

Cheyenne Police Staffing, Crime & State of the Department Report

November 3, 2020

Prepared by Chief Brian Kozak

Sworn Police Officer Staffing Ratio:

2010	2020
108 authorized officers (population of 59,000) 1.83 officers per 1,000 residents	107 authorized officers (population of 65,000) 1.64 officers per 1,000 residents
14 additional positions are required to maintain the 2010 staffing level of 1.83 officers per 1,000 residents. The national average is 2.4 officers per 1,000 residents, which would equate to 150 officers for the City of Cheyenne; The average in Wyoming is 2.5 officers per 1,000 residents. ¹	

During the last decade the City has increased population by approximately 12% and incorporated new service areas, such as the 2nd Walmart, Menard's, the truck stops at I25 and College, and 400 units at the Sundance Apartments with another 300 in the planning stage; new housing developments, such as Thomas Heights, Waterford Square, Sweetgrass and Converse Apartments have created additional demands for police service. The Cheyenne Police Department (CPD) reduced in authorized staff during this same time period of City growth.

Expanded service requirements and a City expansion of 35% in land mass necessitated the implementation of a seventh patrol beat, however, the PD has not been able to staff the new beat. Thus, a portion of the city often does not have police patrol.

To reach a police officer per capita ratio like 2010, the City would need to hire 14 additional police officers at a salary/benefit cost of \$1.3 million annually.

Each city is different in the demand placed on police resources; thus, ratios should not be the only evaluation of staffing. Calls for service should also be considered.

Calls for Service:

CPD handled 72,468 calls for service in 2019 (198 calls a day); 36,280 calls were initiated by citizens calling into the Laramie County Combined Communication Center. ² The ratio of citizen initiated calls for service per sworn officer is 363, which is 13% higher than the ratio in the benchmark cities survey, who averaged 322 calls per officer for the year. ³ Additionally, the survey shows that other law enforcement agencies average 452 citizen requested calls per 1,000 residents in 2019 ⁴; CPD averaged 558 citizen-initiated calls per 1,000 residents in 2019 (23% above other agencies). The data shows that CPD is much busier than agencies of similar size; year to date 2020 data shows that calls for service are up 15% over 2019.

¹ FBI Uniform Crime Reports, Full Time Law Enforcement Officers Data, 2019

² CPD 2019 Annual Report, <https://www.cheyennepd.org/Education/Annual-Reports>

³ Benchmark Cities Survey 2019, Overland Park, Kansas, <https://dw.opkansas.org/public/FileCabinets/2fa13812-70a3-4126-848b-3a20df7175c3/Documents/10811/FileDownload?targetFileType=Auto&keepAnnotations=false>, Page 5

⁴ Benchmark., Page 4

Reduced staffing levels has caused the PD to eliminate the following services:

- Reports for private property vehicle crashes
- Reports for gas drive-offs
- Calls that can be reported on-line
- Civil stand-by calls except for the first request

Best practices recommend that 40% of a police officer's time be discretionary to allow time for community policing. CPD day shift and swing shift officers average 10% discretionary time, while midnight officers average 40% discretionary time. Cheyenne officers have reduced proactive time and are usually responding from one call to the next. As a result, requests for selective traffic enforcement and community outreach 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 backup.

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 and continue to meet response time standards.

Response Times:

Response times can be an indicator of appropriate police staffing. The benchmark cities had an average response time for from dispatch time to arrival of 4 minutes and 24 seconds (4:24);⁵ CPD had a response time average of 3:19 for traffic crashes with injury and 4:22 for domestic assaults, which is better than the national average.⁶ The average response time for CPD for a priority three call (not in progress) is 36 minutes, which is twice that of most cities our size, who had an average response time of 16 minutes.⁷ The evaluation of response times indicates 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.

