

**Department of Law Enforcement
Model Policing Initiative
Quarterly Progress Report**

Submitted to: President Preckwinkle and the Board of Commissioners
From: Chief of Police Theresa Odum
Date: March 15, 2022



The Forest Preserves of Cook County recognizes that the deep racial and ethnic inequities that exist today are a direct result of structural racism which has evolved and persisted throughout our country's history. The District's Department of Law Enforcement recognizes its obligation to combat structural racism, reject discrimination, and treat everyone with dignity and respect.

In 2020 the District launched its model policing initiative and retained Hillard Heintz to conduct an independent analysis of the Law Enforcement Department. The Hillard Heintz team presented 21 recommendations which were used to develop a new strategic plan for the Forest Preserves Law Enforcement Department. The plan lays out six strategic initiatives as follows:

- 1. Build trust and legitimacy with the community.**
- 2. Develop clear and comprehensive policies.**
- 3. Promote positive organizational change and better communication across ranks.**
- 4. Ensure officers have the technology, tools and equipment they need to do their jobs and to keep safe.**
- 5. Provide training and opportunities for advancement to all personnel throughout their careers.**
- 6. Develop strategies to recruit officers who can succeed and grow at the Forest Preserves.**

The Law Enforcement Department is in the process of implementing these initiatives; this report presents our progress to date.

Goals

1. Build trust & legitimacy with the community.

- Embrace a guardian (rather than a warrior) mindset to build trust and legitimacy with the public.
- Increase transparency of data, policies, and procedures.
- Adopt and embrace, internally and externally, the principles of procedural justice:
 - Treat people with dignity and respect.
 - Give the public a voice during encounters.
 - Be neutral in decision-making.
 - Convey trustworthy motives.



Progress to Date

- ✓ Adopted Ten Shared Principles of Community Policing.
- ✓ In partnership with Commissioner Britton, conducted a virtual town hall to discuss with residents the Ten Shared Principles of Community Policing.
- ✓ Developed PD REDI which is a subset of the District REDI (Racial, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) Committee. Participants includes all ranks of the Police Department.
- ✓ Continued participation in Hate Crime Coalition with Chicago Commission on Human Relations.
- ✓ Conducted high-visibility patrols in the preserves, on and off the trails, on foot, bicycle, boat, ATV, Razr and snowmobiles.
- ✓ ATV & Razr patrols have been utilized in locating missing and injured persons.
- ✓ Conducted boat patrols in Tampier Lake and at the Illinois High School Association Fishing Derby held at Busse.
- ✓ Conducted six snow mobile patrols to date in 2022.
- ✓ Continue to partner with Volunteer Resource Department with the Trail Watch Program.
- ✓ Appointed Dog Park Liaison.

Goals	Progress to Date
<p>2. Develop clear and comprehensive policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop clear and comprehensive policies on the use of force (including training on the importance of de-escalation), consent before searches, gender identification, racial profiling, performance measures, external and independent investigations, and prosecutions of officer-involved shootings and other use of force situations and in-custody deaths. ➤ Periodically review policies and procedures to ensure policies are maintained and current. ➤ Conduct nonpunitive peer reviews of critical incidents separate from criminal and administrative investigations. ➤ Establish civilian oversight mechanisms. 	<p>In 2021, best practices were incorporated into 65 new policy updates, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use of Force/de-escalation ✓ Body Worn Cameras ✓ Tasers ✓ Officer Involved Shootings ✓ Hate Crimes ✓ Immigration
<p>3. Promote positive organizational change and better communication across ranks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt procedural justice principles to ensure fairness in processes, transparency in actions, opportunities for voice, and impartiality in decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Developed and shared Department Communication Plan. ✓ Chief of Police has an open-door policy which has fostered an environment for members of the department to come and talk openly with her. ✓ Scheduled meetings with Chief of Police and officer and sergeants' union, monthly sergeants' meetings.
<p>4. Ensure officers have the technology, tools and equipment they need to do their jobs and to keep safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Acquired two new K9 vehicles. ✓ Providing 10 new vehicles that are slated for delivery in April 2022. ✓ Mobile data terminals assigned to each officer instead of being assigned to each vehicle. ✓ Installed Quicket (an electronic evidence system), and Asset Tiger (a new asset inventory system). ✓ Created forms committee to update and modernize electronic forms.

Goals	Progress to Date
<p>5. Provide training and opportunities for advancement to all personnel throughout their careers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide a clear, progressive career path. ➤ Promote opportunities for officers to assume leadership roles in problem solving. ➤ Engage community members, particularly those with special expertise, in the training process. ➤ Promote interagency collaboration, shared services and regional training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Newly promoted First Deputy Chief of Police from within the organization. ✓ Newly appointed Taser coordinator to ensure Taser training is given the proper attention that is needed. ✓ Held stand-alone award and promotion ceremonies to recognize officers' accomplishments. Officers have been publicly acknowledged at board meeting and General Superintendent and Assistant General Superintendent visited officers in person to present them with certificate.
<p>6. Develop strategies to recruit officers who can succeed and grow at the Forest Preserves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Like other police departments across the country, the District struggles to fill vacant positions and retain sworn officers. Our police department is budgeted for 94 officers; we currently have 74. We cannot continue with business as usual; we must develop new strategies to find officers who can succeed and grow at the Forest Preserves' police department, and we must retain officers over many years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Developed a recruitment team comprised of all ranks. This team was provided formal interview training by the Director of Compliance and team members have attended a job fair at Brookfield Zoo and participated in a Facebook virtual conversation to encourage members of our Conservation Corps, Youth Outdoor Ambassadors, and others to pursue a career in law enforcement at the Forest Preserves. ✓ Made changes to the Employment Plan which directly affects hiring process for police department. ✓ Conducting Industry Research regarding pay and pension benefits. ✓ Newly appointed sergeant and First Deputy Chief of Police provided a promotional ceremony.