

NIAGARA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

POLICE REFORM COLLABORATION



SHERIFF MICHAEL J. FILICETTI

JANUARY 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| PREFACE | 1 |
| History of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office | 3 |
| Mission Statement | 5 |
| Vision Statement | 6 |
| DEPLOYMENTS..... | 7 |
| Criminal Division..... | 8 |
| Corrections..... | 13 |
| Communications..... | 17 |
| STRATEGIES | 19 |
| NYS Accreditation | 20 |
| Community Policing | 22 |
| GIVE | 23 |
| Victim Assistance Unit | 24 |
| Crime Prevention..... | 26 |
| Drug Task Force Operational Planning..... | 27 |
| Targeted Patrol Enforcement | 29 |
| Mobile APP..... | 30 |
| Website..... | 31 |
| Social Media | 32 |
| NY Alert..... | 33 |
| OffenderWatch® | 34 |
| Officer Recording Systems | 35 |
| Corrections Programs | 36 |
| Communications..... | 43 |
| POLICIES AND PROCEDURES | 45 |
| Use of Force | 46 |
| Professional Standards | 47 |
| Recruitment, Selection, and Appointment | 47 |
| Discrimination | 50 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Affirmative Action | 51 |
| Training | 51 |
| Performance Evaluations | 52 |
| Discipline..... | 53 |
| Handling Complaints..... | 53 |
| Investigating Hate Crimes | 54 |
| CIT/De-escalation | 54 |
| Patrol Procedures | 55 |
| Prohibition Regarding Racial Profiling and Other Bias Based Policing..... | 55 |
| Professional Conduct | 57 |
| General Call Taking Procedures | 57 |
| Call Taking Procedure for Abusive or Uncooperative Callers | 58 |
| PRACTICES | 59 |
| Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy | 60 |
| Field Training Program..... | 63 |
| Department Training | 64 |
| LEAD..... | 67 |
| Less Lethal Options | 68 |
| CIT Training | 70 |
| Use of Force Review Process | 72 |
| Community Outreach | 73 |
| Citizen Comment Form | 75 |
| NCSO COMMITMENTS | 76 |
| Recruitment | 77 |
| Accreditation..... | 78 |
| LEAD..... | 79 |
| CIT/De-escalation | 80 |
| Use of Force Review | 81 |
| Anti-Bias Training | 82 |
| Explorer Program..... | 83 |
| NCSO Transparency via Website | 84 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Expanded Inmate Programs | 85 |
| Town Hall Meetings | 85 |
| Peer Support | 86 |
| Mental Health Response | 86 |
| Continuous Reform Evolvement..... | 87 |
| GOALS AND MEASUREABLE OBJECTIVES TO POLICE REFORM..... | 88 |
| Goal #1 | 89 |
| Goal #2 | 90 |
| Goal #3 | 91 |
| Goal #4 | 92 |
| Goal #5 | 93 |
| Conclusion | 94 |
| Appendices | 95 |
| Figure 1 | 96 |
| Figure 2 | 98 |
| Figure 3 | 99 |
| Figure 4 | 100 |
| Figure 5 | 101 |
| Figure 6 | 102 |
| Figure 7 | 103 |
| Figure 8 | 104 |
| Figure 9 | 105 |
| Figure 10 | 106 |
| Figure 11 | 107 |
| Figure 12 | 108 |
| Figure 13 | 109 |
| PowerPoint Presentation Provided to Stakeholders..... | 110 |

PREFACE

In compliance with NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order 203, issued on June 12, 2020 ([See Figure 1](#)), the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative for the Niagara County Sheriff's Office has developed the following plan. This plan includes a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities being served. The executive order requires each local government to adopt a policing reform plan by April 1, 2021.

A comprehensive plan is also to be reviewed by community stakeholders who will provide input in areas of evidence based policing strategies to include, but not limited to: policies, procedural justice, implicit bias awareness training, de-escalation training, law enforcement assisted diversion programs, community based outreach, and problem-oriented policing.

Once this plan has been created in conjunction with community stakeholders, it shall be offered for public comment to all citizens in the locality.

Upon completion of the review and comment, the plan will be presented to the local legislative body to be ratified and adopted by local law or resolution.

History of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office was established March 11, 1808.

Sheriffs were the very first form of law enforcement in this country. As sheriff's offices continued to grow, Sheriffs appointed Deputies to assist with the protection of life and property.

The position of Sheriff is an elected position and the Sheriff serves as the chief law enforcement officer for a county. Sheriffs are elected to four year terms. The Sheriff has the responsibility to provide patrol services for the county as well as maintain the Niagara County Correctional Facility.

The first Niagara County jail was built in Buffalo in 1810, prior to being separated from what is now Erie County. On April 2, 1821, Niagara County separated from what became Erie County. In 1825, the first Jail and courthouse was built on Niagara Street for a cost of \$4,500. A new jail was constructed in 1842 and consisted of 32 cells and an exercise yard. With the need for additional space, a new jail was constructed in 1893 and increased the capacity to 53 cells. The cost for construction was \$50,000.

Ultimately, new regulations forced the construction of another new facility in 1961. That facility was constructed on the property where the Niagara County

Sheriff's Office is still located today, Niagara Street Extension. The new jail facility had 172 cells. As populations continued to grow and space became limited, the jail facility was expanded to increase capacity to 449 beds in 1996. The new construction established a "podular" style jail system, which is a more cost effective way to supervise and house inmates. The facility is still in use today.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has a proud tradition of serving the residents of Niagara County with honor, integrity, and professionalism. This culture has never wavered and can be found in the words of our mission and vision statements.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office is to secure for the people of Niagara County the conditions that will bring about and sustain the full measure of the benefits of citizenship in a democratic society of laws by safeguarding life and property, preserving the peace, preventing and detecting crime, enforcing the law, and protecting the rights of all citizens.

Vision Statement

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office shall provide the finest and most professional public safety services to the residents of and visitors to Niagara County. We will work in unison with the community and other law enforcement agencies. We shall demand of ourselves the highest standards of honesty and integrity as we uphold all laws for which we are responsible.

The Office of the Sheriff shall maintain a safe, secure and cost effective jail that recognizes the dignity of all individuals, while adhering to all constitutional standards and regulatory guidelines.

We are committed to preventing crime and protecting life and property; preserving peace, order and safety; enforcing laws and ordinances and safeguarding constitutional guarantees. We recognize that our employees are our most valued assets and we recognize that diversity is strength.

By utilizing the most extensive education and technology available, the Office of the Sheriff will faithfully serve the people of Niagara County to the best of our ability with steadfast honor and dedication.

DEPLOYMENTS

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office consists of three main divisions: Criminal Division, Corrections Division, and Communications Division. This comprehensive review will encompass all of these divisions to ensure a transparent and consistent process.

Criminal Division

The Criminal Division is comprised of Patrol, Investigations, and Specialty Units. The Patrol Division is the most visible component of the Sheriff's Office.

[\(See Figure 2\)](#) There are a total of 109 sworn police officers working within the Criminal Division. The bulk of these sworn officers conduct patrol functions. The Patrol Division has primary jurisdiction throughout Niagara County. They provide patrol services to the towns and villages. They also assist the city police departments as needed. For patrol assignments, the County is divided into 12 zones. Each town within the county comprises a zone. For example, the Town of Porter is located in Zone 1; the Town of Wilson is considered Zone 2 and so on.

Patrol cars are deployed based on several factors. For officer safety and contractual purposes, each shift can deploy a minimum of six patrol cars and one supervisor. If more cars are available, they can be deployed to busy service areas or utilized for special assignments. At a minimum, two patrol cars are assigned to cover the northern part of Niagara County. This comprises the Towns of Porter, Wilson, Newfane, Somerset, and Hartland. Additionally, two cars are assigned to the southern part of Niagara County. This comprises the Towns of Royalton, Lockport, Pendleton, and Cambria. The remaining two patrol cars are assigned to

the western area of Niagara County. This comprises the Towns of Lewiston, Wheatfield, and Niagara. Additional cars are assigned to areas where there are a larger number of calls for service which require additional manpower to handle.

(See [Figure 3](#) and [Figure 4](#))

The Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) is responsible for investigating serious crimes throughout Niagara County. They are highly trained investigators responsible for investigating crimes ranging from Burglary to Homicide. They often work in conjunction with other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

The Niagara County Drug Task Force (DTF) is comprised of highly trained investigators whose primary role is to address drug problems throughout Niagara County. The DTF also employs members of partnering local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

The Sheriff's Office also deploys School Resource Officers (SRO) to the school districts of Newfane, Starpoint, and BOCES. These specially trained officers are responsible for ensuring the safety of all the school children. Initially, SROs were deployed in the wake of mass school shootings throughout the country in an effort to provide additional safety measures. Their original role has grown a great deal over the years. These officers spend a great deal of time with the children

and often assist teachers with classroom presentations. These unique positions give police officers the opportunity to engage not only with the students, but with parents as well. They are able to work closely with teachers and administrators in these buildings to develop conflict resolution strategies. They remain proactive in keeping school children on the correct path and offer early intervention solutions. They are not generally involved in school district disciplinary action but rather try to encourage positive behaviors with the children. In addition to the SROs on the campus, patrol deputies routinely perform checks of the school and stop by periodically to interact with students and faculty.

Several deputies are assigned to the Niagara County Social Service buildings, which are located in Lockport and Niagara Falls, to provide security for staff and clients. These buildings house the Office of Child Protective Services who are often vulnerable to threats from unhappy clients.

The Sheriff's Office assigns three deputies to the Crime Scene Investigation Unit (CSI). These deputies are responsible for collecting evidence at crime scenes for later prosecution. These deputies often find fingerprints, DNA, or other valuable evidence to locate suspects and provide for effective prosecution.

Another important unit is the Sheriff's K-9 Unit. The Sheriff's Office assigns three canines and handlers to this division. All of the canines are trained patrol

dogs with certifications in tracking and handler protection. The canines are further certified in narcotics detection or explosives detection. The canines and handler must complete not only NYS training requirements, but must also conduct a certain number of training hours each month to retain their certifications. When not assigned to a specific canine function, they provide additional manpower to the patrol division.

Two deputies are permanently assigned to our Warrants Division. These deputies are responsible for executing warrants issued by the local and county courts. These deputies are also assigned to work in partnership with the US Marshal's Fugitive Task Force. They perform warrant executions on some of the most dangerous criminals throughout Niagara County.

One of our most important divisions is our Community Services division. The Sheriff's Office takes great pride in working directly with the community we serve. Our Community Services division attends many events throughout the county. They assist with car seat installations, the Niagara County Fair, and other important functions. They coordinate many events and rarely say no to any request made by the community. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they were responsible for coordinating many birthday parade requests received by NCSO.

They were also instrumental in delivering meals for FeedMore WNY who had a shortage of drivers due to the pandemic.

Not only is the Sheriff's Office responsible for patrolling the roadways throughout Niagara County, but the waterways as well. Our Marine Division is comprised of NYS trained and certified boat operators who patrol Lake Ontario, the Niagara River, and the Erie Canal. The safety of our waterways is of crucial importance.

The Sheriff's Office also maintains a Civil Division. These deputies are responsible for enforcing court decisions by service; divorce and eviction papers, warrants, and other notices of appearance. In addition, deputies handle garnishments and property executions.

It is not uncommon during the warmer months to see sheriff's deputies patrolling on bicycles. Some members of our Patrol Division are certified bike patrol officers also. Bicycles allow us the opportunity to patrol small community areas as well as the various bike paths throughout the county.

Patrol deputies can also receive training on the operation of ATVs. We utilize ATV patrols to respond to complaints of illegal ATV operation on properties throughout the county. They are also a very valuable search and rescue tool.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office also operates an Aviation Unit on a part-time basis. Trained pilots and spotters assist with many search and rescue missions throughout Niagara County and surrounding areas. This unit functions on a call-in basis.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office deploys, on a part-time basis, an Emergency Response Team (ERT). This is a team of highly trained tactical officers who are able to respond to critical incidents. Their goal is to protect life and property by using tactical advantage as a means to resolve incidents. They perform high risk missions while placing the safety of the public and officers as top priorities.

Corrections

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is responsible for providing a safe and secure jail to house inmates who have pending court cases or who are serving a court imposed sentence. Each day, the Niagara County Correctional Facility (NCCF) is entrusted with safeguarding the lives and property of 250 - 300 people. This is accomplished by providing a secure facility but also by exceeding the standards as set forth by the New York State Commission of Corrections (SCOC)

for county jails and penitentiaries. Medical care is provided through a contracted provider in the jail, with great attention paid to mental as well as physical health. In-house medical services provided to the inmate population include 24-hour medical care, psychiatric care, mental health counseling, dental care, and eye care.

The NCCF is fully dedicated to the citizens of this community in its efforts to provide and maintain a safe and secure facility in which to lawfully detain and house inmates. The Niagara County Jail fully recognizes its responsibility to the citizens of this community to operate this facility in the most cost-effective manner possible.

The purpose of the Niagara County Correctional Facility is to lawfully detain individuals charged with any violation of Federal, State or applicable law. All inmates entrusted to its care are treated fairly and justly without regard to their race, gender, religion, or age. The health, safety and well-being of these individuals are maintained by providing adequate medical/mental health care, nutritional diets, and various skills development opportunities.

The Niagara County Correctional Facility is committed to maintaining a professional and well-trained correctional staff which will uphold the State and U.S. Constitution, and comply with the Minimum Standards set forth by the New

York State Commission of Corrections (NYSCOC). The Corrections Division is the largest division within the Niagara County Sheriff's Office. ([See Figure 5](#)).

Presently there are 127 sworn correctional officers in the division. The Niagara County Correctional Facility recognizes that the correctional staff is a critical component in the safe and efficient operation of the facility and in accomplishing its objectives. The correctional staff will effectively operate this facility in a manner which will ensure the highest level of security. This will be accomplished by adhering to proper supervision of inmates, security management, and facility control. The Niagara County Correctional Facility is committed to providing its staff with the necessary resources needed to perform their duties.

As stated in the history of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, the Niagara County Jail was built in 1961, modelled after the most up to date physical layout of the times; linear housing. In 1996 a new jail complex was built and connected to the old jail, substantially increasing the bed capacity from 215 to 449. This new complex contains four (pod) style-housing units ([See Figure 6](#)) Twenty five years later, the podular design is still considered the correctional standard in efficiency based on physical layout, improved surveillance and the use of direct supervision. Inmates housed in a pod have their own cells but are free to move about the common area throughout the day. A recreation yard is also accessible from

within the housing unit. Podular housing units work from a direct supervision model requiring one Correction Officer to supervise up to 60 inmates.

The Linear section of the jail is made up of individual cells and is a more traditional style of housing ([See Figure 7](#)). This section of the Niagara County Jail is less efficient and more labor intensive due to its physical layout and barriers. The largest linear-housing unit in the jail requires one officer for 46 inmates and the smallest unit requires one officer for 18 inmates.

The Correctional Facility is a twenty-four hour operation. Manpower is divided among three shifts or tours of duty. The staffing required to operate the facility is mandated by the New York State Commission of Corrections (NYSCOC). Each housing unit must have a Corrections Officer present to supervise the inmates housed in the unit. The number of officers that are needed to supervise a unit is dependent on whether the inmates are secured in their individual cells or if they have out of cell access. The midnight shift has the smallest deployment of officers due to the inmates being secured in their cells for the entire shift. Minimum staffing for the midnight shift is 15 officers. Afternoon shift has a larger deployment of officers partially because of out of cell access and the increased number of bookings. Minimum staffing for the afternoon shift is 22 officers. Day shift has the largest deployment of corrections officers. This increase in

manpower is driven by court appearances, legal visits, medical appointments, records, lobby control, inmate classification, Inmate visitation, education services and programming. Minimum staffing for the day shift is 36 officers.

Communications

The Niagara County Communications Center is the primary Public Safety Answering Point in Niagara County for all land line 911 calls received from all Towns, Villages and the City of North Tonawanda. Any 911 call that is placed through a cellular device from anywhere in Niagara County is received by the Communications Center as well. Once these calls are received, dispatchers are then able to dispatch calls for service to law enforcement, ambulance and fire companies. This center is staffed 24 hours a day seven days a week with certified, trained professionals that have the ability to send the proper first responder quickly ([See Figure 8](#)). As calls come in to the Communications Center, dispatchers work diligently to ensure an appropriate police response if necessary. In addition to dispatching the call, the center accurately records units involved in each incident and ensure that only the necessary units are at each call. This is

important as police protection needs to continue being available even when there is a large, manpower consuming incident occurring.

The Communications Center also fields non-emergency calls and is able to direct callers to the appropriate point of contact. In 2019, the Communications Center answered 308,427 phone calls and dispatched 144,650 calls for service to law enforcement and first responders across Niagara County.

STRATEGIES

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office utilizes several strategies to effectively provide law enforcement services to our community. Many of those strategies are not only directed at targeting crime, but are also developed to ensure the community has the necessary resources offered by the Sheriff's Office. NCSO believes in transparency and sharing as much information as possible with the public. It has always been our goal to work together with the community to provide better service and promote public safety.

NYS Accreditation

Accreditation in New York State provides a framework of best practices and operational standards to be followed by the divisions of the Sheriff's Office. At the Sheriff's Office, accreditation has been achieved and is administered by New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services and the New York State Sheriffs' Association in the following areas: Law Enforcement, Corrections, Communications, Civil Division and Forensic Laboratory. The Forensic Laboratory also maintains an International Accreditation through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The Corrections Division Medical provider, PrimeCare, is also accredited. The medical accreditation is administered by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) which has 59 standards that must be maintained. During the accreditation process, these divisions must submit to an independent, outside examination and review to ensure the following:

1 – That the division has policies and procedures in place to address specific areas of the operational, administration and training process at the Sheriff's Office.

- 2 - That the policies in place meet the standards which have been set by the outside oversight agency.
- 3 - That the division has implemented and continues to follow the policies that have been established for that specific division.

In addition to the process of becoming accredited, the Sheriff's Office has committed to maintaining accreditation by having subject matter experts on staff to continually monitor and update accreditation files. This involves the constant review of policy and procedure as well as observing the process for each division to ensure that policies are followed. When a policy is not being followed, corrective action is implemented by the subject matter expert in that division. This process assists in the safeguarding of life and property by ensuring that specific policies are implemented and followed. While not every situation can be accounted for in a policy, these provide the framework for guidance in most situations. In order for a policy to be enacted at NCSO, a written policy is reviewed by the subject matter experts as well as the entire administrative staff. This ensures the policy receives the utmost scrutiny. Only after the completion of this process will the Sheriff implement the policy.

