

*2021 Topeka Police Department
Public Policy Agenda
&
Crime Reduction Strategy*





TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dear Community Members,

In 2021, we are committed to the continued implementation of the prior year's violent crime reduction strategy. It is my belief, that the full extent of that strategy was not implemented due to COVID-19. The targeted intent of this strategy is to reverse the violent crime trend that has had such a negative impact on our community in recent years.

This strategy's foundation is rooted in the utilization of new ballistic evidence technology, enhanced cooperation with local, state and federal prosecutors in prioritizing gun crime prosecutions, and the development of community resource partnerships to provide an array of social services to more holistically address the needs of all of our citizens. Many of the most at risk are locked in a negative cycle of reoccurring violence, substance abuse or mental health situations.

In this document, you will find a detailed overview of department initiatives, as we move forward into 2021.

The Topeka Police Department is dedicated to partnering with our community to make this a safer place to live, work and play.

Chief Bryan Wheelles



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Public Policy Agenda

Public Policy Statement: The Topeka Police Department’s public policy agenda seeks to address significant interests and concerns of the department and community members on contemporary criminal justice and social issues.

Education: Mentoring and developing future leaders of Topeka

A priority of the Topeka Police Department is to work collectively with schools, business and community partners to ensure the youth of Topeka are provided every opportunity to grow up in a safe and nurturing community.

| 2020 Initiatives | 2021 Expectations |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a 3rd Youth Education Officer at the High Schools to teach sophomores. <i>Completed</i> • Conduct a summer Internship program with students from Washburn, Emporia State, Fort Hays State, Pittsburg State and South Mississippi State Universities Criminal Justice Program. <i>Not completed-COVID impacted.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize the mentorship program in the middle schools. • Complete certification of 2 SROs through National Association of School Resource Officers to be train the trainers. • Conduct summer internships in continuance of 2020 proposed plan |

Behavioral Health: Community and Officer Safety

The Behavioral Health Unit is a community effort that involves members of the Topeka Police Department, mental health providers, consumers and their family members working together to provide the best possible outcomes during a mental health crisis.

| 2020 Initiatives | 2021 Expectations |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Homeless Outreach Team that focuses on the unsheltered, allowing BHU officers assigned a co-responder to focus more on their specialty. <i>Not Completed.</i> • Expand de-escalation training to include “Train the Trainer” to enhance our ability to train officers. <i>Completed</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add an additional officer & co-responder to the BHU • Conduct formalization of Peer Support team training towards national standards. • Expand BHU capabilities thru technology and equipment acquisitions |



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Community: Police-Community Relations

A guiding philosophy the Topeka Police Department utilizes to promote an organizational strategy that supports partnerships with members of the community to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods within the City of Topeka.

| 2020 Initiatives | 2021 Expectations |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure the Community Police Unit with a Problem Oriented Policing focus. Completed • Conduct a quarterly community meetings in each Zone that will engage NAs, NIA, and other community partners. Not complete; Covid-Impacted • Develop a media relations program with the Latino community. In process .Covid-Impacted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Bystander ship for Law Enforcement (ABLE) training to all department personnel • Anticipated completion of the City Council Sub-Committee on Police -Policy Review • Implementation of S.A.V.E (Strategies Against Violence Everywhere) program in Topeka |

Crime Reduction: Reduce Violent Crime and Strengthen Trust

The expectation of the Topeka Police Department is to create a safe environment for people to work, play and live in the city of Topeka.

| 2020 Initiatives | 2021 Expectations |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a crime reduction research project with PERF - Police Executive Research Forum. Not complete • Provide Tactical Communication Training to the Public as well as in the Citizens Academy to demonstrate the verbal component of gaining voluntary compliance from suspects. Not complete Covid-Impacted • Conduct public presentations on active shooter and personal safety. Not complete Covid-Impacted • Restructure the Narcotics Unit and increase staffing. Not complete • Implement the 2020 Crime Reduction Plan Implement Problem Oriented Policing to address crime issues. Completed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue various crime reduction strategies across the city in furtherance of 2020 programs • Train officers in NIBIN system and establish a partnership with ATF to utilize that intelligence. • Increase Narcotics Unit staffing and capabilities • Increase Criminal Intelligence Unit staffing and capabilities • Enhance operational opportunities with federal law enforcement partners • Lay foundation for establishment of Real Time Information Center |



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2021 Violent Crime Reduction Plan

The 2021 Violent Crime Reduction Plan has three primary goals:

1. Alter the community at large norms regarding violence.
2. Provide alternatives to violence when groups and individuals in the community make risky behavior decisions.
3. Increase awareness of the perceived risks and costs of involvement in violence among high-risk young people.

