

HOWARD COUNTY
POLICE
2020 annual report





***From County Executive
Calvin Ball:***

This year, the outstanding members of our Howard County Police Department continued to exemplify the professionalism and integrity that our community expects from those who protect and serve. Our Police Department has set a standard for our region and our nation, and as a Howard County resident and parent, I am so grateful for the hard work of our police to keep us safe.

In 2020, our officers were quick to adapt to the changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. They provided essential support and infrastructure to our community and moved services online to protect public health. While serious issues are raised around the country about the role of policing in our communities, Howard County continues to stand out as a model of best practices. I could not be prouder of the transparency, accountability, and integrity of this Department and our Officers. As Howard County emerges from this pandemic and continues to recover, I look forward to building on the progress we've made, encouraging more community conversations, and the shared goal of keeping our community safe.

CALVIN BALL
County Executive

A LETTER TO RESIDENTS OF HOWARD COUNTY



This past year brought unexpected challenges on many fronts. The global COVID-19 pandemic changed nearly all aspects of our lives: how most people make a living, the way our children learn, how we socialize, even the way we're able to mourn. It certainly changed some aspects of police work.

In March of 2020, our Operations Support Division pulled together a team to focus on sourcing critical supplies, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies for all employees. The team researched and recommended safety measures to assist with

policy development, which we quickly put into practice. In an effort to limit exposure for officers and residents before PPE was widely available, the department began promoting the already existing option to report some categories of crime either over the phone or online in certain circumstances.

Police were also tasked with enforcing the ever-changing state and county Executive Order violations related to COVID-19. While we received hundreds of calls for service reporting suspected violations at businesses and large gatherings, only a fraction actually were, and officers were able to gain voluntary compliance in nearly every situation.

But our focus wasn't only on COVID-19. In 2020, the death of George Floyd and others at the hands of police officers in other parts of the nation put renewed focus on how police departments use force, how officers are held accountable, how they are trained, and what steps can be taken to make policing better for everyone in the community. The Howard County Police Department is dedicated – and bound by policy, law and humanity – to treat every person equally and with respect. We expect and tolerate no less from every member of our agency.

In our ongoing commitment to police-community relations and transparency, the department compiled answers to frequently asked questions on topics of interest to our community and posted them on social media and our website. We covered use of force, confirming that chokeholds are not permitted at HCPD; accountability and transparency; education and training; and community outreach and involvement. In an effort to continue strengthening relationships in our community, our department leadership and officers from our Community Outreach Division participated in discussions with community groups, places of worship, gatherings of concerned residents, and the media, and we'll continue to do so.

The past year brought many challenges and I am proud to say that our members rose to those challenges. As we move forward to evolve into an even more efficient and effective law enforcement agency, we will continue to depend on the involvement and support of our community in 2021.



LISA D. MYERS
Chief of Police



Pictured, L-R: a dispatcher poses with a bottle of hand sanitizer early on in the pandemic; a traffic officer assists at a county testing site for COVID-19; officers pose for their photo after locating a missing man with autism as part of the Office of Public Affairs' positive stories campaign; two officers show off their masks and social distancing; an officer gets vaccinated at the Howard County Health Department; community members place a thank you sign at the station

YEAR IN REVIEW

POLICING DURING COVID-19: Life changed in 2020 for everyone, including the HCPD. The department responded quickly to the new needs presented by the pandemic. In an effort to limit officer and resident in-person interactions, HCPD began encouraging residents to report incidents online or over the phone for certain categories of crime. Instead of having an officer respond to your location, reporting online or over the phone can be done when the incident is not an emergency or in progress, the suspect is not known and there is no evidence to collect. These reporting options, which were already in use prior to 2020, were widely adopted and will remain options going forward.

CRITICAL SUPPLIES: HCPD's Operations Support Division was tasked with sourcing Person Protective Equipment (PPE) and critical cleaning supplies early on and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic for all members of the department. The team researched and recommended safety measures to assist with policy development, and identified and procured the proper PPE, hand sanitizer, cleaning and disinfectant supplies, as well as researched and recommended alternative decontamination and cleaning options.