Community Policing

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has a long tradition of proud service to the citizens of Niagara County. We take great pride in engaging with the community while increasing our transparency. The Sheriff's Office always puts the needs of the community first. We invite the community to work together with us to make Niagara County a safe place to live, work and play. Our members can frequently be seen at community events. Recently we offered an open house to let the community get a behind the scenes look at what takes place at the sheriff's office. This included a tour of our jail facility as well as demonstrations by our K-9 Division and Emergency Response Teams. This past October, we invited the community to bring their children to our facility to participate in a Truck or Treat event. We also invited our law enforcement and fire department partners to participate. We offered tours of our vehicles and made sure to give plenty of candy to the children. We received an overwhelming response and our members thoroughly enjoyed the event.

We always seek new ways to partner with our community. We have participated in Habitat for Humanity house buildings. We have also been active supporters and helpers with SERV Niagara to assist veterans with housing and

integration into the community. NCSO recognizes that community participation and assistance are crucial for maintaining public safety and being responsive to the needs of the community.

GIVE

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has been involved in an initiative administered by New York State called Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE). This program receives state funding to eliminate gun violence in targeted areas throughout the state. In this program, we partner with the Niagara Falls Police Department (NFPD), the Niagara County District Attorney's Office, The Niagara County Probation Department and the Niagara Crime Analysis Center (NICAC). Agencies participating in GIVE must design a gun violence reduction plan that employs at least two of the following evidence-based strategies: hot-spots policing, focused deterrence, street outreach and crime prevention through environmental design. Participating agencies must also integrate procedural justice into their plan in an effort to foster trust and respect among individuals and communities with the law enforcement professionals who serve and protect them. NICAC is able to provide officers with real time data so they can target

specific areas based on statistical data and intelligence. NICAC allows us to provide officers the resources for evidence-based and intelligence-led policing efforts.

Victim Assistance Unit

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office Victim Assistance Unit (VAU) employs five full-time Crime Victim Advocates to assist crime victims throughout Niagara County. The VAU's primary mission is to provide comprehensive, specialized services that are tailored to the specific needs of victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse (both physical and sexual), surviving family members of homicide victims, assault, robbery, DWI, arson, elder abuse, human trafficking and property crimes. The Victim Assistance Unit does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, immigration status or having a criminal record.

The VAU has been providing comprehensive direct services to crime victims in Niagara County since 1989. The advocates work as a liaison between the victim and law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office to make the criminal

justice process easier to navigate. The VAU has continuously met these needs by offering:

- Outreach to explain VAU services and Office of Victim Services (OVS) compensation. OVS offers compensation for medical expenses, counseling expenses, funeral costs, loss of wages, and essential personal property to eligible crime victims.
- Home/hospital/off-site visits (to assist in filing OVS compensation claims, supportive counseling and follow up services)
- Transportation and accompaniment to police interviews, court proceedings and medical examinations at the Child Advocacy Center (CAC), criminal justice support and advocacy
- Referrals to appropriate service providers
- Advocacy on the victim's behalf with other agencies such as OVS, courts, law enforcement, District Attorney's Office, insurance companies, medical providers, and employers, etc.
- Crisis intervention provided at the crime scene or hospital (24 hour on-call availability)
- Telephone and in-person crisis counseling

The VAU directly serves all ten of the police agencies within Niagara County (Niagara County Sheriff's Office, Lockport Police Department, North Tonawanda Police Department, Niagara Falls Police Department, Town of Niagara Police Department, Middleport Police Department, Lewiston Police Department, Youngstown Police Department, Somerset Police Department and Barker Police Department), the District Attorney's Office, and four local hospitals.

Crime Prevention

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office, through a Lieutenant in Community Services Division coordinates speaking engagements, displays and other community presentations. Crime prevention is the principle element of our Community Services Division. Programs offered include home and personal security and conflict resolution. Also administered is the Sheriff's Office ALL STAR (**All Students Taking Action and Responsibility**) program which is taught at the 5th grade level at schools across Niagara County.

Another component to the Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention is our neighborhood watch program. In 2013, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office implemented Nextdoor, a virtual neighborhood watch for neighborhoods across

Niagara County. The Sheriff's Office was the first in New York State to offer such a program. Unlike the traditional neighborhood watch club meetings, this virtual platform allows members to define boundaries for their neighborhoods and collaborate with neighbors to share community building information. The Sheriff's Office can directly post crime prevention tips in addition to community notifications regarding criminal activity within their neighborhood. With almost 21,000 users of Nextdoor in Niagara County, this continues to be a well-received resource for both residents and the Sheriff's Office.

Through these various outreach efforts, the Sheriff's Office is able to effectively communicate with residents to ensure vital safety information is received. In addition, regular public service messages are broadcasted through press releases and various social media channels.

Drug Task Force Operational Planning

The Niagara County Drug Task Force (DTF) is comprised of investigators from the Niagara County Sheriff's Office as well as local, state, and federal partners. They recognize the importance of combatting the drug problem plaguing the county and its residents. Over the last several years, Niagara County

has not been immune to the opioid epidemic facing so many communities. DTF invests significant resources on this epidemic. DTF responds to all overdose calls and attempts to cultivate leads to trace the origin of these drugs. They utilize investigative tips and confidential informants to bring drug dealers to justice. These cases can be quite complex and often take several months to bring to prosecution. Drug dealers are also not bound to any geographical areas. Many of these cases under investigation lead our investigators to other counties and, in some cases, to other states. DTF has cultivated great partnerships with other agencies to work together to combat this problem.

Building a drug investigation can often present difficult legal challenges. In order to prosecute a drug case, there are many burdens of proof which must be met long before a case can be brought to the court system. The Drug Task Force cultivates confidential informants who provide important information about local dealers. Through this information and additional evidence gathering by investigators, the DTF can choose to present cases to the Grand Jury or can choose to execute search warrants on the drug house.

Many questions surrounding the use of search warrants have come to light recently. To obtain a search warrant, the investigator must have probable cause

and present that information to a Judge. Only the Judge can determine the validity of the information to show cause for a search warrant to be issued.

Targeted Patrol Enforcement

The Patrol Division at the Sheriff's Office not only responds to calls for service, but also provides proactive patrolling as a deterrent to crime. These efforts can also lead to the interruption of crimes in progress. When not responding to service calls, deputies are encouraged to patrol their area of responsibility to look for suspicious activity. The patrol area for the Sheriff's Office is vast and we don't often have the requisite manpower to place a patrol car in every coverage area. Marked patrol cars are often responsible for covering multiple areas.

With coverage areas being so large, we utilize targeted and directed enforcement to combat problem areas. We receive complaints from the public regarding traffic concerns regularly. Those concerns are passed to the Patrol Division for increased enforcement efforts.

Deputies are also directed to patrol problem areas or high crime areas. NICAC is able to provide deputies with real-time crime data which allows us to

quickly identify crime trends and divert additional resources to combat problems. These identified areas, called hot spots, receive additional patrol activities and additional manpower to deter crime. Evidence-based and intelligence-led patrol efforts allow NCSO to maximize the deployment of resources to specific problem areas throughout the county.

Mobile APP

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office continues to look for ways to better connect with the residents and visitors of Niagara County. In 2018, the Sheriff's Office launched a new mobile app. This mobile app has extended the outreach of Sheriff's Office communications in significant and innovative ways such as news, safety and crime prevention, social media, news, submit a tip, sex offender notifications, recruitment, and more.

The app also allows the Sheriff's Office to send out alerts instantly and quickly, to notify the public of emergencies, crime and road closings. The Sheriff's Office mobile app is free and available for both Apple and Android devices by searching Niagara County Sheriff.

The Sheriff's Office mobile app has been downloaded over 15,000 times and is a testament to how valuable this tool is to our agency.

Website

To complement our mobile app, a new website was built and launched in 2019. By searching www.NiagaraSheriff.com, you will find that our innovative website is easy to navigate. Large buttons direct users to vital information such as submit a tip, sex offenders, most wanted, community events, press releases, contact directory and animal abuse registry. In addition, users are able to search and review all functions of the Sheriff's Office.

A new feature under the contact us tab is the ability to electronically file a Citizen Comment Form. The Niagara County Office of the Sheriff strives to provide the best possible service to the citizens of Niagara County. Citizens are encouraged to bring forward positive comments as well as legitimate concerns regarding the Office or misconduct by Sheriff's personnel.

Another notable feature is highlighted under the Inmate Information tab. This unique feature allows persons who are incarcerated within the Niagara County Correctional Facility to have family, friends and acquaintances deposit

money into their commissary account. This feature is a convenient service to assist those who are in our facility for a period of time.

Social Media

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has found great value in Social Media. Currently, the Sheriff's Office utilizes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. With over 42,000 followers combined across all platforms, this outreach tool has proved to be invaluable with regard to connecting with residents and visitors of Niagara County.

Social Media is used to push out press releases, photos of deputies out in the community, crime and safety tips, missing children, recruitment, and highlight events that are occurring throughout Niagara County. Most importantly, the use of social media has allowed our agency to be transparent in all we are involved in. We allow for community interaction on our pages and use feedback as a way to evaluate the needs of our community.

The Sheriff's Office has also utilized our social media platforms to offer the community a virtual ride along on several occasions. We promote this event on our pages and offer the community to follow all of our activities during a shift. We

report every call for service the deputies respond to and then provide a brief synopsis of how the call was resolved. We also provide some body camera footage of some of the incidents so the followers can see exactly what is happening. Throughout the event, we offer the followers the opportunity to engage with us and ask questions that we will respond to. These events generally engage many members of the community and are very well received.

NY Alert

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office utilizes NY-Alert to disseminate press releases and other critical information relating to areas of concern throughout Niagara County.

NY Alert is a free service that New Yorkers can subscribe for to receive critical information and emergency alerts on what is happening in their area. NY-Alert contains critical, emergency-related information including instructions and recommendations in real-time by emergency personnel. Information may include severe weather warnings, significant highway closures, hazardous material spills and other emergency conditions.

All areas of New York State are included in the system, and you can decide which area you would like to receive alerts about. Signing up is free by visiting www.alert.ny.gov Messages can be received by phone, email, text and fax.

OffenderWatch®

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office utilizes OffenderWatch®, the nation's leading registered sex offender management and community notifications tool. The Sheriff's Office utilizes OffenderWatch® to manage and monitor the whereabouts, conduct and compliance status of registered sex offenders in Niagara County. This program provides the most accurate and timely information which is available on our website at www.NiagaraSheriff.com by clicking the Sex Offender button located on our homepage.

There is no greater responsibility than protecting our children. The Sheriff's Office dedicates a deputy sheriff to this program who oversees and regularly monitors sex offenders to ensure they are in compliance. Furthermore, the Sheriff's Office works closely with school districts throughout Niagara County to communicate information about offenders who reside in that community.

A unique tool that OffenderWatch® offers our community is the ability to receive notifications via email or text message regarding sex offenders who reside

in Niagara County. Signing up is not only easy, but free and can be done through our website.

Officer Recording Systems

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has long embraced the use of recording devices for our deputies. This important program began in the 1990's with in-car recording systems. The camera was activated anytime a police officer activated his emergency lights and anything occurring within the front of the vehicle could be captured by this recording.

Eventually, NCSO realized the limitations with this type of technology because much of an officer's work takes place outside the patrol vehicle. In 2009, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office implemented a body worn camera program for the Patrol Division, becoming one of the first agencies in NYS to utilize this technology.

Deputies are required by Sheriff's Office policy to activate the camera anytime they have interaction with a citizen. At the end of each shift, these recordings are uploaded to a cloud based storage location. Videos are then kept for a minimum of eight months but can be retained longer for pertinent

investigations. Videos can only be deleted by a Supervisor. Any video containing a use of force incident of a complaint against an officer is retained forever in the database.

The Corrections Division has also implemented body cameras on their officers. While the jail is equipped with many closed circuit cameras throughout the facility, the body cameras offer a point of view perspective during any critical situation.

The recordings obtained through the use of our technology allow us to review incidents in their entirety. These systems are useful training tools to ensure the professionalism of our agency.

Corrections Programs

The Niagara County Correctional Facility (NCCF) offers a variety of programs in partnership with multiple agencies. These agencies are a combination of paid, volunteer, and grant funded organizations, that provide services to incarcerated individuals within our facility, and offer resources to these individuals upon transitioning back into our communities.

The programs at the NCCF have continuously evolved over time to meet the needs of the incarcerated population. Our education program, administered through Orleans/Niagara BOCES, has instituted night classes for Job Readiness Training and Customer Service. With Raise the Age legislation, our facility no longer houses 16 and 17 year old minors, so night programs were instituted partially to provide an opportunity to our changing population for adults 18 years and older.

The NCCF has enjoyed a long, healthy relationship with Orleans/Niagara BOCES. The primary goal of BOCES is to provide education. Starting with High School Equivalency, continuing with computer skills, customer service and vocational training; BOCES' aim is to educate students in order to help them take steps toward a successful future. Soft skill development, interpersonal communication, teamwork and other elements crucial to individuals' employment are blended into curricula so that students have the resources necessary to navigate the difficult situations they will encounter in the workforce. The goal of each program offered through BOCES is job placement and successful re-entry into the workforce upon release from incarceration. Once released from incarceration, trainings are offered in industry sectors that provide students with the best possible opportunity for success. The case management structure

utilized by BOCES, allows them to individualize re-entry programs for the students. Specific needs of each person are addressed in order to increase the likelihood of success with a focus on housing, employment, childcare, transportation, mental health and substance abuse needs, as well as any other concerns facing the individual. Prior to release, students are linked with a case manager in the community and given whatever resources they require to transition successfully. Students are encouraged to reach out to BOCES whenever they need assistance.

Life skills such as financial literacy, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving and self-awareness are some of the components that are integrated into the various programs available to students. These abilities are shown to increase success in the workplace, and as a result lead to financial stability and independence.

Credential achievement is an additional goal of each individual program. In the case of the High School Equivalency program, the HSE Diploma is the end goal. Upon achieving this goal, students are provided with a graduation ceremony similar to ones held in public schools. After graduation, students are encouraged to further their education through either college enrollment or entry into a skilled trade program.

Many courses that are successfully completed at the Niagara County Correctional Facility lead to the issuance of a certificate. These include, Computer and Office Skills, Customer Service Training, Culinary, Carpentry, Small Engine Repair and Landscaping.

Among the programs offered at our facility, one of the most successful both in terms of popularity and completion has been the culinary program called “F BITES”. This program is administered by Chef Bobby Anderson, a well-known and successful presence in the Niagara Falls area. The information provided for this program has the motto “Great Food Changing Lives.” The mission of “F BITES” is to empower youth and adults through the exposure and hands on training of a healthy working environment, advancing the skill, leadership and supportive resources of the motivated individual. The course examines various current techniques of culinary training and develops skill and knowledge of incorporating healthy nutrition with advanced cooking methods. This specific focus seeks to advance the practice and culinary skill of the motivated individual, with a specific focus on obtaining employment at the time of completion. Leadership skills, effective communication and problem solving are skills taught to students that are transferable to many entry level workforce positions. In addition to skills and leadership tools, this 6 week course provides its graduates with a certificate and a

personal reference to several institutions to seek employment upon completion. Inmates are provided with a sample resume and cover letters to include in their search for work. “F BITES” utilizes a hands-on-method and peer support to introduce these skills at a turning point in the lives of these inmates.

Another integral program offered at the NCCF is for opioid use disorder. This program is administered through Best Self Behavioral Health, Inc. Best Self provides education, peer support and discharge planning post release to individuals with substance use disorders, as well as education on options for medication assisted treatment if there is a need. The goal of the Best Self Recovery Transition Jail Service is to provide incarcerated individuals with supportive services to live a substance free life, providing education about substance use disorders, teaching coping skills, meditation and evidence based curricula. Providing alternatives to obtaining vocational/educational opportunities post-release leading to self-sufficiency, independence and an overall enhanced quality of life is part of that goal. While incarcerated, individuals are identified through screening or self-reporting, as suffering from opiate/substance use disorder. These individuals are then housed together in the same physical environment to promote participation in services provided.

Prior to re-integrating back into our communities, individuals are linked with a discharge planner who facilitates contact with medication assisted treatment, resources for employment, educational opportunities, care coordination and housing post-release. Identified individuals are encouraged to engage in treatment beyond incarceration utilizing these resources.

A third program that the NCCF has enjoyed a long relationship is Good News Jail and Prison Ministry. Under the direction of Good News, the Jail Chaplain provides oversight to religious programming that takes place within the NCCF to ensure that incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to practice their religion and exercise their protected religious right while detained. Good News Jail and Prison Ministry has multiple goals regarding Chaplaincy at the Niagara County Correctional Facility. The first goal is to facilitate individuals' religious needs and requests within legal safety and security guidelines established by our facility. The second is to provide religious counseling as requested by inmates and/or staff members and third, to provide and/or facilitate religious services as requested by inmates.

The NCCF Chaplain can support the re-integration process back into our community by assisting with arrangements for temporary housing and shelter to those in need of it. The Chaplain maintains a good working relationship with

multiple local shelters including Lockport Cares, The Niagara Gospel Rescue Mission and similar organizations to facilitate housing upon release. In addition, the Chaplain can help arrange residential rehabilitation and addiction recovery services for those that have the need. Good News Jail and Prison Ministry has partnered with Niagara County for over 30 years to provide services, resources and counseling to individuals at the NCCF.

Along with the above duties, The Chaplain reviews and approves religious diets, funeral visitation and Bible study that is conducted in housing units, as well as coordinates with community volunteers who conduct Sunday worship and individual religious counseling.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is progressive in its attempt to offer the inmate population training and educational opportunities that will help them when they return to their communities. We are in the early stages of building a 3200 sq. /ft., state of the art, vocational education building for the sole purpose of equipping the men and women incarcerated at NCCF with a trade and/or skill. Our vision is to have a commercial kitchen for the F-Bites culinary program and a fully equipped wood shop along with classroom space. Part of this new building will be dedicated to training service dogs for "Pawsitive for Heroes," a program that trains assistance dogs for our veterans. Our intent is to collaborate with

Orleans/Niagara BOCES, WNY Heroes and the Niagara County SPCA to help us facilitate these programs.