Crime:

Year to date crime figures for 2020 reveal that Cheyenne had the lowest property crime rate per capita in decades (chart 1), even with a 15% increase in calls. Property crime, which includes auto theft, burglary and larceny, has dropped 26% in the last two years. In 2019, the command staff began evaluating crime data on a weekly basis (CompStat), which allows us to respond to patterns of crime. The success of CompStat has proven the need for a professional crime analyst. Most cities our size have two crime analysts; all benchmark cities have at least one analyst.⁸ CPD has secured the funding to hire a crime analyst and is waiting for approval of Mayor Collins and City Council to fill the position.

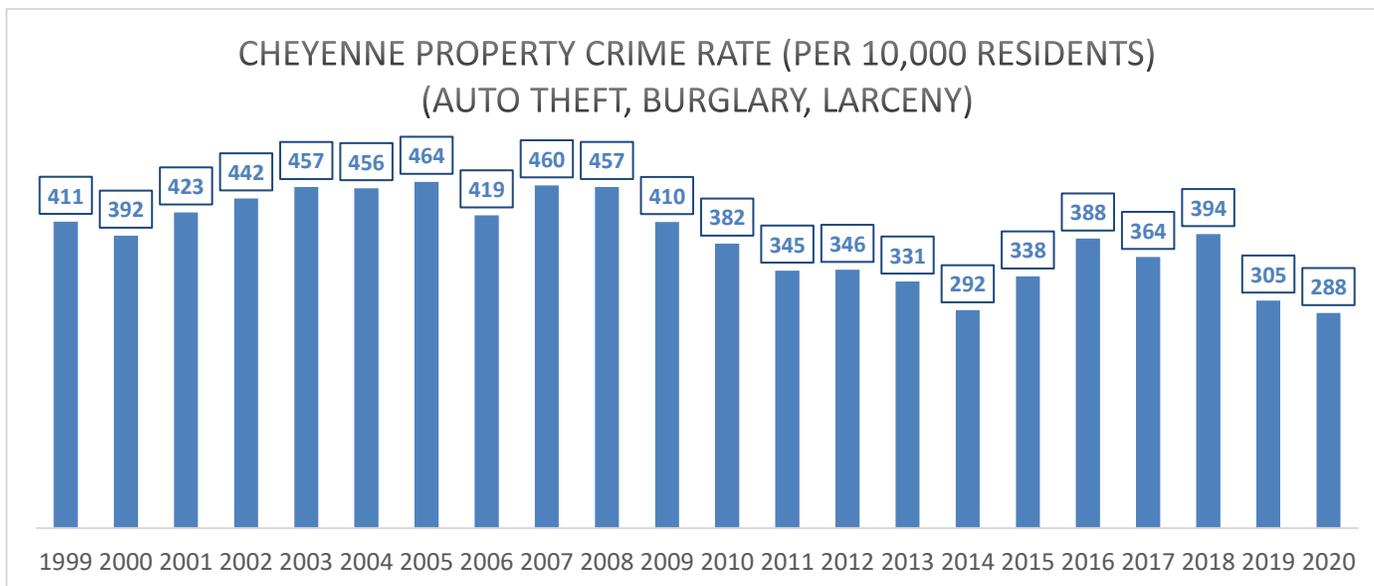
⁵ Benchmark, Page 15

⁶ CPD 2018 Annual Report, <https://www.cheyennepd.org/Education/Annual-Reports>

⁷ Benchmark, Page 20

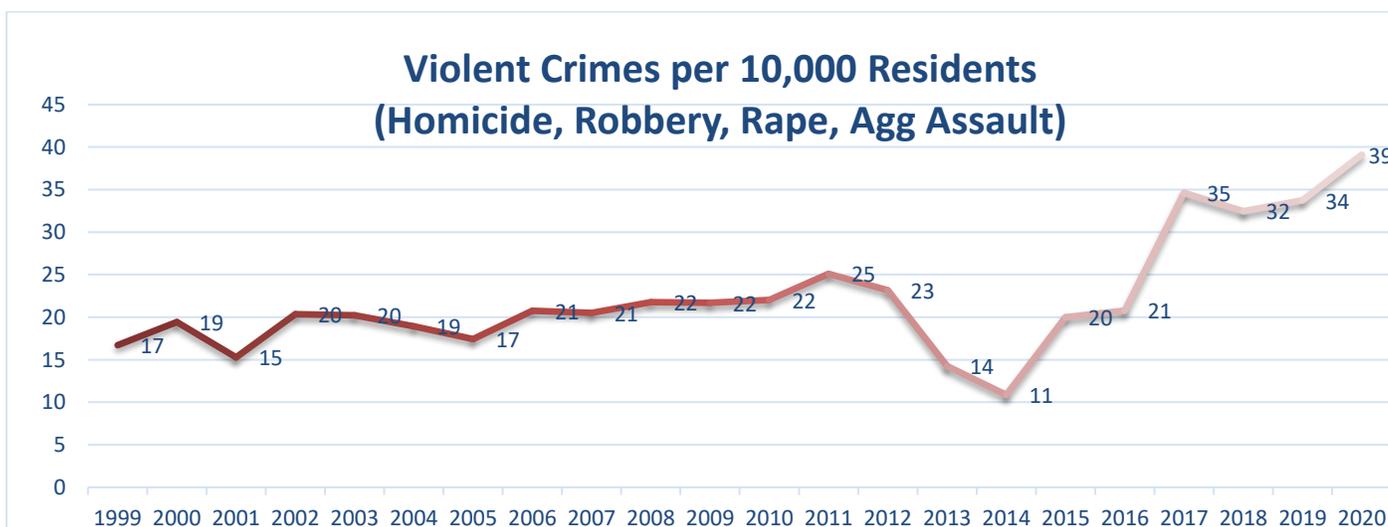
⁸ Benchmark, Page 49

Chart 1



Violent crime, which consists of homicide, rape, robbery and felony aggravated assault has increase over the last several years (chart 2). In 2015 the state law changed to classify domestic violence strangulation as a felony assault. The agency trained officers to recognize this crime, resulting in over 50 additional aggravated assaults by strangulation a year. Over half of the 225 domestic violence arrests in 2019 were from repeat offenders.⁹ CPD believes it can reduce the domestic violence recidivism rate by hiring a domestic violence detective, who would provide support to the victim with the goal of improving the likelihood of conviction. CPD has applied for a federal grant and requested City funding for this position, which has been denied.

Chart 2



⁹ CPD 2019 Annual Report, Page 32-34

CPD detectives have a heavy caseload; between 2015 and 2019 they had a 178% increase in assigned crimes to investigate. ⁹ Detectives spent most of their time investigating crimes that are not tracked in the FBI Unified Crime Report, such as:

- 60 child molestations
- 35 child abuse cases
- 102 frauds
- 43 undercover distribution of methamphetamine cases

In 2021, CPD will begin to report its crime under the National Incident Based Reporting System, which captures all crime. CPD Records Division has completed a complete software upgrade to our records management system to capture the data for the new system.

Money Magazine rated Cheyenne as the 36th best place to live in the U.S. The magazine assesses crime rate and will eliminate a city for consideration which has a rate double the U.S. crime rate. The reason they accept cities over the U.S. crime rate is because destination cities, such as Cheyenne, usually serve a population much greater than the people who live in the city. Cheyenne provides retail shopping and business opportunities for the greater county population; thus, is expected to have a crime rate over the U.S. average. Cheyenne has always had a high property crime rate; although, this year we are close to have a rate that is below the U.S. average.

The public feels safe in Cheyenne; violent crime is usually associated with family members. It is rare for violent crime to have been committed by a stranger, which is why Cheyenne residents feel safe.

Police Use of Force:

In 2019, CPD officers responded to 72,468 calls and only used force in 234 cases¹⁰, well below the national average. CPD spends a considerable amount of training hours (every month) to teach officers to deescalate when possible and use control holds instead of striking tools or the taser.

CPD is the first agency in Wyoming to include civilians on the force review board.

In the last 11 years, CPD has not had a judgement against the agency or an officer for excessive force.

CPD is currently establishing an early intervention system to identify officers who have a higher average of use of force, complaints and missed time from to work to intervene with counseling/training to prevent liability for the City.