EXECUTIVE ORDER ENFORCEMENT: Police officers were tasked with enforcing ever-changing state and county Executive Order violations related to COVID-19. Over the course of the year, there were a total of 547 calls for service for reported Executive Order violations, 127 of which officers determined were an actual violation of a large gathering limitation, business requirement or mask wearing requirement. In nearly all of these cases, officers were able to gain voluntary compliance, very rarely having to issue a citation.

PET FOOD BANK: Animal Control leveraged their existing pet food bank in 2020, soliciting donations from the public and helping anyone who requested assistance due to COVID-19 financial distress or access issues. Animal Control partnered with other county agencies and community groups, attending events at senior centers and churches in addition to offering no contact pick up at the center. This program was a literal lifesaver for many, providing pet food, litter and supplies to families in need.

VACCINATION: Howard County first responders, including police, started receiving their first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine from our partners at the Howard County Health Department in the final week of 2020 to improve safety for officers and all of the people they serve.



Pictured, L-R: community outreach officers participate in Howard County Recreation & Parks' Truck or Treat event; the Office of Public Affairs shoots video for a COVID-safe version of the Polar Bear Plunge for MD Special Olympics; officers carry the torch ahead of the MD Special Olympics Torch Run; two officers pose for a photo following a life-saving call; an outreach officer assists McGruff in handing out autographs during National Night Out; a school resource officer poses with a student and her parent

YEAR IN REVIEW

CRIME DATA: Overall, violent and non-violent crime totals are down from 2019, with significant decreases in several categories. The crime rate in Howard County, which is crimes per 100,000 residents, continues to be far below the statewide average with the rate of violent crimes being less than half that of the statewide rate. Nearly every crime category, including robbery, burglary and theft, continued a downward trend over the past five years.

YOUTH OUTREACH: Outreach to Howard County's youth looked a little different in 2020. HCPD's Youth Division thought on their feet, using School Resource Officers (SROs) to transform its typical programs into COVID-friendly events.

Thanks to the Howard County Police Foundation, SROs were able to purchase supplies needed to offer popcorn, snowballs and other snacks at existing school lunch pick up sites, giving them a chance to meet up with students and parents they hadn't seen in months due to distance learning.

The division also organized an epic field trip for P.L.E.D.G.E. students and Police Explorers to enjoy time together outdoors at The Adventure Park. SROs and students were separated into to smaller groups, social distanced and wore masks for safety.

The annual youth holiday party was also moved outdoors in 2020 as a drive thru event, but there was still plenty of cheer (along with gifts, Santa, and food, of course)! Sponsored by the Foundation's HoCoKids campaign, 140 Howard County children received a gift bag complete with a winter coat, gloves, toys, sports equipment, and more. Our SROs handed out the bags as the children and their families drove through Wilde Lake Middle School's parking lot.

TEXT TO 911: In 2020, residents and visitors in the state of Maryland gained the ability to send a text to 911 in an emergency. This service can assist individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have a speech disability; someone who is in a situation where it is unsafe to place a voice call to 911; or an individual who is experiencing a medical emergency and may be unable to speak.

DRONE PILOT PROGRAM: The department launched a one-year field test to use drones in police operations. The program was the result of a recommendation from the 2019 workgroup that researched the technology, specifically issues related to drone use in law enforcement, including usefulness, transparency, training and privacy issues.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

Chief of Police Lisa Myers

Chief Myers is the highest-ranking officer and leader of the Howard County Police Department. She works to develop goals, formulate plans and implement programs and policies designed to strategically solve problems. The Chief meets regularly with community leaders to address concerns, solicit input and maintain a direct connection to residents.

The Executive Administrator serves as the Chief’s primary liaison with the County Administration, police unions, other County Departments as well as managing the office staff. This position also manages constituent inquires and affairs.