We envision a discharge plan that partners with community stakeholders to assist newly released men and women for successful transition back into their community. Our ultimate goal of the programs and education that we offer is to reduce recidivism and to build stronger ties within our community.

Communications

Many times, the first initial form of contact with NCSO comes through the Communications center. In order to effectively answer 911 calls, all of the dispatch employees have been trained in emergency medical dispatch and can render aid over the telephone for many medical and police emergencies. This would include instruction for CPR, childbirth, bleeding wounds, traffic accidents and a variety of medical emergencies. They are also trained to assist citizens in the event of a police or fire emergency, to ensure the safety of all people involved in the incident. Additionally, they have been provided many tools such as NY Alert, a platform to disseminate critical, emergency-related information including

instructions and recommendations in real-time to assist in distributing accurate information to the public when needed.

Another resource employed by the Communications center is “I am Responding”. This platform is used to transmit dispatches from the Communications Center to the mobile devices of all registered first responders throughout Niagara County. Dispatchers are able to see immediately whether and when anyone is responding to an incident. This tool allows dispatchers to monitor and appropriately distribute resources to the incident as needed.

The Niagara County Communications Center is one of 14 county public safety answering points across New York State to be accredited by the New York State Sheriffs’ Association. In order to achieve this certification, over 70 highly professional standards need to be met. This is a great achievement for the Sheriff’s Office and Niagara County but truly speaks to the testament of the dispatchers who work within the Communications Center.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As part of this endeavor, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office reviewed the policy and procedural manual across all divisions to determine if any changes were necessary. As part of our NYS Accreditation, we are required to review policies regularly. The below policies were particularly reviewed as they relate to the police reform initiative.

Use of Force

The use of force by any member of the Sheriff's Office is governed by NYS Penal Law Article 35 which provides for the justification of such force. The policy of NCSO is more restrictive than the regulations established by NYS law. NCSO also adheres to the model policy created by the Municipal Police Training Council.

One change made to the NCSO policy regarding use of force was to ban chokeholds as a method of gaining control, although the use of chokeholds has never been taught to any member of the office. Chokeholds have long been removed from training curriculums and are not a matter of practice for today's law enforcement officers.

NCSO is obligated to report specific use of force incidents to the DCJS repository if they meet certain criteria. The criteria include: the use of a chemical agent (pepper spray), the use of a firearm, the use of an electronic control weapon (Taser), the use of a chokehold, or any force which resulted in death or serious bodily injury as defined by the NYS Penal Law. Prior to NYS requiring the reporting of use of force incidents, the Sheriff's Office regularly reported use of force incidents to the FBI for statistical gathering.

The Sheriff's Office recognizes a Use of Force Continuum as a guide to navigate officer actions. ([See Figure 9](#))

Any use of force incident by any police officer or corrections officer is thoroughly reviewed by an administrative team to determine whether the force used was appropriate, justified, and authorized by law and policy.

Professional Standards

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is committed to ensuring the proper conduct of our officers. It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to thoroughly investigate any complaint made against any member of NCSO. The Office of Professional Standards (OPS) was created to ensure that all investigations into a member's conduct were handled properly and fairly.

Recruitment, Selection, and Appointment

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to recruit and select the highest caliber of police officer candidates for the position of Deputy Sheriff and to do so in accordance with the New York State Civil Service Law as administered by the Niagara County Civil Service Commission. The Office of the Sheriff will hire qualified

candidates utilizing fair and impartial recruitment practices which do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, age, religion, ethnic or national origin or physical impairment. The Office of the Sheriff is an Equal Opportunity Employer and shall maintain policies and procedures to ensure this result.

To be eligible for appointment, candidates must meet the prescribed standards set forth by the New York State Bureau for Municipal Police and the Niagara County Civil Service Commission. All candidates must be Niagara County residents and have at least sixty (60) hours of college credits from an accredited College/ University or a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma with three years full-time active duty military experience.

Eligible candidates must pass a written exam administered by Civil Service. All candidates must satisfactorily complete a physical agility test, which tests candidates using current, accepted standards as determined by the Division of Criminal Justice Services.

A thorough background investigation will be conducted on each person on the eligibility list by members of the Office of the Sheriff. Candidates must complete and submit a background questionnaire and they will be fingerprinted and photographed. The background investigation will include, but not be limited to, investigation into the candidate's residence, family, education, military

background, previous employment history, social contacts, physical and emotional health, credit history, organizations and affiliations and motor vehicle and criminal history inquiries.

Candidates successfully completing the recruitment process and background investigation will be required to take part in an oral interview conducted by the Sheriff and/or his designees. The oral interview will employ a set of uniform questions and the results obtained will be recorded on standardized forms.

The pre-appointed candidate will be evaluated to establish that the candidate has the emotional stability and psychological fitness compatible with the position of Deputy Sheriff.

The pre-appointed candidate will be given a physical examination by a licensed physician in accordance with the current standards prescribed by the Municipal Police Training Council. When such physical examination has not been conducted in the course of civil service testing, as in the case of some transfer candidates, the same standards and procedures will be applied.

The pre-appointed candidate will be required to submit to a test to determine substance use/abuse.

The Office of the Sheriff also engages in recruitment procedures in an effort to attain and maintain a ratio of minority group employees in approximate

proportion to the makeup of the County of Niagara and aggressively recruits women and minority members to become Niagara County Deputy Sheriffs. This is accomplished by engaging with local minority community leaders to encourage minority applicants. The Sheriff's Office also participates in a subcommittee on minority hiring created by the Niagara County Legislature.

Discrimination

It is the policy of the Office of Sheriff that no person may use race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, financial status, or lawful source of income in the course of their duties.

Affirmative Action

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to provide equal employment to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, disability, or Veteran Era Veteran status. The sheriff's office goal is to encourage minorities and women to apply for departmental positions and to assist them in attaining supervisory status when time and rank permits. This policy is also designed to increase the overall effectiveness and vitality of the criminal justice system. The Sheriff's Office is committed to keeping Affirmative Action Considerations an integral part of all agency activities performed in the furtherance of our mission and in meeting our responsibilities to the citizens.

Training

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has long been committed to providing the best training possible for our police officers and corrections officers so they can deliver the best service to the community. NYS Accreditation mandates not only initial training, but mandatory in-service training annually by members of law enforcement. At a minimum, police officers must receive twenty-one hours of in-service training each year in the areas of Use of Force, Firearms, and Legal Updates.

The requirements of NCSO training exceed the minimum requirements set forth by NYS Accreditation. All training is conducted by NYS certified instructors.

In addition to the topics above, the Sheriff's Office is committed to ensuring that our deputies receive annual training in Implicit Bias.

Performance Evaluations

It is the policy of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office to recognize the value of our employees and to stimulate them to excellence by evaluating their performance, recognizing their abilities and strengths and documenting their deficiencies.

Supervisors of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office are required to conduct annual evaluations of their subordinates. Performance evaluations assist in the administration of the personnel performance system, principles of which includes retaining employees on the basis and adequacy of their performance, correcting inadequate performance, and dismissing employees whose inadequate performance cannot be corrected.

Discipline

Members of the Sheriff's Office who violate any federal, state, or local laws or ordinances, or who violate the Rules and Regulations of the Sheriff's Office are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The execution of disciplinary action is governed by Article 75 of the Civil Service Law as well as the Collective Bargaining Unit of the Niagara County unions. Any member whose employment is terminated for cause or who chooses to resign prior to facing disciplinary charges is subject to a decertification process by NYS law. When this occurs, the agency must notify DCJS who maintains the police officer registry and submit paperwork to remove the officer's certification.

Handling Complaints

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff that every complaint that can be properly resolved by the Patrol Division should be so handled without regard to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, financial status or lawful source of income. Exceptions to this policy shall be limited to those complaints where efficiency demands specialized assistance

such as cases which require extensive investigation, both in time and expertise for their solution or by their inherent nature, necessitate investigation by a separate division

Investigating Hate Crimes

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to employ the necessary resources and necessary law enforcement action to identify and arrest hate crime perpetrators. Any acts or threats of violence, property damage, harassment, intimidation or other crimes motivated by hate and bias and designed to infringe upon the rights of individuals are given a high priority by the Sheriff's Office.

CIT/De-escalation

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office will deploy a group of officers specially trained, on a voluntary basis, to deal with emotionally distressed individuals in a variety of situations in the community and correctional facility. These situations may include suicidal persons, persons exhibiting irrational behavior, handling psychiatric patients, the homeless, various mental health concerns and/or

referrals, and any other situations that deal specifically with the needs of the mental health community and emotionally disturbed persons. It is the goal of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office to expand Crisis Intervention and De-escalation training to all members so they are better equipped to deal with emotionally disturbed persons. The Sheriff's Office also has an extensive partnership with the Niagara County Department of Mental Health. These agencies routinely work together to determine the best course of action when dealing with persons in crisis.

Patrol Procedures

Patrol Deputies are assigned to specific patrol areas on a daily basis. Patrol Deputies will perform their duties and conduct themselves at all times in a professional, courteous, polite and efficient manner.

Prohibition Regarding Racial Profiling and Other Bias Based Policing

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office expressly prohibits racial profiling or other bias based policing. The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is committed to observing, upholding, and enforcing all laws relating to the individual rights of all persons. Members will respect and protect each person's human rights and comply

with all laws relating to human rights. In addition to respect for those human rights prescribed by law, members will treat all persons with the courtesy and dignity which is inherently due to every person as a human being. Members will act, speak, and conduct themselves in a professional manner and maintain a courteous attitude in all contacts with the public. It is a fundamental duty of every member to be vigilant in the investigation of unusual or suspicious occurrences, detect violations of the law, safeguard lives and property, guarantee all persons fair and equal treatment under the law, and ensure that the rights of all persons are protected. In meeting these duties, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office remains committed to working actively with all communities throughout Niagara County. Members are expressly prohibited from engaging in racial profiling or bias based policing activities. Members making routine or spontaneous law enforcement decisions, such as investigatory stops, traffic stops and arrests, may not use race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, financial status, or lawful source of income, except that officers may rely on the listed characteristics in a specific suspect description. Members must be able to clearly articulate the specific police or public safety purpose of any traffic or

other stop. Members will immediately report any observed violations of the policies and procedures established under this directive to a supervisor.

Professional Conduct

It shall be the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to investigate fully complaints against the office and its members. It shall also be the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to reach a prompt resolution of such complaints or allegations, after an objective and impartial investigation, in order that while maintaining the credibility and integrity of the Office of the Sheriff, the public will be assured that police misconduct will not be tolerated, but at the same time provide a mechanism through which a member, unjustly accused, can be vindicated.

General Call Taking Procedures

It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to be professional and courteous while taking calls received by the Communications Center. We maintain procedures which promote professional dispatch standards to ensure an acceptable level of customer service. We recognize that Public Safety Dispatchers are the public's

critical link to help in an emergency. Many callers will be frightened, angry or confused. The dispatcher's initial conversation with the caller sets the tone for the entire incident.

This policy was modified to ensure every call is handled without regard to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, financial status or lawful source of income.

Call Taking Procedure for Abusive or Uncooperative Callers

It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to treat all callers courteously and efficiently. While callers can often become upset or sometime belligerent, Dispatchers will maintain their professionalism. The Dispatcher, regardless of a caller's demeanor, must provide the appropriate response to all calls for service.

This policy was reviewed to ensure compliance with accreditation standards as well as NYS Executive Order 203. Language was added to the policy to ensure a non-biased procedure was outlined for handling calls for public safety services.

PRACTICES

As part of our collaborative process, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office reviewed all current practices throughout our divisions to ensure standards of New York State Police Reform Collaboration. Listed below are the evaluations of current practices in our Criminal, Corrections and Communications Divisions.

Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy

One of the most important requirements of any police officer is training. The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has always been committed to providing the most highly trained deputy sheriff's. This commitment begins at the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy.

The training required of a police officer is mandated by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). DCJS has established the Municipal Police Training Council (MPTC) to define the standards for training throughout NYS. Prospective police officers are required to attend an accredited law enforcement academy. The Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy trains not only Sheriff's deputies, but police officers from all across Western New York.

The Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy is a premier law enforcement training program. Through its partnerships with both private and public entities, they are able to administer the highest level of training available to law enforcement agencies across Western New York.

Training is one of the most important and vital functions of any law enforcement agency. The Basic Course for Police is often considered to be the

most important learning experiences that a police officer completes during his or her career.

The Basic Course for Police has undergone a continual evolution since it was first established on July 1, 1960. It originally consisted of a minimum of 80 hours of instruction in specific areas. Today, the Basic Course for Police consists of a minimum standard of over 700 hours that is established through the New York State Municipal Training Council (MPTC). The Directors at the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy as well as New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services routinely reviews the content of the Basic Course for Police Officers to ensure that the material remains relevant to criminal justice issues and best prepares officers to serve their communities. Today's Basic Course for Police Officers covers a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, Ethics & Professionalism, Cultural Diversity, Bias Related Incidents, Professional Communication, Persons with Disabilities, Crisis Intervention, Use of Physical Force & Deadly Force, Active Shooter Response and Decision Making. Today's police recruits are also mandated to complete numerous Reality Based Training Scenarios to better prepare them for the situations they will encounter on the job.

More often than not, the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy exceeds the minimum standard number of hours during the Basic Course for Police. Additional time is allocated in critical areas of instruction such as Emergency Vehicle Operation, Firearms, Reality Based Training, Officer Wellness and Response and Investigative Skills.

As previously mentioned, the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy routinely reviews course curriculums to ensure compliance and up to date training. To remain in compliance with New York State Executive Order 203, The Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy has made changes to the Defensive Tactics Curriculum for the Basic Course for Police. This legislation establishes criminal penalties for the use of a chokehold by a police or peace officer causing serious physical injury or death. New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and Office of Public Safety (OPS) issued a training advisory to all law enforcement academies and defensive tactics instructors outlining the necessary trainings. Per Municipal Police Training Council directives, defensive tactics training objectives and sections related to neck restraints have been discontinued, effective immediately.

The Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy has a great partnership with all law enforcement agencies throughout Niagara County. Each year, the

Academy holds a roundtable discussion with stakeholders regarding current training trends. In addition, Academy directors are able to share information that is received through both New York State Department of Criminal Justice and the New York State Municipal Training Council to ensure stakeholders are in compliance with new laws and regulations and to adequately plan and prepare for any upcoming changes.

In addition, the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy has updated the curriculum for Defensive Tactics reflecting Part 4 Section J, specifically discontinuing objective #21 which demonstrates the mechanics of a shoulder pin restraint, and discontinuing instruction of the Neck Restraint (Pages 4J 26-29).

Field Training Program

A Deputy Sheriff's training does not end upon graduation from the academy. They are then required to complete an extensive and elaborate Field Training Program administered by certified training officers within the agency. The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has a Field Training Program where new recruits receive supervised training by a certified Field Training Officer (FTO). Recruits shadow a senior Deputy to ensure they are following proper policy and

procedure and are meeting expectations of the Sheriff and mission of the Sheriff's Office.

In 2020, the Field Training program introduced a policy sign off sheet which allows the Field Training Officer to track and monitor current policy and procedures that the new recruit has reviewed. This addition will ensure that the Field Training Officer has properly taken the time to read through each directive with the new recruit so they have a good working knowledge of what is expected from them.

Department Training

A police officer's training is never complete. Law Enforcement officers are continuously learning new techniques and new methods of policing. They are required to keep abreast of legal changes annually.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is a New York State Accredited Agency. In order to stay in compliance with this Accreditation, In-service training is a critical standard. It requires that all sworn personnel, both full and part-time, receive at least 21 hours of in-service training annually. This includes, at a minimum, firearms training, legal updates, a review of use of force and the use of

deadly force. The Training requirements at the Sheriff's Office exceeds these minimum standards.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office regularly reviews training opportunities to further the education and certifications of personnel. As trainings are identified, members can submit a request to attend. Efforts are made to seek out relevant trainings which allow attendees to share this information through train the trainer opportunities.

The Sheriff's Office routinely utilizes a method of training called Reality Based Training (RBT). This is a scenario based training which allows officers to react to the situation as it is occurring. The scenarios are scripted to achieve the desired training outcomes. Following the completion of each scenario, instructors provide immediate feedback to the student on their performance.

All Corrections Officers must complete the Basic Corrections Academy which the state currently mandates at 169.5 hours. The Niagara County Sheriff's Office Corrections Academy is currently 240 hours. Their training includes Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) as well as firearms instruction. All Correctional Officers must complete a minimum of 24 hours of mandatory training yearly. The New York State Commission of Corrections (NYSCOC), DCJS, and Red Cross, in accordance with our accreditation body, the New York State Sheriff's Association

(NYSSA), mandate the following training: Suicide Prevention, Fire Prevention, CPR/First Aid, Use of Force (Baton/OC), OSHA and Sexual Harassment.

Training for the Communications Division begins with 7 weeks of classroom training to learn the basics of dispatching, our radio system, emergency medical dispatch and a variety of other topics. Also included is the policy and procedures of the dispatch center as well as the rules and regulations of the Sheriff's Office. The 7 weeks of classroom training lay the foundation for the work which is continued through the CTO (Communications Training Officer) program. During this phase of training, which lasts 10-13 weeks, the new Dispatcher is paired with an experienced and trained CTO who instructs the dispatcher in various methods until they are finally able to take calls and dispatch the appropriate units while the CTO listens in and observes. Once this portion of the training is completed, an additional 4 weeks is taken to train the new Dispatcher to dispatch for fire and EMS calls. All totaled, the training for a new dispatcher requires 21-24 weeks of intensive training.

In addition to new hire training, each dispatcher is required to participate in 24 hours of continuing education throughout the year. This training ranges from dispatch specific training such as Emergency Medical Dispatch continuing education to general instruction such as AED/CPR. Included in this continuing

education is a yearly customer service portion which stresses courtesy as well as problem resolution for any caller to the center.

Lastly, training opportunities are not limited to classroom trainings only. Supervisors utilize mandatory pre-shift briefing as an opportunity to share information relating to current topics, review legal updates and policy and procedures.

LEAD

The Sheriff's Office has instituted an expanded partnership with Niagara County Mental Health to become involved in the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program. LEAD is a community-based diversion approach with the goals of improving public safety and public order, and reducing unnecessary justice system involvement of people who participate in the program. This program allows police officers to exercise discretionary authority at point of contact to divert individuals to a community-based, harm-reduction intervention for law violations driven by unmet behavioral health needs. Individuals are instead referred into a trauma-informed intensive case-management program

where the individual receives a wide range of support services, often including transitional and permanent housing and/or drug treatment. Prosecutors and police officers work closely with case managers to ensure that all contacts with LEAD participants going forward, including new criminal prosecutions for other offenses, are coordinated with the service plan for the participant to maximize the opportunity to achieve behavioral change.