Objectives:

The primary goals will be achieved through the following objectives:

1. Keep guns out of the hands of people who are prohibited from owning them by law.
2. Prevent future shootings by proactive deterrence.
3. Encourage proper gun safety and care by law-abiding owners.
4. Implement evidence-based policing strategies to identify the small number of offenders who are responsible for the majority of the gun violence.
5. Enhance ballistic technology efforts.
6. Intelligence-based policing to identify threats and intervene before an incident occurs.
7. Work with Municipal, District and Federal Prosecuting Attorney Offices to prioritize the prosecution of criminal cases involving firearms.

Initiatives: Evidence shows, the best strategies to reduce gun violence have three things in common: focus, balance and fairness.

- Focus - Effective strategies focus narrowly on the “hot people” or the “hot spots” driving most of the violence,
- Balance - They balance the threat of punishment with prevention, i.e. real efforts to help even the highest-risk people change their lives without going to prison, and
- Fairness - To be most effective, they need to be perceived as fair and they need to have support and legitimacy within the communities most affected by violence.



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The 2021 Violent Crime Reduction Plan will focus on four primary initiatives:

1. Strategies Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)
2. Implement Crime Gun Intelligence (CGI)
3. Evidence-based Policing
4. Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Project

1. Strategies Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)

SAVE is a community strategy including law enforcement and social service providers to deliver necessary services for identified youth and join in a united effort of anti-violence for the Topeka community.

- a. TPD will help facilitate the research process.
- b. Aid in sharing information with the public about what is happening in our communities.
- c. Facilitate discussions with individuals in the community who are prone to violence.
- d. Facilitate additional efforts within the Topeka community to help address violent crime.

2. Implement Crime Gun Intelligence (CGI)

CGI focuses on local and federal partnerships to provide a more comprehensive violent crime suppression strategy.

- a. CGI utilizes evidence-based technology (NIBIN) to provide a unique tool to enhance comprehensive violent gun crime strategies.
- b. When incorporated into an overall strategy, CGI has proven its value in measurable reductions in violent gun crimes through apprehensions and successful prosecution of violent offenders.
- c. CGI is a lead-generating process that provides law enforcement the opportunity to intervene and disrupt the shooting cycle.
- d. The main area of emphasis is to help law enforcement make our communities safer by disrupting the shooting cycle.
- e. CGI combines all available information on crime guns and shootings to identify and disrupt the shooting cycle.

3. Evidence-based Policing:

- **Hot spots policing:** focused law enforcement interventions within small geographic areas of high crime density.
- Research and implement alternative methods of hot spot analysis better suited for Topeka's distributed violence problem. While the jurisdiction may lack highly-formed, traditional hot spots, other methods to assess the impact of geography on crime exist. Examples include analysis of crime by block segments, risk terrain modeling, and methods incorporating social network analysis or distance to crime calculations. All such methods can allow a tailored response within a manageable, small geography.



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- **Focused deterrence:** change criminal behavior through a strategic, coordinated effort of enforcement and social services.
 - Leverage elements of focused deterrence in a systematic but straightforward way, to specifically include:
 - a. Form an interagency group (law enforcement, probation/parole, courts/corrections, federal partners) to establish network
 - b. Regularly communicate with identified individuals. Any communication should also come with efforts to provide any needed social services and voices of those impacted by violence.
- **Directed patrol:** assigning additional officers to high-crime areas, with orders to conduct proactive activity rather than respond to calls for service.
 - Assign officers to high-crime areas with the sole purpose to be proactive and engage with the community. This can be done by detectives, community policing officers, or patrol. The important element is to have said officers dedicated to non-reactive activities for a fixed period of time.

4. *Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Project*

- All non-fatal shooting incidents should be investigated thoroughly with full departmental resources, in line with homicide investigations.
- Consideration of development of a support unit to aid in information collection and analysis. Information on group conflict and violence can be collected and disseminated, thereby improving agency communication and simplifying processes.
- Crime analysis will focus on providing both tactical (short-term) and strategic (long-term planning) trend assessments. The goals for crime analysis should be to meaningfully contribute to crime meetings and to conduct in-depth analysis of violence (homicides, shootings, robberies) over the last several years.

Desired Outcomes/Goals:

1. Reduce the number of gun-related crimes and violent offenses committed by youth under the age of 25 years of age.
2. Decrease the number of overall gun crimes and violent offenses throughout the community.
3. Remove illegal guns on the streets and address individuals prohibited from possessing a firearm.
4. Increase the number of prosecutions for firearms related crimes at the Municipal and District Court levels.
5. Improve the quality of life for citizens in areas that have been prone to gun violence.
6. Establish an effective community model that is focused on intervention that will lead to prevention of incidents within our communities.



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Measuring Success:

With any initiative it is important to measure and track whether those efforts implemented were/are successful. During the course of this Crime Reduction Plan, we will be monitoring several factors to include:

1. Tracking the number of individuals arrested for firearms related offenses.
2. Tracking the number of firearms seized as a result of criminal activity.
3. Tracking the number of indictments associated with firearms related cases at the Federal, State and Municipal levels.
4. Tracking the number of search warrants associated to firearms related cases.
5. Tracking the number of firearms related cases closed due the efforts of the plan.