The Chief of Staff ensures operational matters receive swift attention and coordinates functions and issues related to retirements and the Honor Guard.

Planning and Legislative Affairs is responsible for monitoring and researching legislative issues and law enforcement best practices to ensure current policy adheres to relevant Federal, State and local legislation and national accreditation standards. This position oversees the Accreditation Coordinator who is tasked with collecting proofs of compliance with hundreds of standards set by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

The Office of Public Affairs communicates with the public and the news media. The office is also responsible for social media, the HCPD website, special events, and all public relations and marketing for the agency.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BUREAU

THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION is responsible for the administration and investigation of police personnel complaints. Complaints can range from minor performance deficiencies to allegations of misconduct. All complaints are investigated with adherence to established and accredited policies and procedures with a commitment to provide thorough and impartial investigations.

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE DIVISION is responsible for reviews, inspections, and audits and is taxed with maximizing the agency’s commitment to integrity and professionalism. The Division includes the Staff Inspections Section, Liquor Inspector and Policy Coordinator. They are responsible for ensuring strong policies and policy compliance.

Pictured, T-B: HCPD's honor guard participates in the county's annual 9/11 ceremony; the Chief of Police speaks at a news conference following an unsolved homicide

Ancillary Services:

The Honor Guard presents the colors at all formal ceremonies and represents the department at police funerals and special events.

The Police Foundation is comprised of local business leaders who provide assistance to the department by sharing business and management expertise. The foundation provides funding for various youth programs, manages a scholarship fund, purchases non-budgeted equipment and sponsors the annual Police Pace 5K.

The Citizens Advisory Council is comprised of volunteer Howard County citizens who meet monthly to facilitate the flow of information to and from the police department and engage in creative problem-solving efforts. The council then makes recommendations to the Chief to improve police services.





OPERATIONS COMMAND

Deputy Chief Thomas Ehart

PATROL DISTRICTS

Northern and Southern Patrol District officers respond to calls for service, enforce traffic and criminal laws and address community needs. In addition to patrol officers, the Patrol Operations Bureau includes the following programs and positions:

Special Assignment Sections work in both districts to aid patrol efforts by providing various services, including surveillance and saturation patrols.

A total of four District Detectives assist patrol officers in complex investigations and follow up.

A specialized Traffic Officer assigned to each district focuses on speed, seatbelt and handheld device enforcement and addresses complaints from residents.

Duty Officers work the front desk at each district station and handle incoming calls and walk-in inquiries, as well as write certain types of police reports.

Police Cadets provide a wide range of administrative and operational services. Cadets often have aspirations to become sworn police officers.

Patrol's Bike Program is made up of 42 patrol officers who also utilize bikes to maneuver the County's footpaths, open space and parks.



COMMUNITY SERVICES BUREAU

THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIVISION offers crime prevention and education programs to citizens and businesses and works with individual communities to solve issues as they arise. The division provides focused efforts and assistance to senior, youth, multicultural and Asian populations as well as general community groups. The Community Outreach Division also includes:

Eight Neighborhood Community Resource Officers, who address community needs and concerns through crime prevention programs and targeted enforcement; and the Pathway Patrol, which includes six dedicated officers and a sergeant who maneuver through Howard County's unique expanse of footpaths, open space and parks on bicycles and electric motorcycles.

The Mental Health Section has grown to include two officers, a sergeant and an embedded state-licensed counselor working side-by-side to reduce the cycle of repeat mental health issues.

The Victim Assistance Section provides crisis intervention, financial assistance and counseling services to people victimized by crime. Members of the section serve as advocates and offer support services to survivors and their families.

THE YOUTH DIVISION focuses on engaging young people and creating opportunities for interactions with officers. The Youth Services Section oversees prevention and intervention programs like BearTrax, Community Athletic Program, Teen Court, Youth Police Academy, P.L.E.D.G.E. leadership camp and Explorer Post 1952. They oversee the Youth Advisory Council and Teen Court. The School Resource Officer Sections manage officers assigned to 13 high schools and 12 middle schools. SROs mentor students, instruct classes and handle incidents at those schools.