Less Lethal Options

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office believes in giving deputies the proper tools to ensure their safety and that of the public. The goal to resolve any interaction is to use the least amount of force possible to control the situation. While deputies are required to carry a service weapon, often times the most valuable tools available to them are their less lethal options. Every Deputy is issued pepper spray, also referred to as Oleoresin Capsicum (OC). OC spray is designed to be applied to a subject's facial area to cause a burning sensation. Exposure to OC spray allows the officer to assist in gaining control of a combative subject. Immediately following exposure, deputies are required to ensure proper

medical treatment is provided to a subject. It should be noted that deputies are also required to become exposed to OC spray in order to be certified to carry it.

Another valuable less lethal option is a Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW), often referred to as a Taser. The CEW is designed to deliver electrically charged probes into a combative subject in an effort to incapacitate the neuromuscular system. The CEW has proven to be an effective tool for combative subjects. Studies have shown that the use of the CEW decreases the potential for injury to both the subject and the officer. It should also be noted that deputies are required to be exposed to the CEW prior to being certified to carry it and are also required to receive training on the weapon annually. Per policy, deputies are required to provide medical care to any subject who has been exposed to the CEW.

NCSO policy also authorizes patrol supervisors to carry bean bag shotguns in their patrol vehicles as an additional less lethal option. The bean bag round can be deployed to the midsection of a combative subject in an effort to temporarily incapacitate him/her, thus giving the deputy a window of opportunity to take the person into custody. Supervisors are required to train and certify annually on the use of this less lethal option.

CIT Training

With the increase in calls to assist individuals in crisis and/or suffering from mental illness the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, in January 2018, partnered with the NYS Office of Mental Health to create a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). The CIT is a first-responder model of police-based crisis intervention with community, health care, and advocacy partnerships. The goal was to assist individual with a mental illness, and improve the safety of patrol officers, consumers, family members and citizens.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office deploys a group of CIT officers who have received an additional 40 hours of CIT training, on a voluntary basis, to deal with emotionally distressed individuals in a variety of situations in the community. These situations may include suicidal persons, persons exhibiting irrational behavior, handling psychiatric patients, the homeless, various mental health concerns and/or referrals, and any other situations that deal specifically with the needs of the mental health community and emotionally disturbed persons.

The CIT trained officers will make contact with the office of mental health when appropriate to assist with the call. The goal of CIT and the assistance of a mental health counselor is to reduce the need for further involvement with the

criminal justice system. If an individual can be assisted in the field with appropriate services, it may reduce the need for hospitalization or further criminal justice intervention.

The Sheriff's Office also utilizes a Crisis Negotiation Team which is comprised of ten members who have received more extensive training. Each member must successfully complete the FBI 40 hour Hostage Negotiation Training. The members of this team continue with training beyond the initial 40 hours. They meet several times a year to train and improve tactics, and to discuss current topics and best practices.

Members from this team are activated for high risk incidents which may involve barricaded individuals, emotionally disturbed persons, hostage situations, or when a supervisor believes it may be beneficial for the safety of the officers, citizens and subject(s) involved.

It is the goal of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office to expand Crisis Intervention and De-escalation training to all members so they are better equipped to deal with emotionally disturbed persons. The Sheriff's Office also has an extensive partnership with the Niagara County Department of Mental Health. These agencies routinely work together to provide training for officers and to determine the best course of action when dealing with persons in crisis.

Use of Force Review Process

Although the significant majority of arrest made by the Sheriff's Office are made without incident, on occasion it becomes necessary for deputies to use authorized and justified force to resolve a situation. As mentioned earlier, all force situations by NCSO are governed by departmental policy as well as New York State Law. The Sheriff's Office closely examines all use of force incidents by department personnel. NCSO has established a review process for all incidents. During this process, deputies using force are required to complete departmental reports and collect all pertinent information. Once those reports are completed, their supervisor must review the incident to determine if the amount of force used was authorized under NYS law, department policy, and current training standards.

Once the supervisor has completed his/her portion of the review process, the entire file is then reviewed independently by each member of the Sheriff's administrative team before closing the matter.

The Sheriff's Office retains all use of force incidents permanently. Each file is maintained in a computer database. Not only does this database maintain the files, but it also allows supervisors and administrative personnel the opportunity

to generate reports of force incidents. Administrative personnel can set parameters on the database to receive notifications on specific officers who may have more force incidents compared to other officers. This serves as an additional measure of checks and balances.

The Sheriff's Office is required by NYS to report certain types of force incidents to the DCJS portal system. Any force involving the use of pepper spray, the deployment of a CEW, the discharge of a weapon, or any incident that causes serious bodily injury must be reported.

Community Outreach

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office attends many events throughout each year and works tirelessly to remain an active partner in each community across Niagara County. The Sheriff's Office Community Services division plays a vital role in outreach efforts. Programs such as Building Bridges, Explorers Post and All-Students Taking Action and Responsibility (ALL-S.T.A.R.) work to build relationships with law enforcement and youth, while programs such as crime and safety presentations and recruitment are geared more for adults and individuals seeking employment at the Sheriff's Office.

Another community outreach program the Sheriff's Office is heavily involved in is Niagara Police Athletic League (P.A.L.). The basic mission of the Niagara Police Athletic League is Juvenile Crime Prevention accomplished by creating better relations between police, citizens, and community youth through a myriad of interactive programs that include the youth in positive endeavors, athletic and non-athletic, within the community structure.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has held numerous Citizens Police Academy's for members of our community. This 12 week program provides attendees an in-depth experience of all functions at the Sheriff's Office. The program includes simulated firearms training, reality based training and an emergency vehicle operator course.

Furthermore, the Sheriff's Office has a long standing tradition of volunteering with different community organizations. This exemplifies our commitment to maintaining relationships within the community and getting to know the visitors and residents we proudly serve.

Citizen Comment Form

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office strives to provide the best possible service to the citizens of Niagara County. Through our Citizen Comment Form, citizens are encouraged to bring forward possible comments as well as legitimate concerns regarding the Sheriff's Office or misconduct by Sheriff's Office personnel.

The Citizen Comment Form has been designed to document such comments, and to initiate investigation of alleged misconduct. This form can be located on our website and can either be printed and returned via mail or submitted electronically through the website. In addition, the Citizen Comment Form is in the process of being added to our Mobile App to further promote transparency and allow users better access to information.

NCSO COMMITMENTS

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office remains committed to ensuring the safety and security of all Niagara County residents. This commitment has never wavered. We constantly review the operations of our agency and seek to improve the services we provide to the community. To that endeavor, NCSO is committed to effecting positive change in our relationships with the community we are so proud to serve.

Recruitment

While we have always looked for new ways to improve our recruitment efforts, we are seeking new and innovative ways to ensure the recruitment of quality minority candidates to improve diversity in our agency.

The Niagara County Legislature has implemented a minority hiring committee to attract potential candidates for employment. Within that committee, exists a sub-committee particularly for attracting law enforcement candidates. The Niagara County Sheriff is a member of that sub-committee and is seeking new ways to get our recruitment efforts directed to the minority community. We are hoping to attract youth to careers in law enforcement through our expanded community outreach efforts. Additionally, we are looking to educate perspective candidates on the sought after qualities of law enforcement officers.

NCSO is also initiating a new partnership with the Niagara Falls High School to assist high school candidates with interests in joining law enforcement. We will host information classes for youth so they can understand the process of getting into a law enforcement career. We are also partnering with Niagara County Community College (NCCC) and Niagara University (NU) to further assist with

career planning. We have been active partners with both area colleges for quite some time. NU currently hosts our Pre-Employment Police Academy so applicants can become certified police officers. The college offers credit toward a degree for attendance.

Lastly, the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy routinely holds civil service test preparation courses that seek to further prepare candidates for any civil service exam.

Accreditation

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is committed to maintaining the standards set forth in our Accreditations. As mentioned earlier, the Sheriff's Office is accredited in Law Enforcement, Corrections, Communications, Forensic Laboratory, and our Civil Division. We also recently attained DCJS Accreditation for our Emergency Response Team (ERT). To achieve this certification, the team was required to meet standards in Equipment, Training, and Operations. It should be noted that the contractor providing medical services to the inmates at NCCF has also recently achieved Accreditation after a lengthy process.

LEAD

As discussed previously, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office is pleased to partner with Niagara County Mental Health to begin training our members in the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program. This program will allow our officers to utilize discretion for low level arrests and encourage offenders to participate in necessary treatment programs in lieu of criminal charges. We anticipate having the majority of our officers trained by the end of 2020.

In addition to the LEAD program, the Sheriff's Office will be partnering with Niagara County Mental Health to participate in a Quick Response Team to address overdose problems occurring in the county. The Quick Response Team will respond to overdose victims and assist them with treatment planning immediately.

CIT/De-escalation

The Sheriff's Office has experienced much success since the inception of our Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). Our goal is to expand the training opportunities to more deputies and correction officers. We will continue to expand upon this important program to meet the needs of our communities.

Members of the Sheriff's Office will also continue to engage in de-escalation training programs. We are currently in the process of rolling out additional de-escalation training and empathy training. We have recently purchased a product which allows us to utilize Virtual Reality (VR) training to place officers in real life situations. The VR training will enhance officer's abilities to recognize members of the community who are experiencing mental health situations. Additional scenarios continue to be developed and will be implemented as they become available.

In addition to our expanded CIT training, we also continue to evaluate and expand the training our officers received in Disability Awareness. We have enjoyed a great partnership with a local professor who has helped our disability awareness program grow over the years. We are able to offer this training during

our law enforcement academy as well as through in-service training with the use of certified instructors.

The CIT Training will be expanded to NCSO Dispatchers as well to assist them with proper mental health call screening. These trainings will have specific components directed at contact with veterans.

Use of Force Review

The review process involving force incidents is imperative to our core functions. While this process will continue, we will also look to increase our transparency with the community by sharing statistical data. We will utilize our website to share information regarding our force incidents with the public. Each month this data will be refreshed so the data remains current and the public can view an accurate representation of our incidents.

We are also committed to ensuring that we monitor use of force incidents involving our members to ensure there are no disparities amongst members of certain races. Our current use of force statistical data is listed in the appendices of this document. (See Figures [10](#), [11](#), [12](#) and [13](#))

The Use of Force policy of the Sheriff's Office can be found on the website at www.niagarasheriff.com. It is posted for public review in our effort to remain transparent with the community we serve.

Anti-Bias Training

The Sheriff's Office is committed to providing the most professional and honorable members of our agency. By the end of this year, all members will be provided an in-service training opportunity on Anti-Bias. We have already begun planning with a local university to expand on this training for the upcoming year. We will work in concert with members of this university to provide the most effective and current training for our members of law enforcement. Several of our officers will receive an additional train-the-trainer program to ensure that we can continue to offer this training as an annual requirement.

We will also continue to look for relevant training on these topics to ensure a diverse curriculum of training can be offered to our deputies.

Explorer Program

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office Explorers Post 911 allows young adults, ages 16 to 20 years old, to learn about many facets of law enforcement. The Explorers meet every 2 weeks at the Sheriff's Office where classes are run paramilitary style and are filled with relevant content for young adults interested in a career in law enforcement. Students gain knowledge and hands-on experience during trainings and through working events.

The current program is in the process of being modified to expand its outreach potential throughout Niagara County. An additional program is to be added to accommodate candidates in the western part of Niagara County, primarily Niagara Falls. While there is no current program for youth interested in a career in law enforcement, this program seeks to bridge that gap in cooperation with the Niagara Falls Police Department. The long term goal is to promote positive community interactions with members of law enforcement while empowering individuals to achieve personal life goals.

NCSO Transparency via Website

The Sheriff's Office is furthering our efforts to become a more transparent agency. To achieve this, a statistical dashboard is currently being developed that will be available on our website. This dashboard will allow the public to monitor functions of the Sheriff's Office. Statistical information such as calls for service, uniform traffic tickets issued in addition to demographics regarding individuals housed within the Niagara County Correctional Facility will be posted. This data will be tracked through the dashboard and be available for public view on the website as well as the Sheriff's app at any time. The data will be updated regularly to reflect the current trends, including the race, age and gender of arrestees, number of traffic tickets issued and use of force incidents broken down by race and gender. We will also give a total of the calls for service by month. The data will be kept on the website for one year and will be refreshed every month to give a snap shot of this data for a rolling 12 month period.

Expanded Inmate Programs

The Niagara County Correctional Facility is committed to maintaining the safety of the inmates at the jail. In addition to inmate safety, we recognize the importance of reintegration into the community. As discussed in an earlier section, the NCCF is committed to providing inmates with proper education as well as the development of skills to assist them with obtain gainful employment upon their release. We will continue to blossom our partnership with Niagara County BOCES programs to help incarcerated individuals become productive members of society.

Town Hall Meetings

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office regularly holds "Town Hall" style meetings within the towns and villages that we serve throughout Niagara County. These meetings allow our agency to communicate information about programs and services offered through the Sheriff's Office. In addition, these meetings have and continue to be a great way for the Sheriff's Office to obtain valuable feedback from the community.

Peer Support

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has long understood that the job of law enforcement can be very stressful. We work in close partnership with a Peer Support Management group called Catch a Falling Star. Through this program, we have identified and trained individual members throughout our agency to act as peer support mentors. Members having problems can seek assistance through their peer mentors and can avail themselves of counseling services whenever needed. We also conduct a debriefing session following any critical incident so officers can share their feelings. Supervisors also actively monitor officer behaviors to determine any early indicators of potential problems. The safety and wellness of our officer is paramount.

Mental Health Response

Mental Health calls continue to increase and require a law enforcement response. In addition to continued training provided to deputies in handling these matters, we will continue to expand our partnership with Niagara County

Mental Health. We will be allowing mental health professionals to ride along with patrol deputies to respond to mental health crisis calls.

We will also evaluate funding opportunities to equip patrol deputies with tablets. These tablets will allow deputies to facilitate face-to-face contact with mental health professionals while in the field.

We will continue to work in direct partnership with Niagara County Mental Health. We will continue to utilize the Mobile Crisis Unit to respond to critical calls with deputies.

Continuous Reform Evolvment

We will continue to engage with our selected reform committee periodically to update them on progress and seek regular input and feedback. Once we have completed the reform process, we are going to establish measurement tools to verify that our new procedures are functioning properly. Specifically, we will be looking to measure the effectiveness of our CIT Training program, our minority hiring and recruitment program, the implementation of our mental health program, and the completion of our LEAD training.

GOALS AND MEASUREABLE OBJECTIVES TO POLICE REFORM

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is committed to achieve the goals and measurable objectives set forth by the Niagara County Police Reform Stakeholder working group. This group was comprised of members of the Niagara County Legislature, Niagara County Sheriff, District Attorney, Public Defender, Niagara County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Emergency Services Director, a resident from each of the Town and Cities in Niagara County and five additional members of the public appointed by the Chairwoman of the Niagara County Legislature.

The following outlines the goals and measurable objectives for the Niagara County Sheriff's Office:

Goal #1

Reduce police officer use of force encounters with community members especially those within the minority community, people experiencing mental health emergencies and individuals who may be impaired as a result of substance abuse.

STRATEGIES:

Measurable objective 1a:

Require mandatory ongoing in-service de-escalation training annually to 100% of professional staff across all divisions of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, starting with supervisors and Field Training Officers (FTOs).

Expected completion date: 12/31/2021 (Ongoing)

Measurable objective 1b:

Require mandatory ongoing in-service CIT (Crisis Intervention TEAM) training annually to 100% of professional staff across all divisions of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, starting with supervisors and Field Training Officers (FTOs).

Expected completion date: 12/31/2021 (Ongoing)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Niagara County Office of Mental Health, Best Self, Veterans Service Agencies, Civil Rights Groups – NAACP, OCR

Goal #2

Develop skills and tactics to reduce the influence of bias on police practice and increase police officer recognition of their own human biases and how implicit biases can affect their perceptions of others and their own behaviors.

STRATEGIES:

Measurable objective 2a:

Require mandatory ongoing in-service anti-bias training annually to 100% of professional staff across all divisions of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, starting with supervisors and Field Training Officers.

Expected completion date: 12/31/2021 (Ongoing)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Niagara University, Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, National Federation for Just Communities (NFJC); Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy (NCLEA); NAACP

Goal #3

Increase the tools needed to help officers effectively and safely respond to individuals experiencing mental health crises.

STRATEGIES:

Measurable objective 3a:

Establish first-year baseline data on the % of mental health calls where the mobile crisis team was used.

Expected completion date: 12/31/2021

Measurable objective 3b:

Establish first-year baseline data on the % of mental health calls where tablets/Zoom was used.

Expected completion date: 12/31/2021

Measurable objective 3c:

Assessment by the Mobile Crisis Team and NCSO patrol, via survey or focus groups to determine if the mobile crisis team is finding the tablets effective and whether law enforcement is finding the tablets effective.

Expected completion date: 12/31/2021 (Funding Dependent)

COMMUNITY PARTNER:

Niagara County Office of Mental Health, Veterans Service Organizations

Goal #4

Create a diverse workforce within the NCSO that is racially reflective of Niagara County.

STRATEGIES:

Measurable objective 4a:

Conduct four targeted in-person recruitment events annually with a goal of 60 minority participants.

Expected completion date: 12/1/2021

Measurable objective 4b:

Conduct four targeted in-person Civil Service Test Prep classes annually with a goal of 30 minority participants. Classes will be held in the City of Niagara Falls (e.g., at Niagara Falls High School) and the City of Lockport (e.g., at Lockport High School).

Expected completion date: 12/1/2021

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Niagara Falls Housing Authority; Niagara Ministerial Council; Niagara Falls Peacemakers; Niagara Falls High School, Lockport High School; Lockport Housing Authority; BOCES, Niagara County Community College, Niagara University, YMCA, NAACP.

Goal #5

Strengthen relationships with Minority Communities.

STRATEGIES:

Measurable objective 5a:

Participation in six targeted outreach events annually with minority communities in the City of Niagara Falls and the City of Lockport.

