

Safer Neighborhoods through Precision Policing Initiative: Louisville Metro Police Department



Chief Steve Conrad
Theron L. Bowman, PhD, Strategic Site Coordinator, CNA
Christopher M. Sun, Operations Analyst, CNA

INTRODUCTION

The Louisville, Kentucky, Metro Police Department (LMPD) was one of the 15 departments selected to participate in the Safer Neighborhoods through Precision Policing Initiative (SNPPI). SNPPI provides policy review, assessments, training, and technical assistance to a cohort of law enforcement agencies across the nation based on the President's 21st Century Policing Task Force report. The four goals of the initiative are to:

- Identify promising strategies that reduce crime
- Protect officer's safety and wellness
- Establish productive interagency partnerships with law enforcement and community stakeholders
- Implement innovative and effective technologies to help police departments safeguard neighborhoods.

This report highlights LMPD initiatives, actions, and success around these SNPPI goals. ▀

METHODOLOGY

Each of the 15 selected departments is assigned a CNA Strategic Site Coordinator (SSC) and operations analyst to assist with planning, implementation, coordination, and delivery of technical assistance. CNA worked with the Louisville Metro Police Department to develop a customized strategy to capitalize on the great work already in progress across the four policing principles. To do this, CNA looked at the Louisville Police Department's policies and practices related to: crime reduction efforts, policy effectiveness, technological capabilities, training structures and offerings, and officer safety and wellness philosophies. The CNA team then helped identify the training and technical assistance (TTA) opportunities and additional tools and resources to enhance areas related to the principles of precision policing. These strengths and initiatives were documented and will be available to police departments nationwide to implement proven policing practices that promote public safety. ▀

Louisville Metro Police Department Profile

The Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) began operations on January 6, 2003, as part of the creation of the consolidated city-county government in Louisville, Kentucky. It was formed by the merger of the Jefferson County Police Department and the Louisville Division of Police. LMPD divides Jefferson County into eight patrol divisions and operates a number of special investigative and support units.

Leadership: Chief Steve Conrad
(since 2012)

Population: Approx. 685,000 residents

Area: 399 sq. miles

Sworn Officers: 1,235 (as of January 2018)

Total Crime (2017): 32,718 offenses
– Violent Crime: 4,624 offenses
– Property Crime: 28,094 offenses

Website: <http://www.louisville-police.org/>



IDENTIFY PROMISING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE CRIME

Prior to becoming a SNPPI site, Louisville had a number of initiatives that made it a national leader in supporting effective policing practices that engage the community to reduce crime. Below are two initiatives that set the tone for much of the work LMPD has done under SNPPI.

One Love Louisville

Between 2009 and 2014, Louisville experienced 1,320 violent deaths—deaths due to homicide, suicide, or drug overdose. Recognizing the sheer number of these cases in Louisville and the impact it was having on the community, Mayor Greg Fischer developed the Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods (OSHN) to address this issue in a collaborative way across Louisville metro departments, residents, and community organizations. The guiding framework for this initiative is that those involved would have a common agenda, shared management, continuous communication, and a backbone organization (the OSHN) coordinating activities across the entities.

Under this Initiative, LMPD supported the prevention of homicide within the city. Enhancements to LMPD's crime fighting capabilities as a result of the One Love Louisville initiative included the creation of a Real-Time Crime Center and the addition of enhanced camera systems in key areas around the city.^{1,2}

Louisville Metro Open Data

On October 15, 2013, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer signed an open data policy executive order. The order made a commitment to increase the availability of government data for use and understanding by the citizens they serve. As a part of this initiative, LMPD developed a transparency website that posts the department's data and reports on a number of topics, including the Uniform Crime Reporting data, as well as the department's Standard Operating Procedures. It also provides resources on the Open Data Initiative as well as the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Handbook and National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to help citizens understand how crime data is collected and classified.³

LMPD's Transparency Website is available at <http://www.louisville-police.org/35/LMPD-Transparency>. ▀

1 The One Love Louisville website is available at <http://onelovelou.org/>

2 Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, (2015). Louisville's blueprint for safe and healthy neighborhoods: Phase II. Available at https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/safe_neighborhoods/one_love_louisville.pdf.

3 Louisville Open Data. (2013). Mayor Fischer's open data executive order. Available at <https://data.louisvilleky.gov/mayor-fischers-open-data-executive-order>.