Accountability:

In 2019, CPD investigated 26 complaints of service (16 externally generated and 10 generated by supervisors). Of those, 50% were sustained. ¹⁰ This data shows that CPD is an ethical agency, which holds its members accountable to high standards of policy.

¹⁰ CPD 2019 Annual Report, Page 20-21

Since 2010 CPD has revised every policy to meet national accreditation standards. In 2020, the agency conducted a self-assessment and determined we were within 90% of meeting accreditation standards with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. However, due to COVID budget cuts the employee who would have been the accreditation manager was laid off.

Each year, CPD is the only city department to establish goals for its members to achieve. CPD believes in setting high standards to improve performance. The goals for each year can found online in the annual reports.

Budget, Recruiting & Leadership:

The Cheyenne Police Department's per capita budget is \$212 per citizen. The average per capita budget with the benchmark cities, to include Casper, Wyoming PD, is \$280 per citizen.¹¹ CPD is doing the job with a budget that is 24% less than similar sized police departments. To be comparable with similar size agencies, CPD would require another \$3.3 million.

CPD currently has 5 police officer vacancies, three officers are in training and one is on military deployment for a year. Thus, CPD has 98 of its authorized 107 officer positions deployable for service. Our vacancy rate is currently 5%, which is better than average. Many departments are faced with 15% or more shortages. It is important to note that it takes one year to recruit, hire and train a police officer; thus, these vacancies will remain open until we can complete the hiring process. Police officer morale appears to be high; officers have faith in agency leadership. Cheyenne officers are not leaving for jobs with other police departments. Most attrition is due to retirement or failure to meet training standards. Women make up 15% of Cheyenne police officers, which is higher than the national average of 11%.

Every two years the agency conducts a salary survey. In 2019 the survey showed that Cheyenne police officers were at market value for salary and benefits. The survey will be completed again in 2021; it is expected that a salary increase will be recommended to meet the current market value and remain competitive with other police departments. COVID budget reductions resulted in cuts to employee benefits.

The survey for police civilian employees revealed that most positions were severely under market value. The agency developed a plan to bring the employees to market value over a three-year period. The first phase was approved and implemented in 2019. COVID budget cuts did not allow the second or third phases to occur. It is estimated that each phase will cost \$60,000 to implement.

CPD instituted a robust leadership program which requires those who want to become supervisors to complete a validated training program. Additionally, a baccalaureate is required to promote to the rank of lieutenant or above. COVID budget reductions caused the funding for the leadership and tuition reimbursement programs to be cut. It is estimated that these programs will cost \$50,000 to implement again.

¹¹ Benchmark Cities Survey 2019, Overland Park, Kansas, <https://dw.opkansas.org/public/FileCabinets/2fa13812-70a3-4126-848b-3a20df7175c3/Documents/10809/FileDownload?targetFileType=Auto&keepAnnotations=false>, Page 5

Capital and Equipment:

CPD can fully equip its officers with the best equipment in policing due to the 5th penny tax allocated to the PD. Police vehicles are replaced after approximately 8-10 years of service at a rate of 10-12 cars a year. The Police Department will need to replace all handheld radios at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. The PD will seek funding for this on the next 6th penny tax.

\$2,515,074 remain in the 6th penny account for the Public Safety Center. The building was designed with unfinished areas, knowing there would be additional needs once the PD moved in. The PD has a plan to buildout these areas with a defensive tactics training room and digital forensics lab. Additionally, the PD has a plan to install covered parking to protect police cars from hail damage and replace interview room cameras. The PD is ready to request qualifications from architects/builders; however, is waiting for Mayor Collins to approve the plan.

Other Programs:

Parking:

The PD acquired the parking enforcement program in 2018 without any additional management resources. The PD automated the enforcement and permitting system, increasing the daily passes from 59 a year to 1,637 a year. Since automation, the percentage of unpaid tickets reduced from 38% to 15%; this should reduce further once the city begins to send unpaid repeat offenders to collections.