Expected completion date: 12/31/2021 (Ongoing)

[RECOMMENDED] Measurable objective 5b:

Explore the feasibility of working cooperatively with a Community Liaison to regularly address concerns, increase communication, and to provide reciprocal education between community members and the NCSO.

Expected completion date: 12/31/2021

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Niagara Falls Housing Authority (NFHA); Niagara Ministerial Council; Niagara Falls Peacemakers; Niagara Falls High School, Lockport Housing Authority; Lockport High School, NAACP

Conclusion

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is an agency comprised of highly trained men and women who are service oriented and reflect the ideals consistent with our mission, to provide the finest and most professional public safety services to the residents and visitors of Niagara County.

In addition, we are committed to working in unison with the community and other law enforcement agencies and demand of ourselves the highest standards of honesty and integrity as we uphold all laws for which we are responsible.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has always considered itself to be a progressive agency through technology, training and transparency. We are committed and stand ready to proudly serve the needs of Niagara County.

The Sheriff's Office recognizes the importance of public safety throughout our community. We are committed to utilizing all resources available in order to ensure the safety of our citizens. We will continue to work closely with our partners in law enforcement as well as the community to ensure that Niagara County remains a great place to live, work and play.

Appendices

Definitions

BMP – Bureau of Municipal Police

CERT – Corrections Emergency Response Team

CIT – Crisis Intervention Training

CTO- Communications Training Officer

DCJS – Division of Criminal Justice Services

DTF- Drug Task Force

ERT – Emergency Response Team

FTO – Field Training Officer

IamResponding- Enhances communications with first responders when deploying resources to incidents

LEAD – Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion

MPTC – Municipal Police Training Council

NCLEA – Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy

NCSO – Niagara County Sheriff's Office

NY-Alert- Platform to receive critical information and emergency alerts

SCOC- State Commission of Corrections

Figure 1



No. 203

EXECUTIVE ORDER

NEW YORK STATE POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of New York obliges the Governor to take care that the laws of New York are faithfully executed; and

WHEREAS, I have solemnly sworn, pursuant to Article 13, Section 1 of the Constitution, to support the Constitution and faithfully discharge the duties of the Office of Governor; and

WHEREAS, beginning on May 25, 2020, following the police-involved death of George Floyd in Minnesota, protests have taken place daily throughout the nation and in communities across New York State in response to police-involved deaths and racially-biased law enforcement to demand change, action, and accountability; and

WHEREAS, there is a long and painful history in New York State of discrimination and mistreatment of black and African-American citizens dating back to the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in America; and

WHEREAS, this recent history includes a number of incidents involving the police that have resulted in the deaths of unarmed civilians, predominantly black and African-American men, that have undermined the public's confidence and trust in our system of law enforcement and criminal justice, and such condition is ongoing and urgently needs to be rectified; and

WHEREAS, these deaths in New York State include those of Anthony Baez, Amadou Diallo, Ousmane Zango, Sean Bell, Ramarley Graham, Patrick Dorismond, Akai Gurley, and Eric Garner, amongst others, and, in other states, include Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Antwon Rose Jr., Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, amongst others,

WHEREAS, these needless deaths have led me to sign into law the Say Their Name Agenda which reforms aspects of policing in New York State; and

WHEREAS, government has a responsibility to ensure that all of its citizens are treated equally, fairly, and justly before the law; and

WHEREAS, recent outpouring of protests and demonstrations which have been manifested in every area of the state have illustrated the depth and breadth of the concern; and

WHEREAS, black lives matter; and

WHEREAS, the foregoing compels me to conclude that urgent and immediate action is needed to eliminate racial inequities in policing, to modify and modernize policing strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and to develop practices to better address the particular needs of communities of color to promote public safety, improve community engagement, and foster trust; and

WHEREAS, the Division of the Budget is empowered to determine the appropriate use of funds in furtherance of the state laws and New York State Constitution; and

WHEREAS, in coordination with the resources of the Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Division of the Budget can increase the effectiveness of the criminal justice system by ensuring that the local police agencies within the state have been actively engaged with stakeholders in the local community and have locally-approved plans for the strategies, policies and procedures of local police agencies; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State of New York, in particular Article IV, section one, I do hereby order and direct as follows:

The director of the Division of the Budget, in consultation with the Division of Criminal Justice Services, shall promulgate guidance to be sent to all local governments directing that:

Each local government entity which has a police agency operating with police officers as defined under 1.20 of the criminal procedure law must perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develop a plan to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency and promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.

Each chief executive of such local government shall convene the head of the local police agency, and stakeholders in the community to develop such plan, which shall consider evidence-based policing strategies, including but not limited to, use of force policies, procedural justice; any studies addressing systemic racial bias or racial justice in policing; implicit bias awareness training; de-escalation training and practices; law enforcement assisted diversion programs; restorative justice practices; community-based outreach and conflict resolution; problem-oriented policing; hot spots policing; focused deterrence; crime prevention through environmental design; violence prevention and reduction interventions; model policies and guidelines promulgated by the New York State Municipal Police Training Council; and standards promulgated by the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program.

The political subdivision, in coordination with its police agency, must consult with stakeholders, including but not limited to membership and leadership of the local police force; members of the community, with emphasis in areas with high numbers of police and community interactions; interested non-profit and faith-based community groups; the local office of the district attorney; the local public defender; and local elected officials, and create a plan to adopt and implement the recommendations resulting from its review and consultation, including any modifications, modernizations, and innovations to its policing deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, tailored to the specific needs of the community and general promotion of improved police agency and community relationships based on trust, fairness, accountability, and transparency, and which seek to reduce any racial disparities in policing.

Such plan shall be offered for public comment to all citizens in the locality, and after consideration of such comments, shall be presented to the local legislative body in such political subdivision, which shall ratify or adopt such plan by local law or resolution, as appropriate, no later than April 1, 2021; and

Such local government shall transmit a certification to the Director of the Division of the Budget to affirm that such process has been complied with and such local law or resolution has been adopted; and

The Director of the Division of the Budget shall be authorized to condition receipt of future appropriated state or federal funds upon filing of such certification for which such local government would otherwise be eligible; and

The Director is authorized to seek the support and assistance of any state agency in order to effectuate these purposes.



BY THE GOVERNOR

Secretary to the Governor

GIVEN under my hand and the Privy Seal of the
State in the City of Albany this
twelfth day of June in the year two
thousand twenty.