Pictured: an officer poses for a photo following a life-saving call where he saved the life of a choking teenager



INVESTIGATIONS & SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Deputy Chief Mary Levy

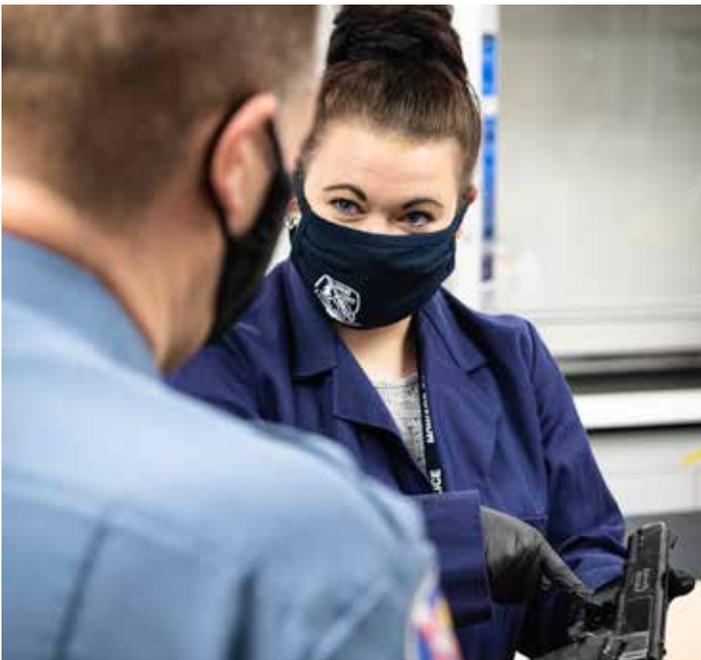
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU

THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION handles the most serious criminal cases, such as violent crimes and robberies. Investigations often involve surveillance operations, covert details and search and seizure warrants, as well as interviews of victims, witnesses and suspects.

THE PROPERTY CRIMES DIVISION investigates residential and commercial property crimes including pawn and metal theft, and handles special investigations including auto theft, fraud/forgery and fire investigations.

THE FAMILY CRIMES AND SEXUAL ASSAULT DIVISION works alongside other agencies to investigate child abuse, sexual assaults and domestic violence incidents, and monitors registered sex offenders.

THE VICE AND NARCOTICS DIVISION is responsible for investigating crimes involving the manufacture, sale, distribution and use of controlled dangerous substances. Members also investigate gambling, human trafficking, prescription fraud and organized crime.



Pictured: a crime scene technician examines a piece of evidence alongside an officer

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPORT BUREAU

THE INVESTIGATIVE SUPPORT DIVISION assists other aspects of the department with their criminal investigations. They assist investigators with surveillance, evidence gathering, arresting fugitives, and providing technical support. The division includes the Warrant/Fugitive, Repeat Offender Proactive Enforcement (ROPE), and Technical Support Sections.

THE OPERATIONS SUPPORT DIVISION includes the Intelligence Unit, which provides information on criminal activity to patrol officers and investigators; the Crime Analysis Unit, which analyzes data to identify trends, develop suspects and assist in determining enforcement strategies; and the Gang Investigations Unit, which is responsible for the development of intelligence as it relates to gang activity in the county. This division acts as liaison to the Office of Emergency Management and collaborates with other county agencies in the Emergency Operations Center when activated. In addition, the division provides active shooter training and awareness to houses of worship, businesses, and private schools within the county.

THE FORENSIC SCIENCES DIVISION includes the Digital Forensics Section, Chemistry Unit, Latent Print Unit, Crime Scene Unit and Ten Prints, who provide forensic examinations through the identification, collection, preservation, and analysis of physical evidence.

