

# Cheyenne Police Staffing Assessment

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## Sworn Police Officer Staffing:

2010	2015
108 authorized officers (population of 59,000) 1.83 officers per 1,000 residents	106 authorized officers (population of 65,000) 1.63 officers per 1,000 residents
<b>11 additional positions are required to maintain the 2010 staffing level of 1.83 officers per 1,000 residents.</b> The national average is 2.2 officers per 1,000 residents, which would equate to 143 officers for the City of Cheyenne; The average in Wyoming is 2.5 officers per 1,000 residents. <sup>1</sup> In comparison Denver, CO has 2.3 officers per 1,000 residents <sup>2</sup>	

During the last six years the City has increased population by approximately 6,000 residents and incorporated new service areas, such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Walmart, the truck stops at I25 and College, 400 units at the Sundance Apartments and responsibility for all State buildings. At the same time, the Cheyenne Police Department (CPD) reduced in authorized staff by two officers.

Expanded service requirements necessitate implementation of a seventh patrol beat, which will require six additional officers. This step is required to maintain reasonable response times to calls.

The City Planning and Development Department has approved 1,428 new housing units in 2015 with expansions such as the Diamond Estates, Thomas Heights, Waterford Square and Saddle Ridge. When built out, these developments would require eight additional officers to maintain the ratio of 1.83 officers per 1,000 residents.

Populations to police officer average ratios indicate that the City of Cheyenne should authorize an additional 19 police officer positions before 2018.

## Calls for Service:

CPD handled 62,203 calls for service in 2014 (170 calls a day); 34,470 calls were initiated by citizens calling into the Laramie County Combined Communication Center. <sup>3</sup> Each patrol officer handled an average of 689 citizen requested calls for the year, which is 30% higher than patrol officers in the benchmark cities survey. <sup>4</sup> Additionally, the survey shows that other law enforcement agencies average 457 citizen requested calls per 1,000 residents per year <sup>5</sup>; CPD averaged 530 citizen initiated calls per 1,000 residents per year (16% above other agencies).

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<sup>1</sup> FBI Uniform Crime Reports, Full Time Law Enforcement Officers Data, 2012

<sup>2</sup> Denver Police Response Times Audit, June 2014,

[https://www.denvergov.org/Portals/741/documents/Audits%202014/Police\\_Response\\_Time\\_Audit\\_Report\\_06-19-14.pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/Portals/741/documents/Audits%202014/Police_Response_Time_Audit_Report_06-19-14.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> CPD 2014 Annual Report, <http://www.cheyennepd.org/DocumentCenter/View/303>

<sup>4</sup> Benchmark Cities Survey 2014, Overland Park, Kansas, <http://www.opkansas.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/benchmark-city-survey-section-b-general.pdf>, Page 10

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Page 6

Reduced staffing levels have caused the PD to become more efficient with the following changes:

- CPD no longer completes reports for private property accidents
- CPD no longer completes reports for gas drive-offs
- CPD requires retailers to make certain reports on-line and we encourage citizens to do the same
- CPD will only complete one civil stand-by per citizen and no longer will stand-by while children are exchanged
- CPD reduced false alarm calls with the alarm ordinance
- Patrol squads are assigned by service demands (with several squads working 5-8hr days)

Unfortunately, CPD cannot always meet the demand for proactive and preventative policing, which has allowed us to reduce crime and vehicle crashes over the last six years. For example, requests for selective traffic enforcement in the neighborhoods cannot always be honored. There are many times when lower priority (priority 3 and below) calls for service remain on hold due to a lack of officers to respond, officers have been required to respond to hazardous calls without any backup; this is concerning with a recent increase in deadly attacks against Cheyenne police officers.

An assessment of ratio of calls per officer indicate CPD should increase its staffing to be more consistent with other law enforcement agencies in order to maintain current community policing strategies.

**Response Times:**

Response times can be an indicator of appropriate police staffing. Below is a listing of several call types and average response times by CPD from Jan 1 to Oct 1, 2015:

Call Type / Priority	Number of calls	Enroute to arrival	911 dispatch pick up to arrival
Injury Accident / Priority 1	175	2 Minutes:00 Seconds	6 Minutes:39 Seconds
No Injury Accident / Priority 1	484	5:20	11:51
Burglary Alarm / Priority 1	716	3:15	6:47
Domestic Physical / Priority 1	377	2:31	8:38
<b>Priority 1 Average</b>		<b>3:17</b>	<b>8:28</b>
Prior Larceny / Priority 3	503	16:40	1:03:23
Prior Stolen Vehicle / Priority 3	101	12:44	39:13
Prior Burglary / Priority 3	175	11:05	39:54
<b>Priority 3 Average</b>		<b>13:30</b>	<b>47:30</b>