Community Service Officer (CSO) / Municipal Security Officers (MSO):

In 2018, CPD expanded the CSO program to allow CSOs to investigate traffic crashes, freeing police officers for other types of calls. However, in 2020 several CSOs were trained to become MSOs to provide armed security for the Municipal Court. The PD had to take on this additional responsibility without any added resources or budget. Therefore, CSOs have a reduced availability for vehicle crash investigations, causing this responsibility to shift back to police officers, who are already short staffed. Additionally, the CSOs have been tasked to transport detainees with city warrants to Platte and Goshen county jails since Laramie County Jail has declined to accept detainees. The added responsibilities have reduced abandoned vehicle enforcement, causing community complaints. This program will need to be funded in the future.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) / Crisis Intervention:

CPD was the first and only agency in Wyoming to obtain a grant for LEAD; we have a full-time case manager to divert minor offenders from the criminal justice system into social programs to treat mental illness and drug addiction. Additionally, CPD was the only Wyoming agency to complete the One Mind Pledge by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The pledge required the agency to meet high standards in providing crisis intervention to those in need.

Digital Forensics:

CPD is the only municipal agency with full-time digital forensic detectives; we can retrieve evidence from digital devices to assist in the prosecution of crime.

Community Action Team (CAT):

CAT is the only team in Wyoming, which its members have been sworn in as DEA agents, giving them federal law enforcement authority in the entire U.S. The team has recovered hundreds of pounds of methamphetamine and heroin and brought dozens of drug distributors to federal court. The team is nationally known for its human trafficking investigations; and instructs other agencies on proper techniques to recover victims.

Operation Change:

CPD developed the Operation Change program to assist downtown merchants with their complaints of crimes caused by the transient population. The program is funded by federal grants and requires officers to conduct walking patrols to promote community policing techniques with the merchants and transient population. Officers offer social services; yet, enforce laws. The program has been highly successful in reducing quality of life crime.

The PD has a plan to acquire the office space in the Spiker Parking Garage Once City Transit vacates the space. The space will be used by the PD Traffic Safety Unit and MSO program. The occupation of the garage by the police will eliminate the false perception that the garage is unsafe and proved a workspace for the MSOs assigned to the Municipal Court.

Body Worn Cameras (BWC):

CPD implemented a full BWC program in October of 2018. The ACLU assisted with the development of CPD policy. The agency has over 100,000 pieces of digital evidence, requires a full-time digital evidence custodian.

Leadership Committee:

CPD has an employee participation team made up of various members of the agency, elected by their peers, to assist the Chief of Police in developing innovative ideas and policy. The team ensure the agency remain leaders in public safety.

Employee Wellness:

CPD developed a peer support team of officers trained to help their peers with stress. The agency has hired a psychologist to oversee the team and provide continuous training to employees.

Community Outreach:

CPD has tremendous community support primarily due to the many outreach programs:

- 30 volunteers who assist at the front desk with VIN inspections, work in the Records Division, deploy the DUI van, issue parking citations and check the homes of residents who are on vacation. In 2019 they volunteered 2,860 hours.
- Youth Explorers who volunteer to learn about law enforcement careers
- Two Citizen Police Academy classes each year
- Annual Neighborhood Night Out
- Coffee with a Cop
- Shop with a Cop
- Chaplain program
- Social media with reach of 105,000 people
- Relationship with African American churches
- Police and Community Together (PACT) Committee which is made up of diverse community members for the ongoing dialog between the community and the police.

Conclusion:

There is no doubt the men and women of the Cheyenne Police Department are the most efficient and trained police employees of any agency in comparison. They are getting more work done than any other department with less resources and budget. The employees of CPD are proud to serve the citizens of Cheyenne with high morale and dedication. They request the City consider their need for additional resources and ensure they are compensated at a fair market value.

A poorly managed police department can cost a city \$ millions and discredit city leaders while causing distrust with the community. CPD has proven itself to be a highly reliable professional police agency, which is trusted by the public. They fulfill their mission each day:

The Cheyenne Police Department is "Protecting the Legend" of Cheyenne by working in cooperation with citizens to lead the charge in preventing crime and defending the rights of the community.