The Property and Evidence section provides secure storage of all property and evidence and preserves its integrity until final disposition.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU

THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION includes the Tactical Section, K-9 Section, Special Support Services, and Critical Incident Negotiations Team. The division also includes 15 Auxiliary Officers and a 6-member Volunteer Mounted Patrol who combined volunteered over 1,289 hours between January and March of 2020 before the program was paused due to the COVID-19.

THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DIVISION is made up of the Traffic Enforcement Section, which is responsible for investigating serious traffic collisions and coordinating traffic safety programs; and the Automated Enforcement Section, which oversees the Red Light Camera, Automated Speed Enforcement and False Alarm Reduction programs, as well as School Crossing Guards.



ADMINISTRATION COMMAND

Deputy Chief James Marshall

MANAGEMENT SERVICES BUREAU

THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIVISION coordinates police training for new recruits and recertification for current officers. The division provides training and professional development programs for the agency’s civilian staff, and includes the firearms and training sections.

HUMAN RESOURCES includes Employment Services, which coordinates employment activities in conjunction with the county’s Office of Human Resources for hiring, employment and benefit-related issues, Payroll and Peer Support, which is comprised of police department employees who volunteer to provide support for agency members who are involved in a traumatic incident or are in need of peer support.

The Recruitment and Screening sections processed applicants for two entry-level and one lateral academy class in 2020. The police department is hiring new officers and cadets on a continuous basis. Interested applicants can find information at HCPD.org.

The Quartermaster handles supplies and inventory for the entire police department, including uniforms and equipment for sworn, civilian and volunteers.

Pictured, L-R: a dispatcher sits at her work station in the newly renovated 911 center; an animal control officer handles a kitten



THE ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION investigates animal cruelty cases, rescues endangered animals, accepts unwanted pets, administers a pet adoption program, and conducts humane education programs. The division processed 1,272 domestic, stray and wild animals at the shelter, facilitated 433 adoptions or release to rescue organizations and returned 211 animals to their owners in 2020. Personnel issued 338 citations and 144 warnings for animal code violations, and expanded the pet food bank to support residents during times of crisis.

The Budget Fiscal Section is responsible for the financial administration of the department’s operating budget, multiple grants and various revenue accounts.

Fleet and Facilities is responsible for 500 marked and unmarked vehicles to include ordering, upfitting, equipping and assignment. They also coordinate repair, maintenance and cleaning of multiple police facilities, manage card access and building security, and renovations and moves.

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY BUREAU

THE COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION houses the County’s 911 Center. Dispatchers on four squads handled 128,662 calls for police in 2020, in addition to calls for fire service.

THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION includes the Records Section, which maintains the department’s records, including the Uniform Crime Reporting data on the following pages.

THE COMPUTER SERVICES DIVISION is responsible for the IT needs of the agency to include remote access, MDCs and desktop computers. They also manage critical databases and the integration of software for field-based reporting, CAD and Lexis Nexis Virtual Crime Center.



ANNUAL AWARDS



HCPD Leadership Award
Cpl. Shapree Crawford



First Year Service Award
PO Stephen Schillinberg



Community Service Award
PFC James Abrashoff



**Scott Wheeler Traffic
Safety Award**
PFC Joseph Gallina



Detective of the Year
PFC Serge Wochtchou



**Telecommunicator
of the Year**
Disp. FC Kristi Carter



Civilian of the Year
James Tyndall



Officer of the Year
PO Nicholas Bucciero

Volunteers of the Year: Explorer Captain Mitchell Calloway | Animal Control Volunteer Rebecca Dreisch

Officer of the Quarter: PFC Jacob Lorentson | PFC Michael Scanlon
PO Nicholas Bucciero | PFC Serge Wochtchou

Dispatcher of the Quarter: Dispatcher First Class Nicole McCormick | Dispatcher First Class Jessica Butler
Dispatcher Denise Grant | Dispatcher Sarah Neal