Figure 2



Figure 3

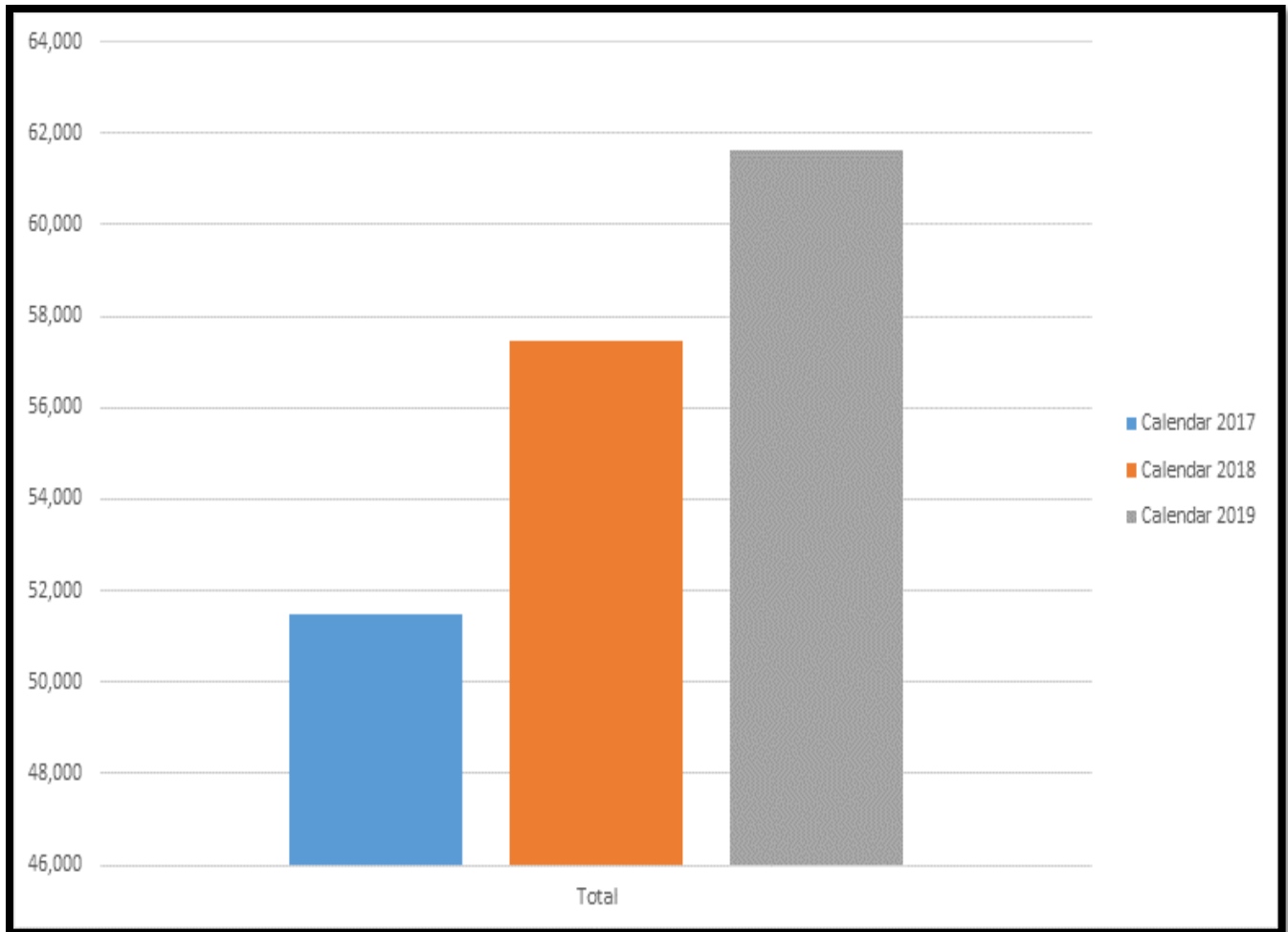


Figure 4

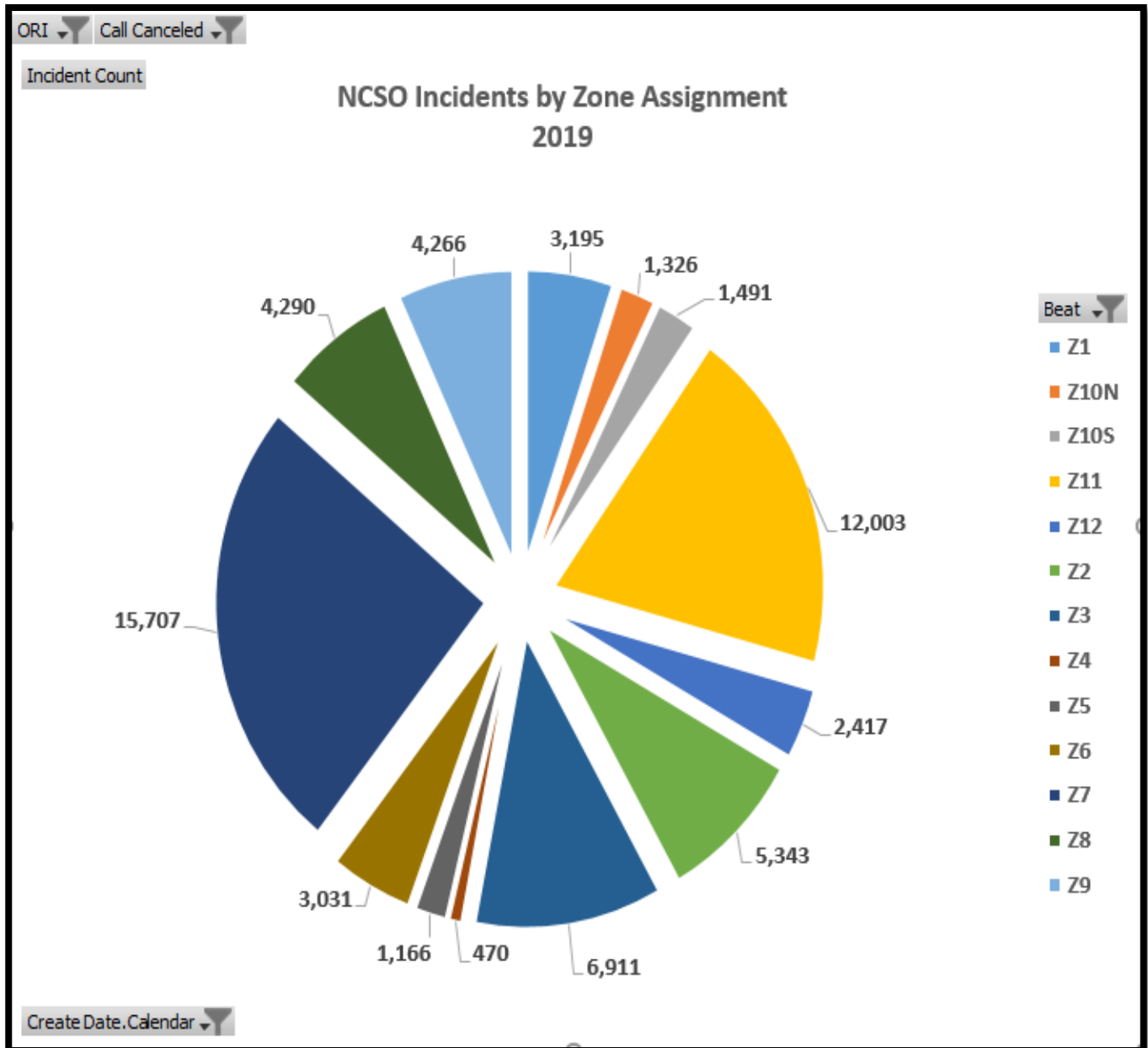


Figure 5

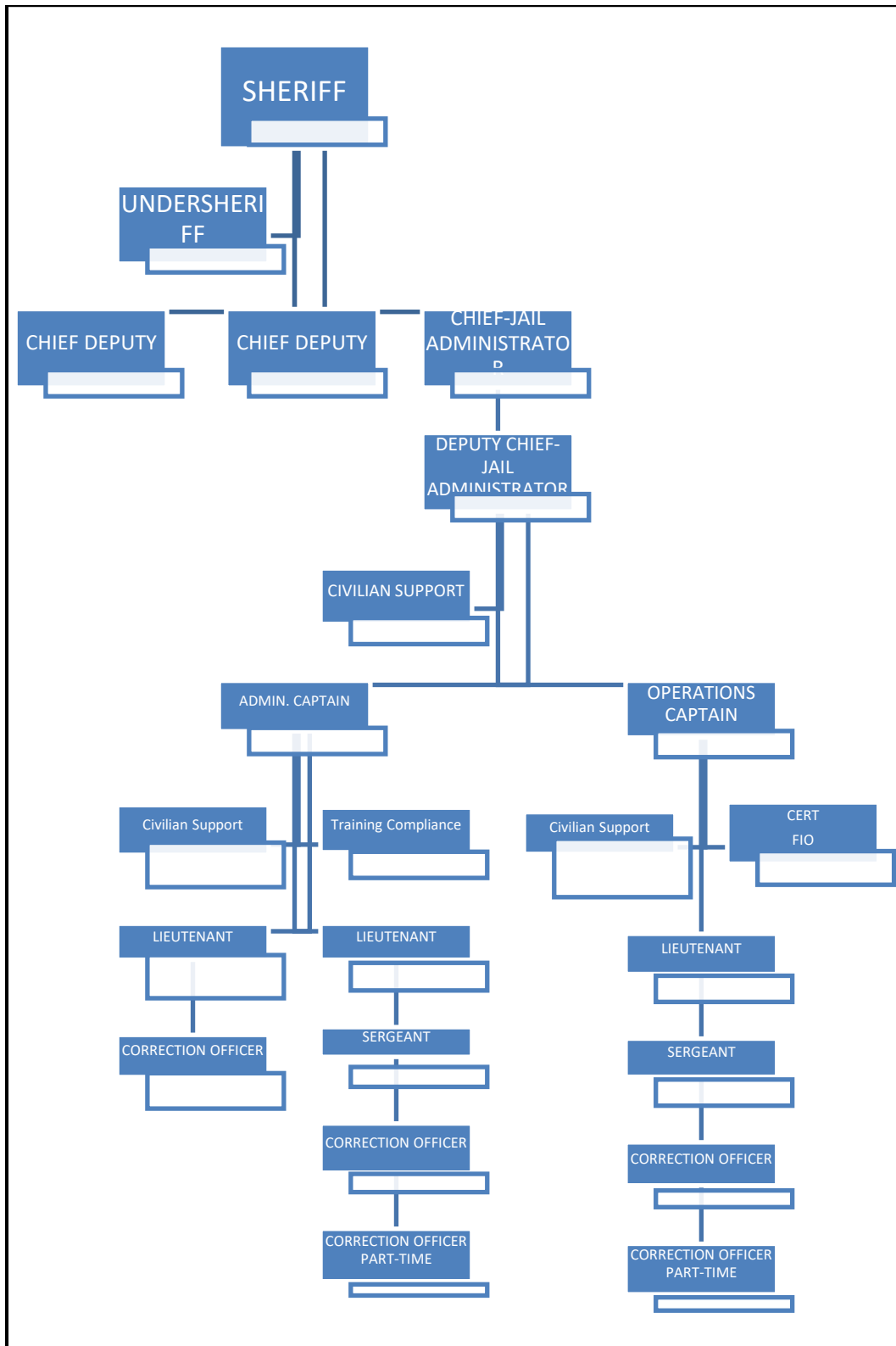


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

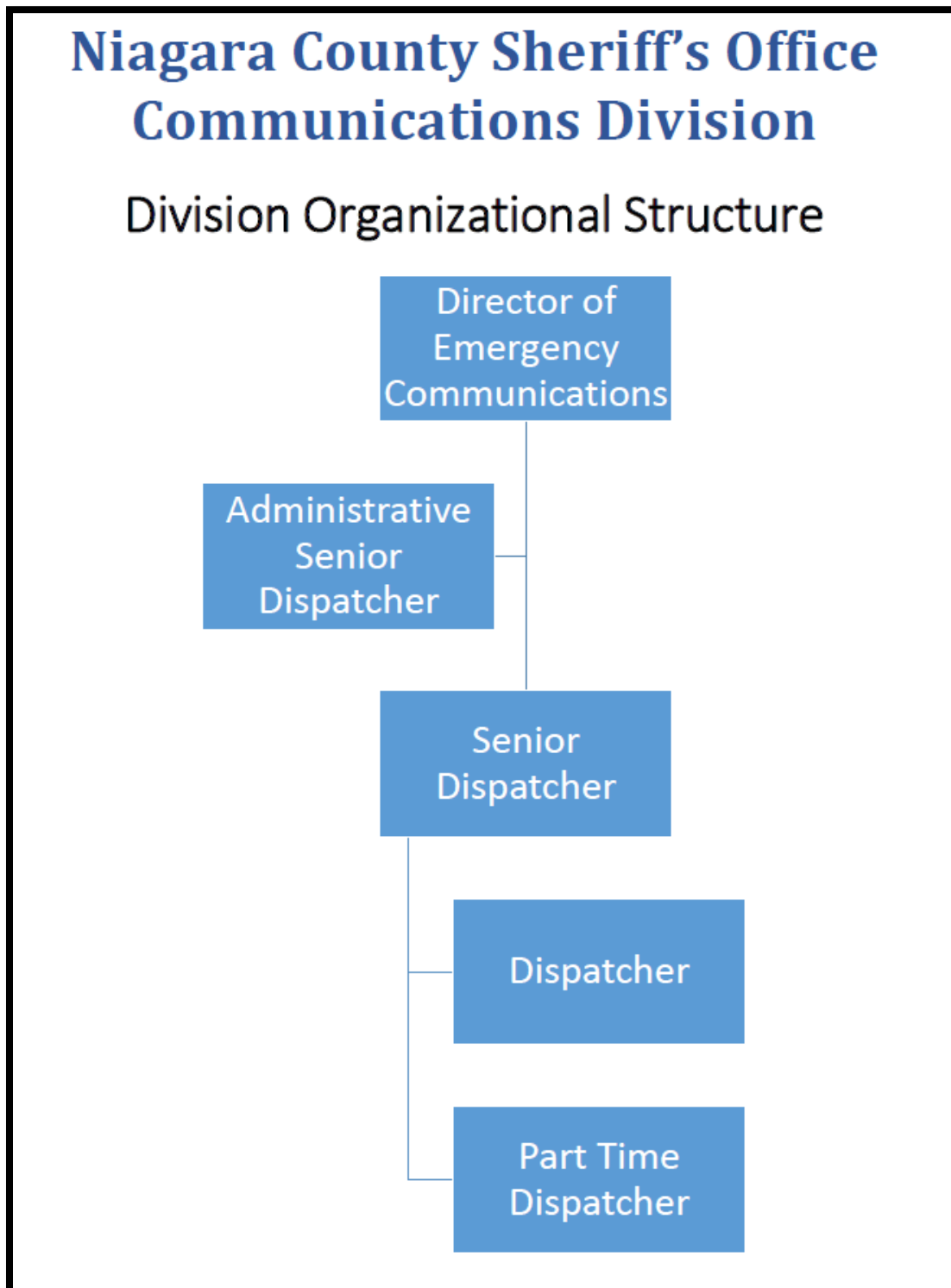


Figure 9

Use of Force Continuum

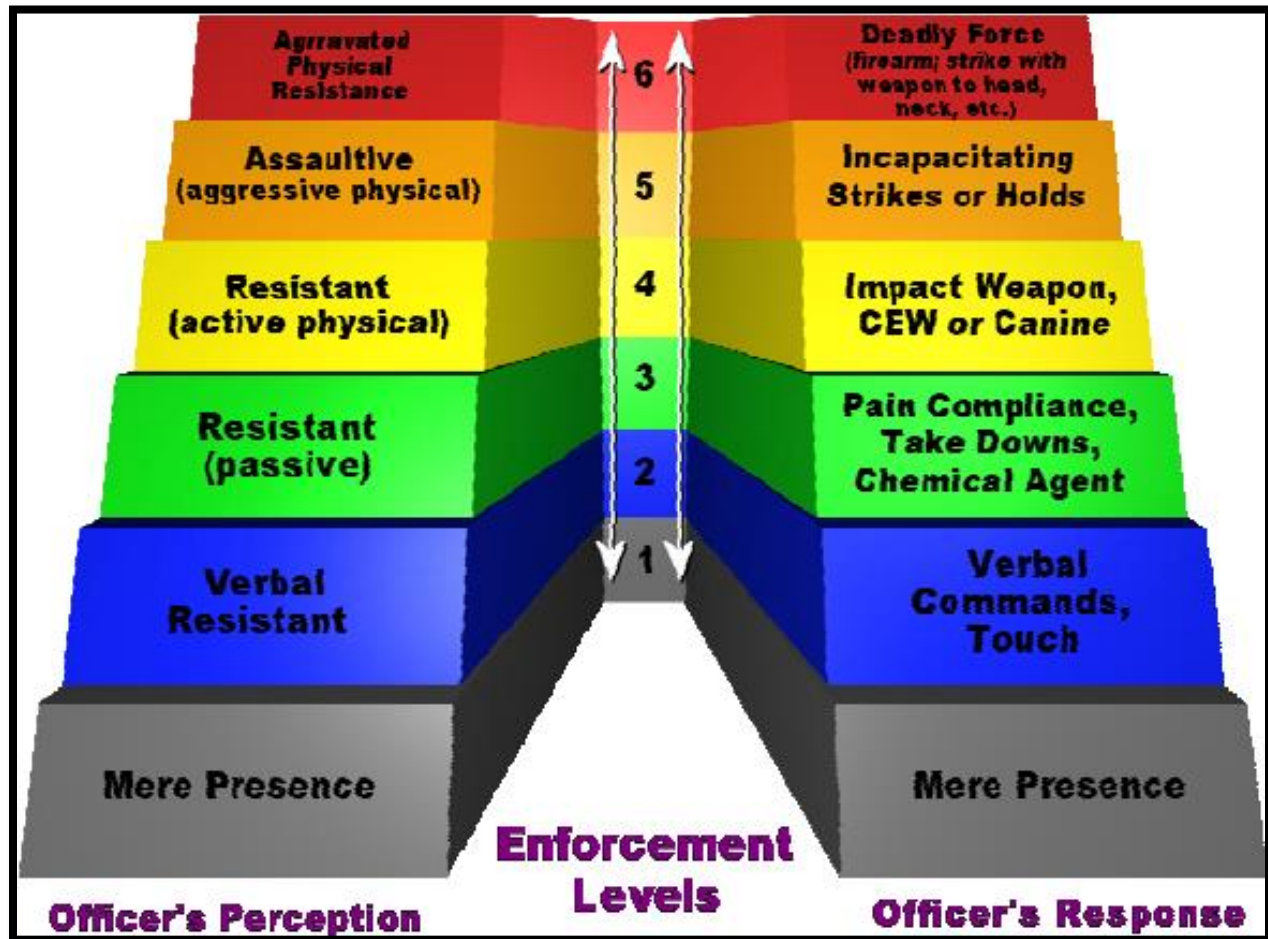


Figure 10

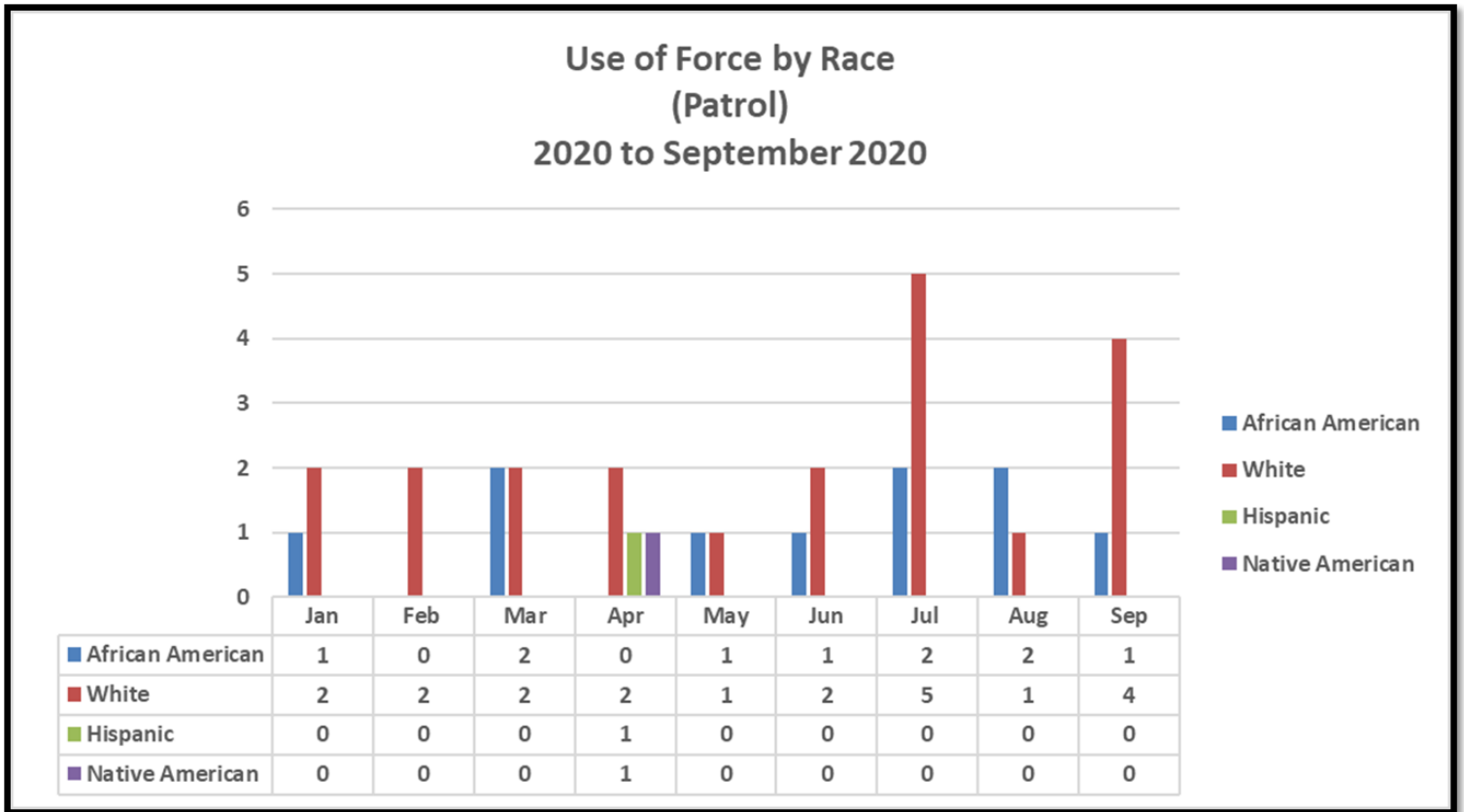


Figure 11

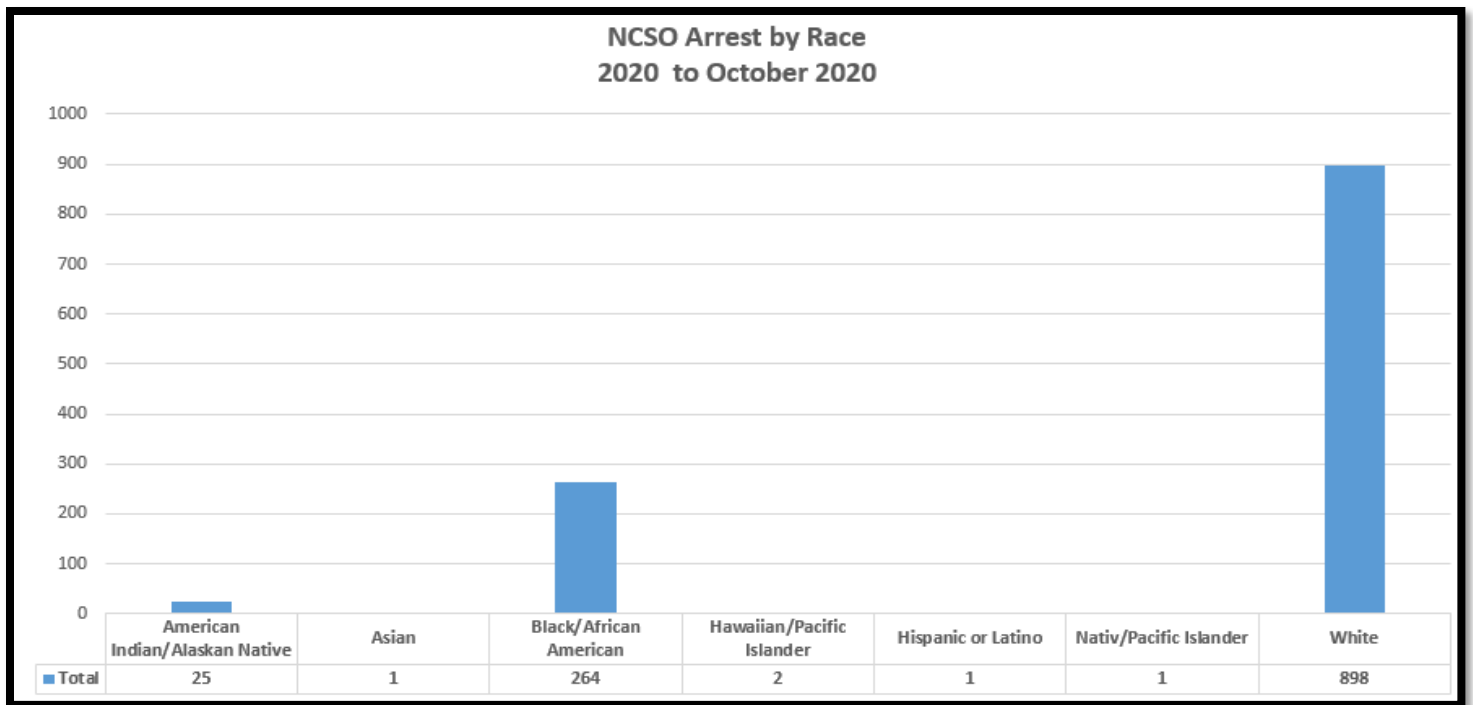


Figure 12

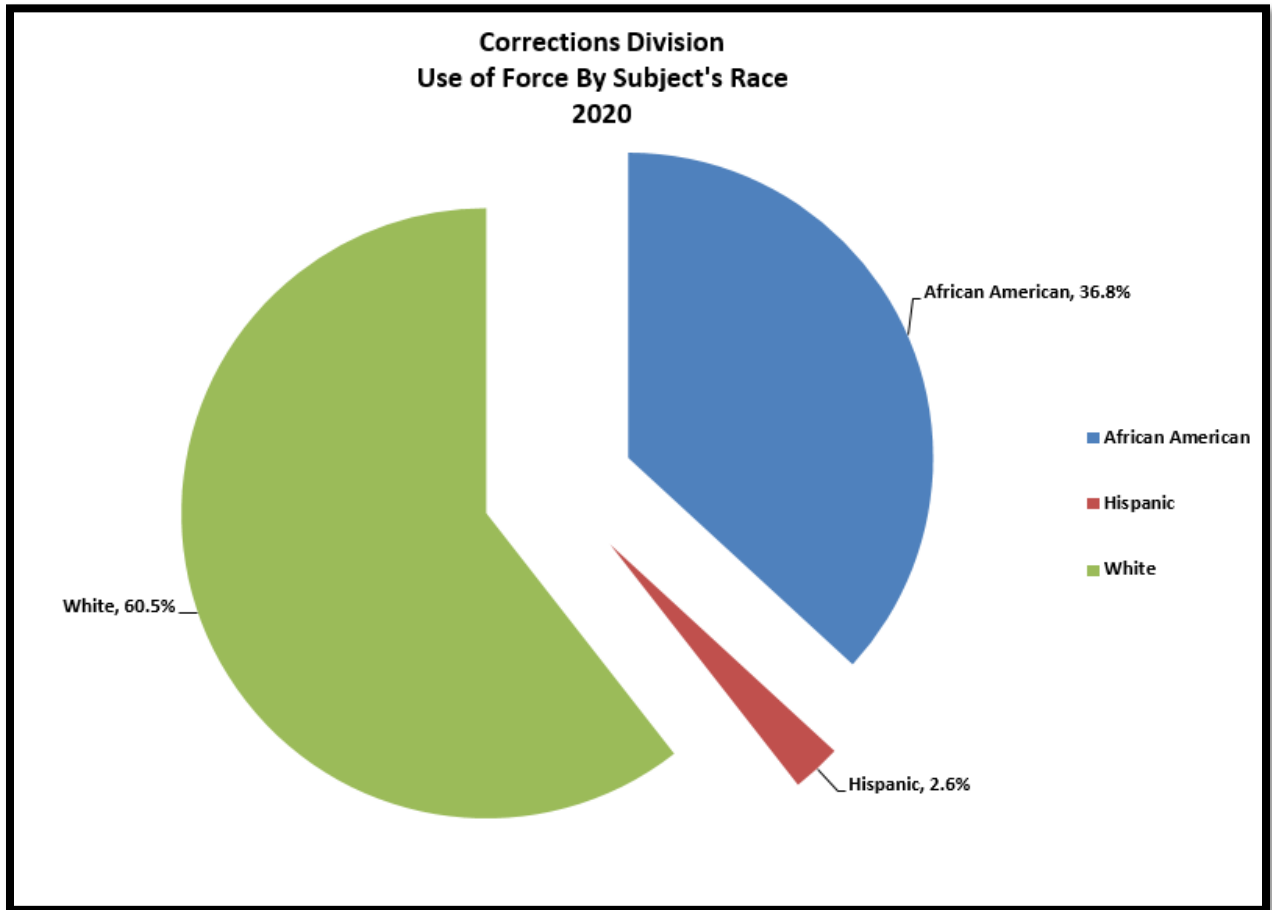
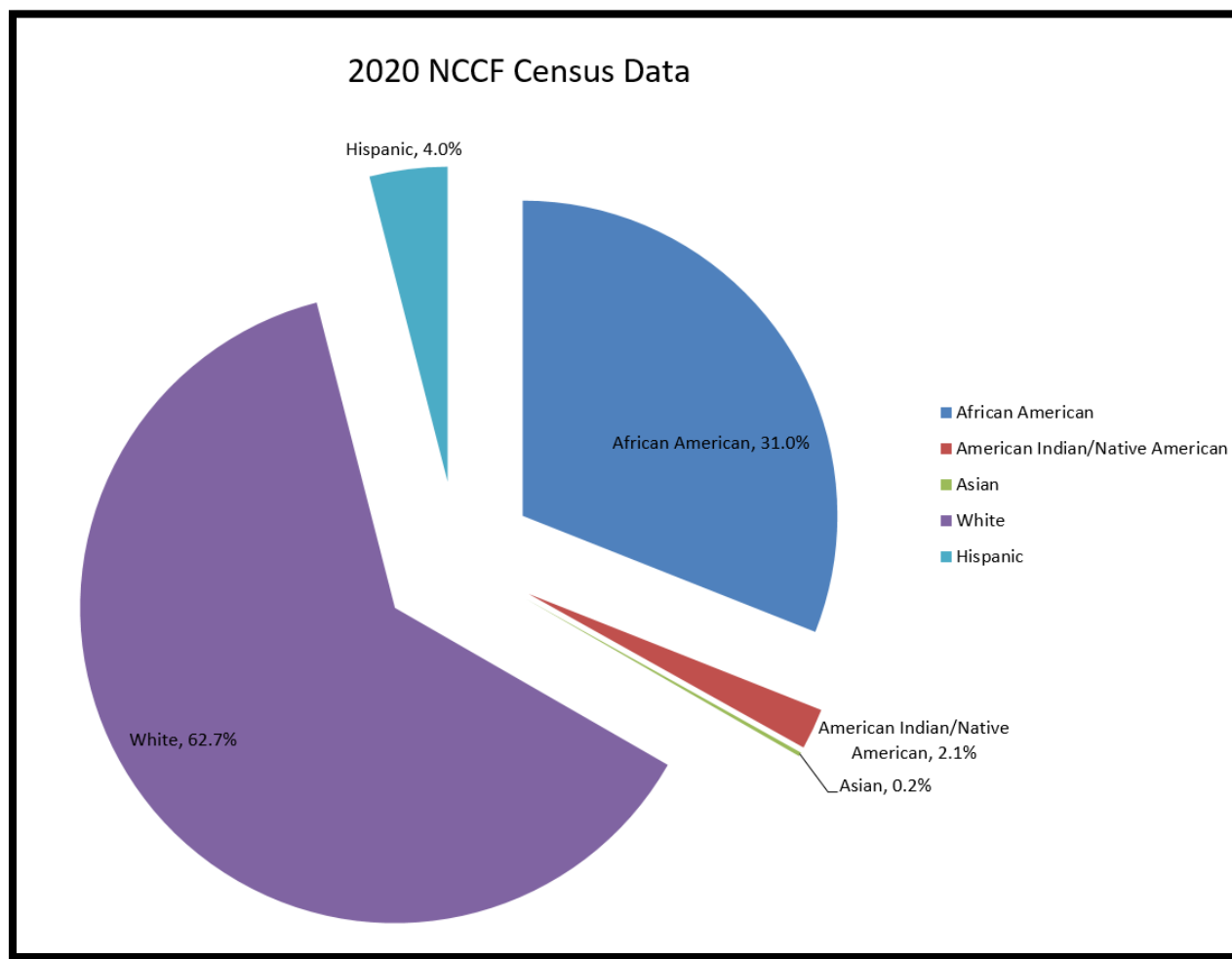