ESTABLISH PRODUCTIVE INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

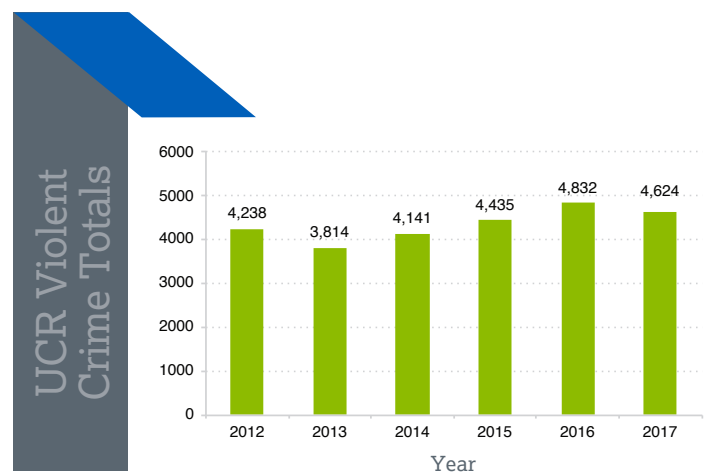
Developing meaningful and long-lasting partnerships with fellow law enforcement agencies and the community continues to be a priority for LMPD. Three LMPD efforts align with this goal: the development and execution of the Louisville Metro Intelligence Taskforce, the continued use of LMPD's Community Policing Unit, and the expansion of the on-line and social media presence for the department.

LMPD's 9th Mobile Division and the Louisville Metro Intelligence (LMINTEL) Taskforce

In 2016, Louisville experienced a peak in violent crime incidents that highlighted a 4-year upward trend (Figure 1). To address this troubling statistic, LMPD called upon a competent resource that both the community and police recognized could get the job done. Time after time, the 9th Mobile Division's crime suppression apparatus has been deployed to identify, investigate, and arrest violent criminals and gang members. The 9th Mobile Division has no geographic borders and works anywhere in the city that is experiencing serious crime issues. It combines offender-focused strategies with daily crime tracking and weekly mapping to identify and effectively police some of the most violent offenders in the Louisville community.

As a part of its work, the 9th Mobile Division leads the Louisville Metro Intelligence (LMINTEL) Taskforce. The Taskforce is a partnership with 9th Mobile and the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; US Marshals Service;

FIGURE 1. LOUISVILLE UCR VIOLENT CRIME TOTALS, 2012-2017[†]



[†] Louisville Metro Police Department. (2018). "LMPD UCR report: January-December, 2017." Available at https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/police/sop_searchable_and_reports/lmpd_ucr_report_december_2017.pdf

“ In early 2017, the Taskforce concentrated on 277 violent individuals with outstanding felony warrants and conducted a warrant blitz within a two-week period. During this time, 111 total warrants were served and 82 people were apprehended over ten days.

A comprehensive training program provides participants with an overview of the various patrol divisions, specialized units, and daily operations at LMPD. For 2017, LMPD operated five CPAs, including a Latino CPA and an LGBTQ CPA, and graduated more than 175 Citizen Police Academy participants from all areas of the community. Many of these graduates join the Volunteers in Police Service program, a community partnership designed to provide valued input and support from the community to LMPD.

Drug Enforcement Agency; and Louisville Metro Department of Corrections. In early 2017, the Taskforce concentrated on 277 violent individuals with outstanding felony warrants and conducted a warrant blitz within a two-week period. During this time, 111 total warrants were served and 82 people were apprehended over ten days. As Phase Two of this effort, the Taskforce will continue to focus on the most violent offenders in the community but will be building long-term investigations that lead to federal charges being filed.

The 9th Mobile Division has perfected conducting surgical strikes into the heart of crime-infested locations in ways that extract known offenders while concurrently protecting community integrity. LMPD attributes some of the decrease in violent crime in 2017 (Figure 1) to actions of the 9th Mobile Division and the work of the LMINTEL Taskforce.

Community Policing Unit

While all LMPD officers are expected to develop and maintain relationships with the communities they serve, the department has devoted resources to a Community Policing Unit (CPU) that has the primary responsibility of fostering improved police and community relations in Louisville Metro. The CPU comprises one lieutenant, four sergeants, 27 sworn officers, one civilian employee, and more than 200 volunteers. With a primary goal of building trust and maintaining a positive working relationship with the residents of Louisville Metro, members of the CPU work comprehensively with community stakeholders to reduce crime through partnerships, problem solving, and non-enforcement strategies.