Civilian of the Quarter: Lauren Frank | Carla James | James Tyndall

CRIME STATISTICS

Crime statistics are tracked in strict accordance with national standards administered by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program. Additional statistics and reports are available at HCPD.org.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
PART I OFFENSES					
Homicide	6	6	1	8	7
Human Trafficking	17	17	13	11	10
Theft	4,379	4,336	3,852	3,613	2,990
Aggravated Assault	440	490	439	280	192
Robbery	201	202	130	167	137
Burglary	840	810	442	428	346
Motor Vehicle Theft	303	353	254	263	251
Rape	66	70	72	57	50
Arson	46	34	62	26	31
Total Part I Offenses	6,298	6,318	5,265	4,853	4,014
PART II OFFENSES					
Simple Assault	2,523	2,593	2,379	2,368	2,021
Forgery/Counterfeiting	868	987	699	725	729
False Pretense/Fraud	564	510	495	469	460
Embezzlement	84	95	79	82	46
Vandalism	1,474	1,303	1,001	931	866
Weapons Violation	96	101	76	74	85
Prostitution/Vice	60	42	48	43	28
Sex Offenses	91	86	98	109	81
Drug Violations	1,534	1,694	1,598	1,407	914
Gambling	2	2	1	0	1
Family, Child Neglect/Abuse	120	90	103	161	111
Driving while Intoxicated	804	785	710	654	333
Liquor Law Violation	60	40	63	30	11
Disorderly Conduct	265	250	284	274	210
Loitering	5	6	5	5	2
All Other Part II Offenses	986	951	921	900	1,107
Total Part II Offenses	9,536	9,535	8,560	8,708	7,375
ARRESTS					
Adult, Part I	1,079	1,022	865	687	471
Adult, Parts II and III	2,909	2,823	2,556	2,090	1,255
Juvenile, Part I	512	426	299	333	185
Juvenile, Parts II and III	494	509	321	299	147
OFFICERS ASSAULTED	114	106	102	123	85

INTERNAL AFFAIRS STATISTICS

2020 COMPLAINTS

<u>Conduct</u>	<i>Citizen</i>	<i>Internal</i>
Conformance to Law	0	0
Conformance to Policy	0	2
Improper Conduct	1	4
Rudeness	3	0
Truthfulness	0	1
Sexual harassment	0	0
<u>Performance</u>		
Biased-based Profiling	0	0
Court Failure to Appear	0	1
Insubordination	0	0
Secondary Employment	0	0
Use of Force	4	1
Unlawful Arrest	0	0
Unlawful Search	0	0
Work Performance	0	10
Total complaints	8	19
<u>Complaint Dispositions</u>		
Not Sustained	0	0
Administratively Closed	0	3
Unfounded	0	0
Exonerated	0	0
Sustained	1	10
Policy Failure	0	0
Currently Open	7	6

Complaints and dispositions are listed by total number of involved-officers, not cases. One case may involve multiple officers.

2020 FACTS AT A GLANCE

It is the mission of the Howard County Police Department to provide a sense of safety and security for everyone by protecting life and property, reducing the opportunity for crime and disorder, enforcing criminal and traffic laws, assisting victims and promoting positive community engagement and effective partnerships.

HOWARD COUNTY POLICE

Organized	1952
Chief of Police	Lisa Myers
Authorized Sworn Officers	480
Authorized Civilians	227 full time 43 contingent
Auxiliary Officers	15 officers, 6 VMP
Bike Officers	49
K-9 Teams	7
Police calls into the 911 Center	128,662
FY20 General Fund Budget	\$122,788,723
Sworn Starting Salary	\$58,240
Sworn Officer Training	30 weeks classroom, 14 weeks in the field

HOWARD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Founded	1851
County Executive	Calvin Ball
Full-time Employees	3,204
Population (US Census)	325,690
Area	251 square miles
County Seat	Ellicott City
FY20 General Fund Budget	\$1,163,175,821
Chief Administrative Officer	Lonnie Robbins
County Council	Liz Walsh Opel Jones Christiana Mercer Rigby Deb Jung David Yungmann

HOWARD COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Committed to Excellence

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