The benchmark cities had an average response time from enroute time to arrival of 5 minutes and 36 seconds; in comparison, CPD has a very fast response time average once an officer is dispatched at 3:17.<sup>6</sup> The benchmark survey does not track response times from 911 pick up to enroute. However, Denver PD had an average response time from 911 pick up to arrival of 14 minutes for priority 1 calls and 23 minutes for priority 3 calls.<sup>7</sup> This illustrates CPD will respond to an emergency in half the time it would take Denver PD to respond; however, CPD will take twice as long to respond to a non-emergency call; most likely due to a lack of police resources available to dispatch the call to. Data showed that it takes an average of 1:59 for our dispatch center to gather information prepare the call to be dispatched. Thus, any additional delays are caused by the absence of available police units.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Page 4

<sup>7</sup> Denver Police Audit

The evaluation of response times indicate that CPD does a good job responding to crimes in progress. However, the excessive delays in responding to lower priority calls denote a shortage in staffing and inability to engage in proactive community policing tasks.

Indeed, the 2013 Cheyenne Police Annual Report revealed that officers spend an average of only 20% of their shift in available status; thus leaving little time to conduct proactive/community policing. Best practices recommend patrol officers to have 40% proactive policing time. Therefore, this indicates that CPD is in need of additional police officers. In comparison, Denver PD averaged 31% of proactive policing time in 2012.<sup>8</sup>

**Crime:**

During the last five years CPD has been able to reduce the index crime ratio per citizens by 37% and traffic crashes by 35% by being more efficient, targeting criminals and hot spots, installing methods of accountability and working with the community.<sup>9</sup> A comparison of year to date actual crime with last year reveals the following changes (increases are expected with increased population):

300% increase in homicide	1% increase in simple assault
77% increase in rape	16% increase in stolen vehicles
31% increase in burglary	42% decrease in robbery
62% increase in aggravated assault	5% decrease in larceny

- **At current trends we can estimate at year end to have 316 index crimes per 10,000 residents, which is 4% higher than 2014, but still 33% below 2009 and earlier levels.**
- **Overall actual crime in Cheyenne has slightly increased this year; however, violent crime is still 60% below US averages and property crime is slightly above US averages**

Crime increases can be attributed to increased narcotic abuse, which is why CPD formed the Community Action Team (CAT). In 2015 CAT has executed 50 search warrants and arrested 32 suspects for distributing/selling drugs in our community. This year, the team has seen a 700% increase in cases of distributing heroin.<sup>10</sup> If not addressed, drug addiction will drive crime rates up.

Over the last six years the Cheyenne Police Department has improved efficiencies and accountability, resulting in unprecedented drops in crime without having to increase staffing. However, the agency has reached the point where proactive policing measures will begin to reduce in order to respond to calls for service. As the agency becomes more responsive and less preemptive, crime will increase.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Page 29

<sup>9</sup> CPD 2014 Annual Report

<sup>10</sup> Community Action Team Activity Stats, Jan 1 – Oct 1 2015

**Recruiting and Retention:**

The cost to hire, train and equip each police officer is approximately \$50,000, and it takes one year before that officer can be deployed into service. Thus, retention of trained officers is much more efficient than replacing vacancies.

Fort Collins, CO will be hiring over 120 police officers in the next four years to meet increases in their population. Cheyenne will need to become competitive to retain and hire police officers.

Cheyenne Police Officer	Fort Collins Police Officer
Salary \$48,224 - \$63,638 (CPD officers have a 20-year defined benefit retirement, which CO officers do not have)	Salary \$57,607 - \$79,401 10% cost of living/tax adjustment for CO Real Salary \$52,121 - \$71,839 <sup>11</sup>

**CPD officers at the rank of lieutenant and above are 20-40% below market value**

**Budget Impact and Employee Needs:**

The cost of one entry level Cheyenne police officer at current salary and benefits is \$74,000 and there should be another \$8,000 added to the budget for each officer for training and equipment expenses.

If approved, increased police officer staffing would be deployed in the following priority assignments:

- First 6 Positions            Patrol for the implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> beat
- 7<sup>th</sup> position                General detective
- 8<sup>th</sup> position                Community Action Team detective
- 9<sup>th</sup> position                Traffic enforcement officer
- 10<sup>th</sup> position               Downtown business officer
- 11<sup>th</sup> position               Hiring and recruiting officer
- 12<sup>th</sup> position               Training supervisor
- 13<sup>th</sup> position               Computer forensics detective

CPD is evaluating the increased use of civilians to reduce the need for sworn officers. Civilians could be used to investigate traffic accidents, freeing up police officers for more hazardous calls. Additionally, the agency could use a crime analyst to assist supervisors in deploying resources where they are needed.

**Recommendation:**

An objective assessment of officer/citizen ratios, call to officer ratio, response times, proactive policing time and crime rate consistently indicate that CPD has to increase staffing in order for the agency to be successful in completing its strategic plan of reducing crime and improving the quality of life in Cheyenne.

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<sup>11</sup> Sperling’s Cost of Living, <http://www.bestplaces.net/cost-of-living/>