Notable programs that have increased community engagement have included:

- Citizen Police Academies (CPA) are designed to educate the public about the police services delivered by the LMPD in order to foster understanding and develop partnerships.



- Chief Conrad's Walks. Chief Steve Conrad walks neighborhood beats throughout Louisville Metro communities that typically have high rates of investigative and enforcement involvement with government agencies to provide opportunities for one-on-one connections with residents. The weekly Chief's Peace Walks have provided opportunities for residents to meet the chief and other LMPD officers in a relaxed, peaceful atmosphere. Because the Chief's Peace Walks have been so well received by residents, LMPD division commanders and officers are now conducting neighborhood Peace Walks all over the city on a weekly basis.

From January to October 2017, the Chief and members of CPU participated in more than 10,000 hours of community outreach initiatives and programs. LMPD has been able to expand the CPU unit by 10 additional officers as a result of recently being awarded a hiring grant from the US Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).

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Expanding Online, Mobile, and Social Media Presence

Based on the command staff review of SNPPI principles, LMPD identified its digital presence as an area for improvement. Prior to the SNPPI, LMPD did not have an active social media presence where LMPD was actively engaging the community via these vehicles. In October 2016, LMPD added a dedicated social media officer to assist with transparent community communications. The officer actively manages pages on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube sites, including proactive outreach to the community as well as timely and accurate communication during critical incidents, modeling Boston's practices after the marathon bombing. Within six months of implementation, the Social Media unit had amassed 32,000 Facebook followers.



In addition, over the past year, LMPD has focused SNPPI efforts to better link the community with vital police services through a redesign of its website. The new website design aims to make it easier to connect with the police in emergency and non-emergency situations, examine crime trends throughout the city, and identify police resources available to the community. Both of these efforts are aimed at linking community members with LMPD supports when they are needed. ▀

IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGIES TO HELP POLICE DEPARTMENTS SAFEGUARD NEIGHBORHOODS

As the use of technology continues to grow in law enforcement to reduce crime and improve community engagement, LMPD has been at the forefront of this effort nationally, particularly with early adoption and broad deployment of wearable video systems (WVS, also known as body-worn cameras).

Wearable Video System Deployment

In 2012, after a number of national police-involved critical incidents and with the leadership from Chief Steve Conrad, LMPD began considering roll-out of WVS to officers. LMPD recognized that WVS can be a tool to improve community relations overall and during critical incidents like officer-involved shootings. After piloting devices and developing appropriate policy regarding the use of WVS, LMPD purchased and rolled out cameras to officers in 2015. By 2016, all nine patrol divisions, the Traffic Unit, the Canine Unit, and SWAT team had body-worn camera deployments. LMPD currently has approximately 925 cameras in service.



The University of Louisville evaluated the role the WVS devices were having on use-of-force incidents. After one year, average monthly use-of-force incidents decreased from approximately 44 incidents per month to 28 per month—almost a 36-percent decrease. The evaluators cautioned that the results are not causal as other factors were not controlled for, such as total levels of crime in the year examined. However, it does begin to provide evidence of the role WVS are playing in this outcome. The year 2 evaluation report will run statistical analyses to see whether these trends are attributable to the WVS system and are statistically significant.⁴

In addition, Louisville makes a practice of releasing the body-worn camera video to the public after a police-involved shooting regardless of circumstance and typically within 12 hours of the incident. Prior to release of the video to the public, LMPD holds a viewing with community leaders for communities impacted by the incident to provide information on the circumstances of the shooting and answer any questions. LMPD has found that this practice helps the community leaders field questions they may receive from citizens after an incident and develops a culture of trust between the LMPD and these organizations. ■

4 Schaefer, B., Campbell, B., Hughes, T., & Reed, J., (2016). "LMPD's wearable video system implementation: Year one report." University of Louisville. Available at https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/police/sop_searchable_and_reports/lmpd_wvs_evaluation_year_1_report_final.pdf

LOUISVILLE'S LESSONS LEARNED FROM SNPPI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Participation in the SNPPI included the development of a targeted training and technical assistance plan developed with LMPD to ensure continued success in implementation of precision policing recommendations and principles. Over the course of participation in the SNPPI, LMPD identified two areas—crime analysis and technology integration—that the department was interested in learning more about as it worked to refine its own practice in these areas. Given the diverse network of SNPPI sites and police department contacts through both the COPS Office and CNA, LMPD visited two different police departments to address these areas of interest. This section provides an overview of the technical assistance received by LMPD in these topic areas and lessons learned that could be applied within LMPD and fellow departments across the country.

