive theft task force—their assignments have not yet increased collaboration and information-sharing. Task Force Officers (TFO) said they are not included in any recurring DHPD strategy, crime, or accountability meetings to improve the flow of routine intelligence and updates between agencies.

The DHPD could also better leverage local partnerships with criminal justice stakeholders. The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office said there was a significant opportunity to further partner with the DHPD. For example, automotive theft has been reported as a significant concern in Dearborn Heights. However, the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office personnel interviewed relayed that they rarely receive cases related to auto theft from the DHPD. In addition, both city and county prosecutorial partners said the investigative cases often lacked relevant content. They conveyed that the DHPD should work to develop increased quality control and established review

of the work and documentation being completed by both investigations personnel and patrol officers. It would be helpful to both agencies to understand the barriers to developing strong cases and identify a strategy to improve efforts. The prosecutor's office offered to provide training to the DHPD on a recurring basis, or as needed, and to work with the agency to build better feedback and accountability loops. The same offer of support was made by the city prosecutor.

On a federal and state level, the DHPD currently works with Michigan State Police (MSP) for officer-involved shootings and major traffic-related investigations. The department also attends Building Respect In Diverse Groups to Enhance Sensitivity (BRIDGES) meetings led by the USAO for the Eastern District of Michigan. These meetings, attended by local law enforcement and community stakeholders, aim to address concerns in the Arab American and Middle Eastern communities. In addition, while there were no existing partnerships with Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), there was hope that with the hiring of a former member of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), a relationship with that agency could be developed. Specifically, the ATF has resources that most law enforcement agencies use to improve investigations of gun crimes. These resources include the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and eTrace, which automates ballistics evaluations and provides actionable investigative leads in a timely manner. No investigations personnel interviewed could explain what NIBIN or eTrace was, and none were aware of any type of follow-up that is conducted or leveraged from crime guns or shell casings recovered in their city.

Recommendation 6.3.a: Consider establishing recurring meetings between senior DHPD leadership, senior personnel at the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, and the City Attorney's Office.

These meetings should include discussions of trends, areas for improvement, and statuses of cases being submitted or pending prosecution, along with opportunities for training and legal updates.

Status: Not started

Recommendation 6.3.b: Establish a quarterly meeting between DHPD leadership, the DHPD TFOs, and their associated task force supervisors to report back to the agency on the work being performed by the group and the assigned TFO.

These meetings should also highlight the work by the task force to impact and identify the narcotics and auto theft trends, respectively, occurring in Dearborn Heights.

Status: Complete

Recommendation 6.3.c: DHPD leadership should communicate or meet with all federal agencies quarterly, at a minimum, to build relationships that leverage the assets of the FBI, ATF, USMS, DEA, and USAO to further the DHPD's criminal investigations.

These meetings should include discussion of relevant strategies and operations along with opportunities for collaboration and/or training.

Status: In progress

Recommendation 6.3.d: Consider ways to expand relationships with local, neighboring law enforcement agencies.

Public safety issues can often transfer city limits; thus, relationships with neighboring law enforcement agencies can be beneficial. The DHPD should continue to find opportunities to build these relationships. For example, the DHPD can engage with groups led by other stakeholders. For example, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights heads the Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust (ALPACT). The DHPD can also explore ways to leverage its current participation in BRIDGES to address its own community's needs, as well as collaboration with neighboring police agencies, such as the Dearborn Police Department.

Status: In progress

About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When law enforcement and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than $20 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 138,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- More than 800,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office–funded training organizations and the COPS Training Portal.
- More than 1,000 agencies have received customized advice and peer-led technical assistance through the COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than nine million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.

The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement. COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, https://cops.usdoj.gov.

The COPS Office's Collaborative Reform Initiative Organizational Assessment program offers law enforcement agencies intensive technical assistance and in-depth assessments on systemic issues that challenge community trust and confidence. In 2023 and 2024, a multidisciplinary team worked with the Dearborn Heights (Michigan) Police Department to identify areas for change, reinforce agency strengths, and assist with the expeditious implementation of improvements while providing transparency and accountability with routine public reporting.

COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

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