Figure 13



PowerPoint Presentation Provided to Stakeholders



Mission Statement

The Mission of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office is to secure for the people of Niagara County the conditions that will bring about and sustain the full measure of the benefits of citizenship in a democratic society of laws by safeguarding life and property, preserving the peace, preventing and detecting crime, enforcing the law, and protecting the rights of all citizens.

The graphic shows two police officers standing in front of a large, modern building. A white police car is parked in front of them. The text "DUTY ✦ HONOR ✦ SERVICE ✦ INTEGRITY" is written at the bottom of the graphic. Below the graphic are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Vision Statement

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office shall provide the finest and most professional public safety services to the residents of and visitors to Niagara County. We will work in unison with the community and other law enforcement agencies. We shall demand of ourselves the highest standards of honesty and integrity as we uphold all laws for which we are responsible.

The Office of the Sheriff shall maintain a safe, secure and cost-effective jail that recognizes the dignity of all individuals, while adhering to all constitutional standards and regulatory guidelines.

We are committed to preventing crime and protecting life and property; preserving peace, order and safety; enforcing laws and ordinances and safeguarding constitutional guarantees. We recognize that our employees are our most valued assets and we recognize that diversity is strength.

By utilizing the most extensive education and technology available, the Office of the Sheriff will faithfully serve the people of Niagara County to the best of our ability with steadfast honor and dedication.



The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has proudly served the residents and visitors of Niagara County for the past 212 years. When reflecting on our humbled beginnings one thing is certain, the Office of Sheriff has a long and proud history of service to the people of Niagara County.



1810

The first Niagara County Jail was built in the Village of Buffalo, just north of the courthouse on Washington Street



1825

The First Jail/Courthouse was built on Niagara Street in Lockport after the redistricting of Erie and Niagara Counties in 1821



1842

A newly Niagara County Jail was constructed with an enclosed exercise yard and 32 cells, each measuring 4x10



1893

With the need for additional space, a new jail was constructed with 52 cells



1961

New regulations were set and a new jail was imminent. A new jail was constructed on Niagara Street Extension, the current home of the Sheriff's Office, consisting of 172 cells



1994

With additional space needed, an expansion was necessary. A state of the art "Pod System" was built onto the existing facility, increasing capacity from 216 to 453 beds



2020

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office and Correctional Facility as you see it today

In light of recent events of civil unrest throughout our nation, NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo issued Executive Order 203 on June 12, 2020. The executive order requires each local government to adopt a policing reform plan by April 1, 2021.

The Governor realizes that maintaining public safety is imperative and a primary function of government. This order requires law enforcement agencies to conduct a comprehensive review of police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices. Law enforcement must conduct this review to ensure they are addressing the needs of the communities being served.

In order to prepare for this comprehensive review of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, two studies were referenced and taken into consideration; "The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing" and the "New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative".

THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON
21ST CENTURY POLICING

NEW YORK STATE
POLICE REFORM
AND REINVENTION
COLLABORATIVE

RESOURCES & GUIDE FOR
PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND CITIZENS

NEW YORK STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 203

Each local government entity which has a police agency operating with police officers as defined under 1.20 of the criminal procedure law must perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develop a plan to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency and promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.

The political subdivision, in coordination with its police agency, must consult with stakeholders, including but not limited to membership and leadership of the local police force; members of the community, with emphasis in areas with high numbers of police and community interactions; interested non-profit and faith-based community groups; the local office of the district attorney; the local public defender; and local elected officials, and create a plan to adopt and implement the recommendations resulting from its review and consultation, including any modifications, modernizations, and innovations to its policing deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, tailored to the specific needs of the community and general promotion of improved police agency and community relationships based on trust, fairness, accountability, and transparency, and which seek to reduce any racial disparities in policing.

Such plan shall be offered for public comment to all citizens in the locality, and after consideration of such comments, shall be presented to the local legislative body in such political subdivision, which shall ratify or adopt such plan by local law or resolution, as appropriate, no later than April 1, 2021.





**The Sheriff's Office Consists of
Three Major Divisions:**



CRIMINAL DIVISION



CORRECTIONS



COMMUNICATIONS

The Criminal Division contains Road Patrol, Investigations and Specialty Units:

Road Patrol

The Sheriff's Office regularly reviews staffing needs to ensure the appropriate distribution of patrol personnel.

Considerations for distribution include:

1. Geographical design of patrol areas
2. Volume of service calls
3. Officer safety
4. High crime areas
5. Hot spot policing



- Patrol areas are divided into 12 zones, including towns and villages outside the three major cities
- Minimum staffing is set for Officer safety



CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Criminal Investigation Bureau

- The Criminal Investigation Bureau is comprised of Criminal Investigators and Crime Scene Technicians
- Investigators are assigned to handle caseloads
- Crime Scene Technicians process crime scenes and log evidence

Drug Task Force



- Drug Task Force is comprised of Investigators who are assigned to handle drug cases throughout Niagara County.
- Partnership with other Law Enforcement Agencies

SPECIALTY UNITS / DIVISIONS

Special Services Division (Aviation/Marine/ATV/Snowmobile)

Aviation

- Call sign of County One
- Search and Rescue Missions
- Marihuana eradication efforts



ATV Patrol

- Deployed to target problematic areas



Marine Patrol

- Coordinate Marine Patrols
 - ✓ Lake Ontario
 - ✓ Niagara River
 - ✓ Erie Canal



Snowmobile Patrol

- Deployed to targeted problem areas on Snow Trails



SPECIALTY UNITS / DIVISIONS (Cont.)

Canine Division

- Three full-time working canines are assigned to patrol areas
- Narcotic and Explosive detection certified



Civil Division

- Eviction notices
- Subpoena Services
- Official Document Service



Community Services

- Liaison to community organizations
- ALL-STAR program
- Explorer Post

Warrants

- Execute arrest warrants issued by local Judges



CORRECTIONS DIVISION

- The Niagara County Correctional Facility is the largest division at the Sheriff's Office
- Staffing plan for the Correctional Facility is set by the New York State Commission of Corrections (SCOC)
- Correction Officers maintain order within the facility and protection of incarcerated persons



COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

- The Niagara County Sheriff's Office Communications Division is an essential component for public safety in Niagara County
- All members of the communications staff are certified Emergency Medical Dispatchers
- The Sheriff's Office Communications Division is only one of 14 county public safety answering points across New York State to be accredited by the New York State Sheriffs' Association
- In 2019 the Communications Division fielded over 308,427 phone calls and dispatched 155,650 calls for service to law enforcement and first responders across Niagara County





The Niagara County Sheriff's Office holds high regard to our mission and vision statement. We strive to be a transparent agency, utilizing a variety of methods to share our message with members of the community.

Through our extensive community outreach efforts, we are able to interact with members of the community on a consistent basis and obtain positive and valuable feedback on the services we provide.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has a proud tradition of honor, integrity and professionalism. The Sheriff's Office has always adapted to better serve the needs of our communities. We take great pride in our service and will continue to evaluate our efforts to ensure the highest level of service the community deserves is provided.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is an accredited law enforcement agency through the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Accreditation is a progressive and contemporary way of helping police agencies evaluate and improve their overall performance. It provides formal recognition that an organization meets or exceeds general expectations of quality in the field. Accreditation acknowledges the implementation of policies that are conceptually sound and operationally effective.

The New York State program became operational in 1989 and encompasses four principle goals:

1. To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement agencies utilizing existing personnel, equipment and facilities to the extent possible;
2. To promote increased cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies and other agencies of the criminal justice services;
3. To ensure the appropriate training of law enforcement personnel; and
4. To promote public confidence in law enforcement agencies.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is accredited in Law Enforcement, Communications, Corrections, Civil and Forensic Laboratory.



Community Policing

- Deputies and staff seek ways to become part of the community in which they serve
- Attend events
- Building Bridges Initiative
- Birthday Parades
- Visit schools and speak with youth
- Explorer Post
- Niagara County Fair
- Citizen's Police Academy



Crime Prevention

- Hold community events to discuss safety tips
- Attend Neighborhood Watch group meetings
- Implemented Nextdoor, a collaborative virtual neighborhood watch group for Niagara County (NCSO was first to sign on in NYS)
- Public Service Announcements

Social Media

- Facebook (over 36,000 followers)
- Twitter (over 4,000 followers)
- Instagram (over 1,800 followers)
- YouTube (over 421 subscribers)



Website

- www.NiagaraSheriff.com
- Overview of functions at the Sheriff's Office
- Citizen Comment Form
- Submit a Tip
- Offender Watch program
- Animal Abuse Registry
- Inmate Information



NY-ALERT

- www.Alert.NY.gov
- Subscribe to receive critical information and emergency alerts

Niagara County Sheriff's Office Mobile App

- Niagara County Sheriff
- Free App for Apple and Android Devices
- Submit a Tip
- Inmate Search
- Sex Offender Notifications
- Push Notifications



OffenderWatch

- Nation's leading registered sex offender management and community notification tool
- Monitors whereabouts of offenders
- Partnerships with school districts
- Available on our website and mobile app



Body and Fleet Camera Program

- Mandatory wear policy
- Deputies capture video when interacting with public
- Correction Officers capture video throughout the Correctional Facility
- Marked patrol fleet equipped with front and rear cameras



Body Camera



Front/Rear
Fleet Camera

Victim Assistance Unit

- Provides comprehensive, specialized services that are tailored to the specific needs of crime victims
- Advocates assist crime victims with navigating the Criminal Justice System
- The Victim Assistance Unit does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, immigration status or having a criminal record.

Niagara County Correctional Facility Programs

- Offers a variety of programs in partnership with multiple agencies
- BOCES- Job Readiness Programs
 - Culinary
 - Computer and Office Skills
 - Customer Service Training
 - Carpentry
 - Small Engine Repair
 - Landscaping
- Best Self Behavioral Health
 - Substance Abuse education, peer support and discharge planning
 - Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)
- Good News Jail and Prison Ministry



Drug Task Force Operational Planning

- Response to neighborhood drug concerns
- Confidential Informants
- Investigation of overdose cases
- Confidential Tips



Targeted Patrol Enforcement

- Traffic complaints
- Areas with known drug and criminal activity
- Areas with increased accidents
- School Zone / School Bus Stops

Transparency- How We Communicate With Communities

- Website
- Mobile App
- Social Media
- Press Releases
- NY-Alert
- Nextdoor



A comprehensive review of the entire Niagara County Sheriff's Office Criminal Division Policies and Procedures was conducted not just through the lens of Executive Order 203 but also under NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation in order to maintain up to date policies and procedures. Modifications will be listed with a brief description of the change and the reason for the change(s).

General Order 139B; Community Relations – This policy was reviewed to ensure compliance with accreditation standards as well as NYS Executive Order 203.

General Order 146; Professional Standards – the original policy was reviewed to ensure compliance with accreditation standards as well as NYS Executive Order 203.

General Order 201E; Recruitment, Selection and Appointment – this policy was modified to include participation in any potential committee(s) that facilitate the recruitment of minority hiring initiatives.

General Order 202B Promotions - this policy was modified to include a Promotional Candidate's race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, financial status, or lawful source of income will not be considered during selection process.

General Order 206A; Affirmative Action – This policy was modified to include a person's sexual orientation for equal employment and Executive Order 203, The New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative.

General Order 207C; Training – This policy was modified to include Prohibition Regarding Racial Profiling and Other Bias Based Policing training.

General Order 209D; Use of Force – This policy was modified to prohibit the use of chokeholds or similar restraints.

General Order 217C; Employee Performance Evaluation – This policy was modified to reflect current Employee Performance Evaluation process and standards.

General Order 229; Prohibition Regarding Racial Profiling and Other Bias Based Policing – This policy conforms to NYS Executive Order 203.

General Order 305C; Professional Conduct – This policy was modified to ensure the Office of Professional Standards reviews all complaints of allegations of racial profiling and other bias based policing.

General Order 411C; Handling Complaints – This policy was modified to ensure every complaint is handled without regard to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, financial status or lawful source of income.

A comprehensive review of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office **Corrections Division** Policies and Procedures was conducted in accordance with Accreditation and NYS Executive Order 203.

Modifications will be listed with a brief description of the change(s) and the reason for the change(s).

1001A Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Correction Officers – this policy was modified to include participation in any potential committee(s) that facilitate the recruitment of minority hiring initiatives.

1008 Prohibition Regarding Racial Profiling/Bias Based Corrections – This policy conforms to NYS Executive Order 203.

1051 Community Services – this was an entirely new policy to codify current practices into policy in light of EO 203.

1113B Physical Force – Use of – This policy was modified to prohibit the use of chokeholds or similar restraints.

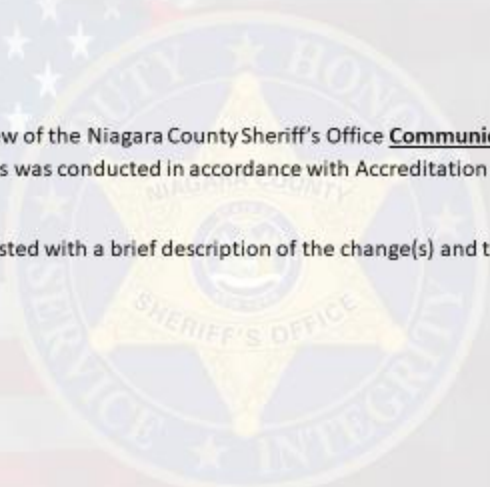
1159 A Restraint Chair – this policy was updated to require constant supervision of any inmate placed in the restraint chair. Also decreased the amount of time (2 hours from 4 hours) before a supervisor must document reasons for continued restraint.

1177A Punitive Segregation – this policy changed in order to comply with SCOC Minimum Standards Part 7075 (Inmate Confinement and Deprivation) requirements.

1183A Reportable Incidents – this policy was changed because the requirements in SCOC Minimum Standards Part 7022 (Reportable Incidents) changed.

1192 Officer Video Recording System – this was an entirely new policy to codify current practices into policy in light of EO 203.

1194 Crisis Intervention Team – this was an entirely new policy to codify current practices into policy in light of EO 203.

The seal of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office is centered in the background. It features a five-pointed star with a smaller star in the center. The words "HONOR", "INTEGRITY", "SERVICE", and "DUTY" are written around the perimeter of the seal. The words "SHERIFF'S OFFICE" and "NIAGARA COUNTY" are also visible.

A comprehensive review of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office **Communications Division** Policies and Procedures was conducted in accordance with Accreditation and NYS Executive Order 203.

Modifications will be listed with a brief description of the change(s) and the reason for the change(s).

General Order 9103A Recruitment, Selection, and Appointment– this policy was modified to include participation in any potential committee(s) that facilitate the recruitment of minority hiring initiatives.

General Order 9401B General Call Taking Procedures– This policy was modified to ensure every call is handled without regard to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, financial status or lawful source of income.

General Order 9427A Call Taking Procedure for Abusive or Uncooperative Callers– This policy was reviewed to ensure compliance with accreditation standards as well as NYS Executive Order 203. Language added to the order in regard to ensuring a non-biased procedure in handling calls for public safety services from the public.