Sustaining SNPPI Practices – Training and Support

One area that LMPD wanted to focus on through the SNPPI is the integration of precision policing principles in a sustainable way. One visible manifestation of this goal has been providing officers with the skills and knowledge to de-escalate tense situations with citizens using initial and on-going trainings. In 2014, LMPD offered de-escalation skills classes, and implicit bias and de-escalation trainings were included in mandated in-service trainings by 2015. These trainings included two separate mandatory blocks of in-service classes:

- The “De-Escalation Tactics” block provides officers with techniques to “slow down” an incident, employing time as an asset to ease tensions and providing resources available to them during these incidents.
- In the “De-Escalation Communications” block, officers are taught effective crisis communication techniques.

As a result of these efforts and moving forward, all LMPD recruits are taught SNPPI principles that will be implemented throughout their career. For example, while de-escalation has been a part of several Academy classes for several years, including Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), Domestic Violence, and Pedestrian Stops, the standalone De-Escalation of Critical Incidents class was first implemented in 2017. Since that time, 79 recruits have gone through the training, with an additional 33 expected in early 2018. LMPD is planning to provide mandatory in-service classes on implicit bias and cultural diversity as well.



Crime Analysis

Understanding the need to evaluate and act on crime trends in the city, LMPD is exploring how to advance its crime analysis capabilities. To support this effort, CNA linked LMPD with the Cambridge Police Department in Massachusetts, a leading department in this area, to provide it with insight and peer support as the site examines this issue. Lieutenants Theodore Eidem, and James Cirillo as well as Detective Christopher Geoghegan visited Cambridge and learned how they utilize crime analysis on a daily basis in operations as well as the kinds of products developed that support targeted crime reduction efforts in the city. During the visit, LMPD also had the opportunity to collaborate with Boston Police Department as well as visit the Commonwealth Fusion and the Boston Regional Intelligence Centers.

The visit allowed LMPD officers to hear from multiple perspectives about how other departments utilize crime analysis. For example, Cambridge PD integrates crime analysts in each division while Boston PD utilizes crime analysts for specific types of crime. This gave LMPD different perspectives on the same issue as it considers how to implement it in Louisville. In addition, LMPD was able to bring back a number of examples of crime analysis products that it can model and develop itself and will provide critical information to operations on a regular basis.

LMPD considers the peer exchange a great success by providing key insights as it considers how to increase its crime analysis capabilities within the department.

Technology Integration

As the need for real-time and coordinated information across the department continues to increase, Louisville identified a need to deploy additional technology tools for more effective policing. In 2017, Major Eric Johnson and Lieutenant Josh Judah visited the New York City Police Department (NYPD) to observe its technology deployment. The site team visited the NYPD real-time crime center and learned about its ShotSpotter and license plate readers deployed throughout the city. Louisville mentioned that the level of technology integration across NYPD was impressive. All NYPD officers have access to the NYPD data systems through mobile devices, including license search, police bulletins, and filing reports. At the moment, Louisville officers either do not have mobile access to these services or have a limited service available. Although full mobile integration will take time and a significant investment in Louisville, the visit did help the department start to think about what services it could provide to officers in a mobile setting to improve effectiveness and response times. ▀

FINAL THOUGHTS

LMPD's commitment to excellence and self-improvement will continue after the SNPPI concludes in 2018. LMPD's deployment of modern technology, cutting-edge management practices, and personnel development strategies cement its perennial commitment to community engagement and crime reduction. These efforts are buoyed by a strong mayoral commitment to performance management, problem solving, and a data-driven culture. Together, they create the conditions for LMPD to build upon its SNPPI successes.

Chief Conrad notes the importance of participation in the SNPPI and the network of leading police departments committed to reducing crime and engaging their communities. ■

“ Successful crime reduction through community and interagency engagement depends upon precision policing initiatives - like those the SNPPI brings to the table. Maintaining transparency and active collaboration with community stakeholders delivers us closer to realizing our goal – a better, safer city in which to work and live.

— Chief Steve Conrad



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