One of the most important requirements of any police officer is training. The Niagara County Sheriff's Office has always been committed to providing the most highly trained deputy sheriff's. This commitment begins at the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy.

The training required of a police officer is mandated by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). DCJS has established the Municipal Police Training Council (MPTC) to define the standards for training throughout NYS. Prospective police officers are required to attend an accredited law enforcement academy. The Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy trains not only Sheriff's deputies, but police officers from all across Western New York.

Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy

- Basic Course for Police Officers and Correction Officer
- Coordinates training opportunities
- Assists with department in-service training and scheduling



In-Service Training

- Requires all sworn personnel, both full and part-time, receive at least 21 hours of training hours annually
- This includes, at a minimum, firearms training, legal updates, a review of use of force, suicide prevention, CPR/AED and First Aid and Implicit Bias Training
- Training includes classroom training, roll call (briefing) or video presentation
- Participants must demonstrate proficiencies established by the Sheriff and DCJS Standards

Department Training

- Training provided to achieve specialized skills to further their career and advancement
- Crisis Negotiation Training, Crisis Intervention Training
- Required Certifications by employees in CPR/AED, Firearms, Emergency Medical Dispatch

Continuing Education

- Training opportunities are hosted by NCSO or outside agencies
- Enhance skills
- Receive training in specialized fields

Field Training Program

- Extension of academy training, transition from theory and role play to conditions of the job
- Field Training Program is a minimum of 12 weeks and accompanied and by a certified FTO
- Correction Officer Training Program is 80 hours and accompanied and supervised by a CTO
- Communications Training Program is 21-24 weeks and includes EMD certification
- Officer/Personnel is not ready for solo patrol until such training is satisfactorily completed
- Daily written evaluations, Performance criteria, Observed interactions with the public



Community Outreach

- Social Media
- Community Services Unit
- Participate in Community Events
- Recruitment Efforts

Crisis Intervention Team

- Trained officers to recognize emotionally distressed individuals in a variety of situations in the community and Correctional Facility
- Ensures the safety of the community and the emotionally distressed individual
- Facilitate an appropriate outcome for the emotionally distressed individual so assistance is rendered

Corrections Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.)

- Team of specially trained Correction Officers
- Responsible for regaining control of violent, dangerous and or non compliant inmates
- Ensures the safety of inmates and staff within the Correctional Facility

Emergency Response Team (E.R.T.)

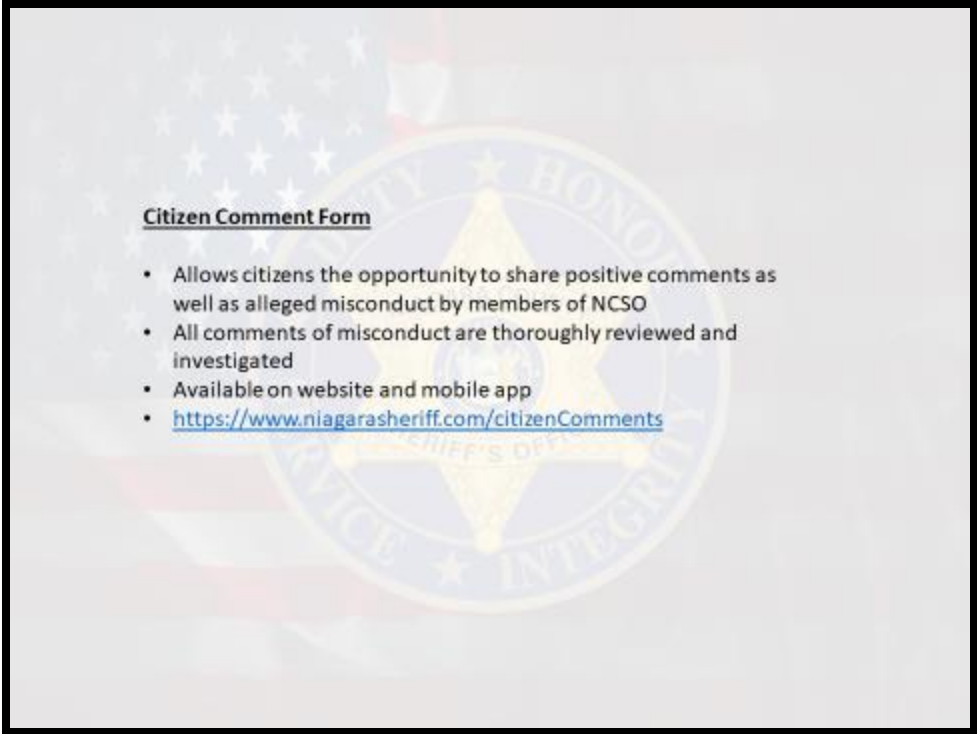
- New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Accredited Team
- Team of specially trained tactical officers
- Responsible for handling critical, high risk situations
- Protect life and property to resolve incidents safely

Crisis Negotiation Team

- Team of skilled and trained officers
- Activated during critical incidents where
- Team members work to find peaceful resolutions to:
 - persons who are armed
 - looking to harm themselves or others
 - holding others against their will
 - Barricaded

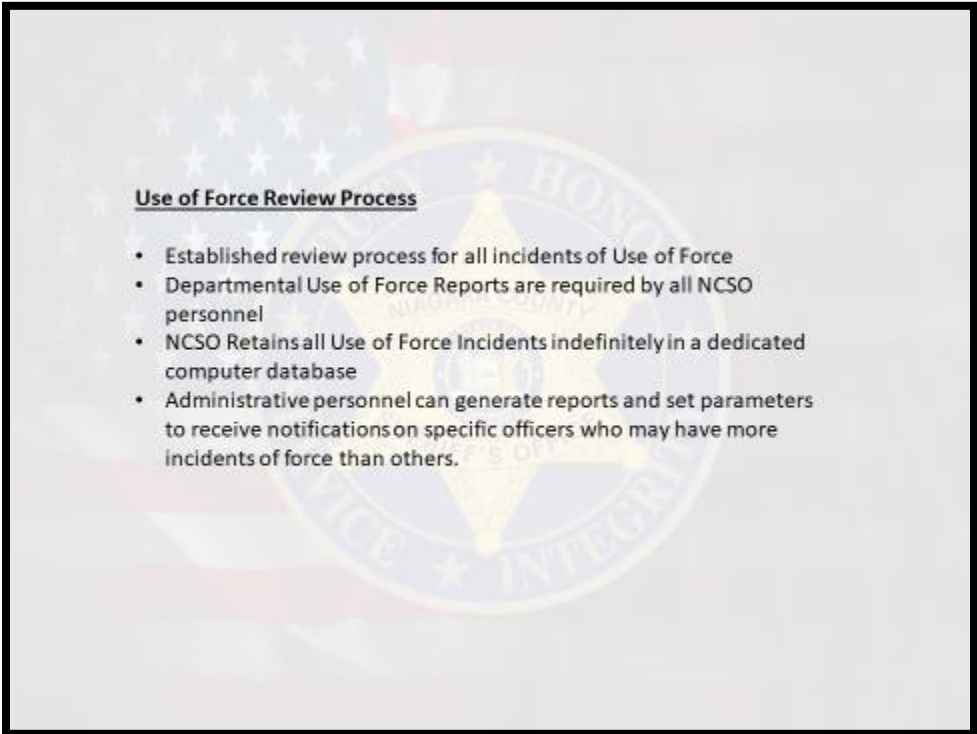
Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (L.E.A.D.)

- Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (L.E.A.D.) is a community-based diversion approach with the goals of improving public safety and public order, and reducing unnecessary justice system involvement of people who participate in the program.
 - Training will begin in October of 2020



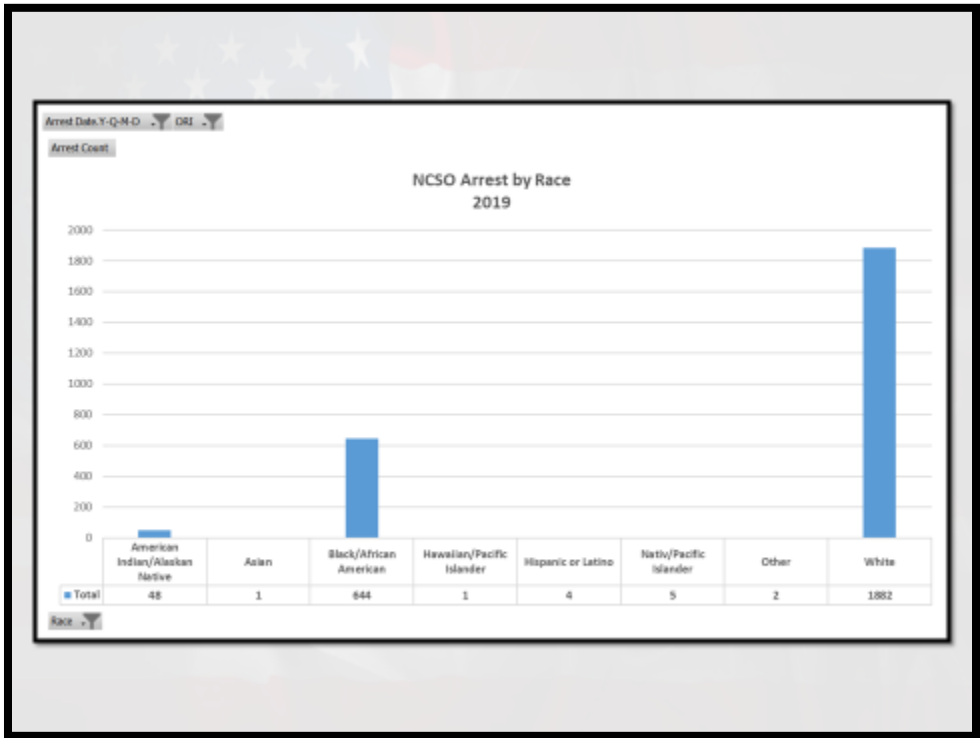
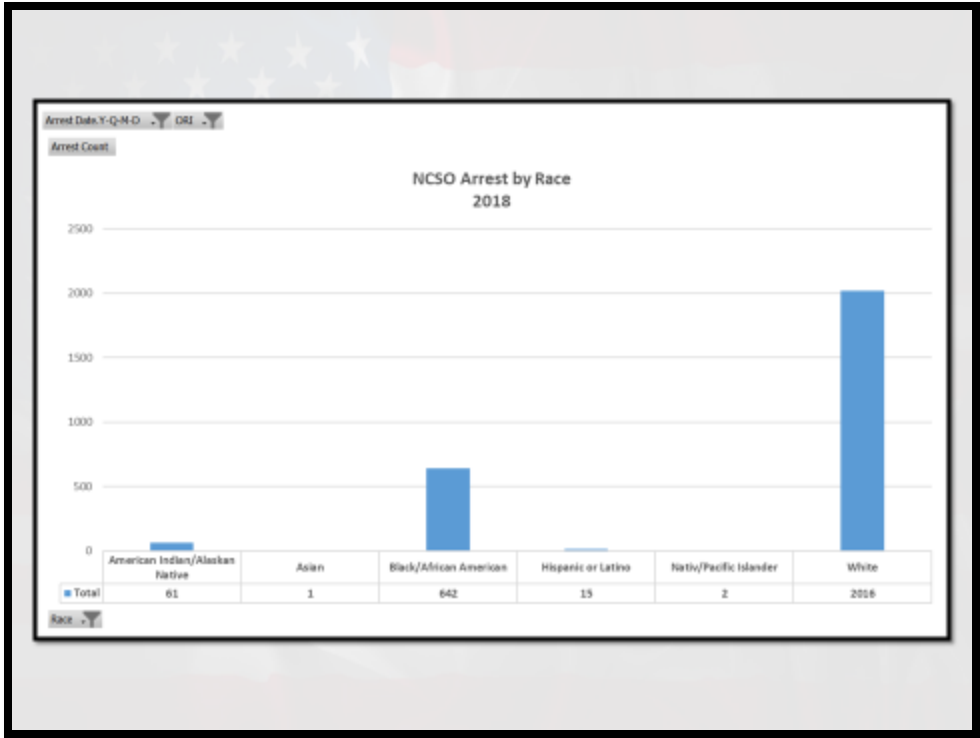
Citizen Comment Form

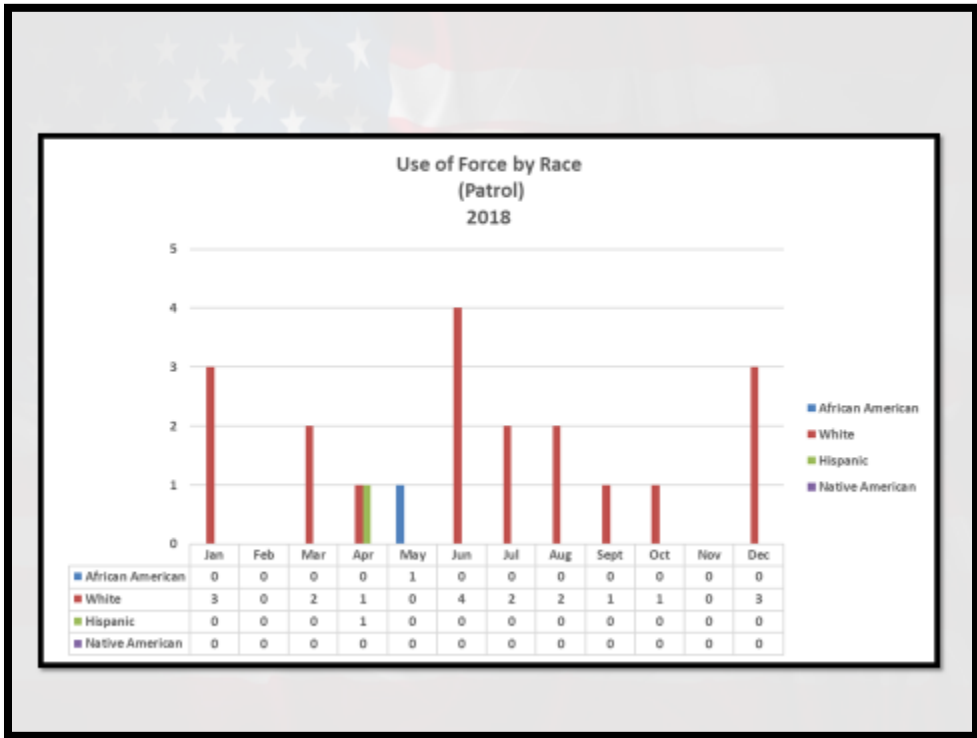
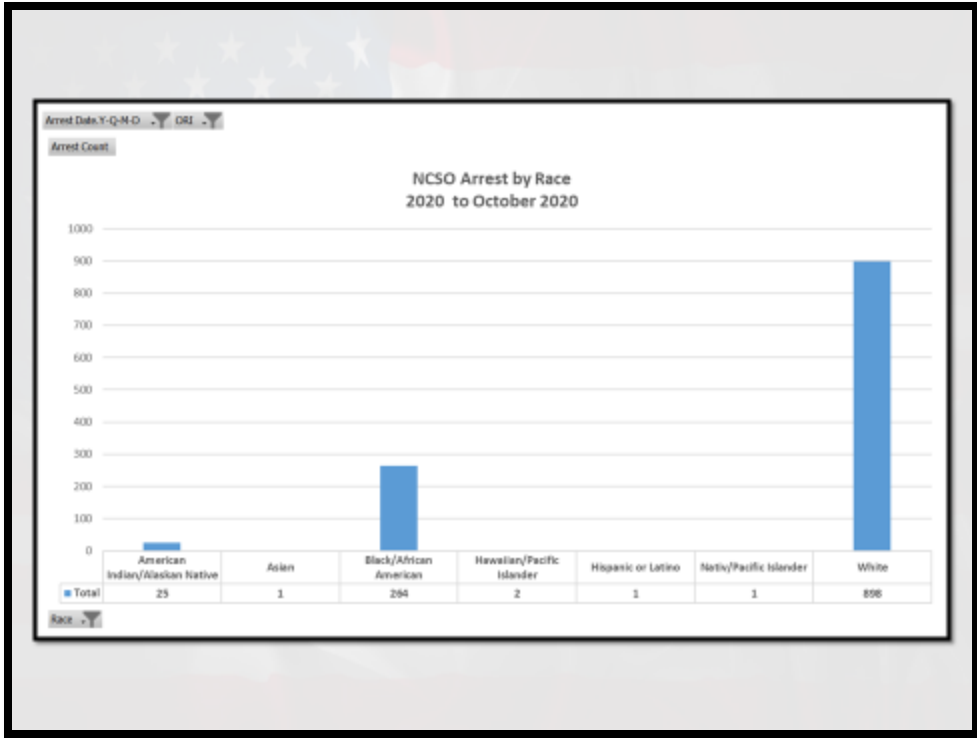
- Allows citizens the opportunity to share positive comments as well as alleged misconduct by members of NCSO
- All comments of misconduct are thoroughly reviewed and investigated
- Available on website and mobile app
- <https://www.niagarasheriff.com/citizenComments>

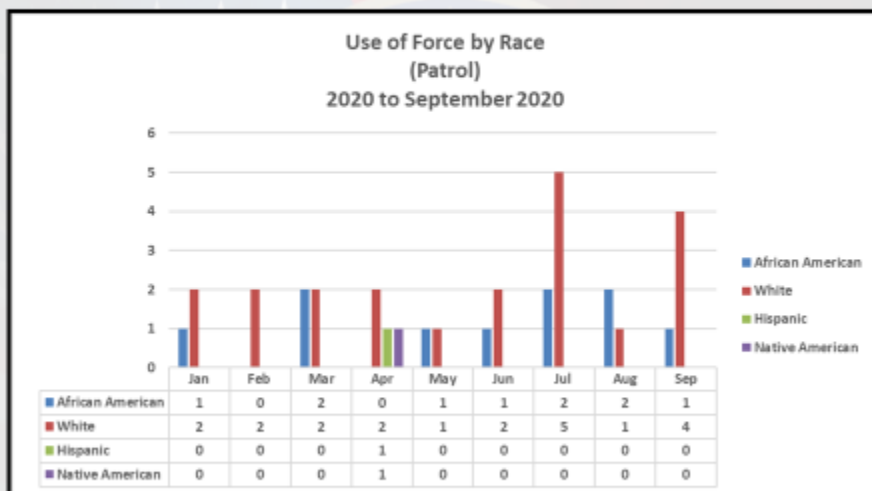
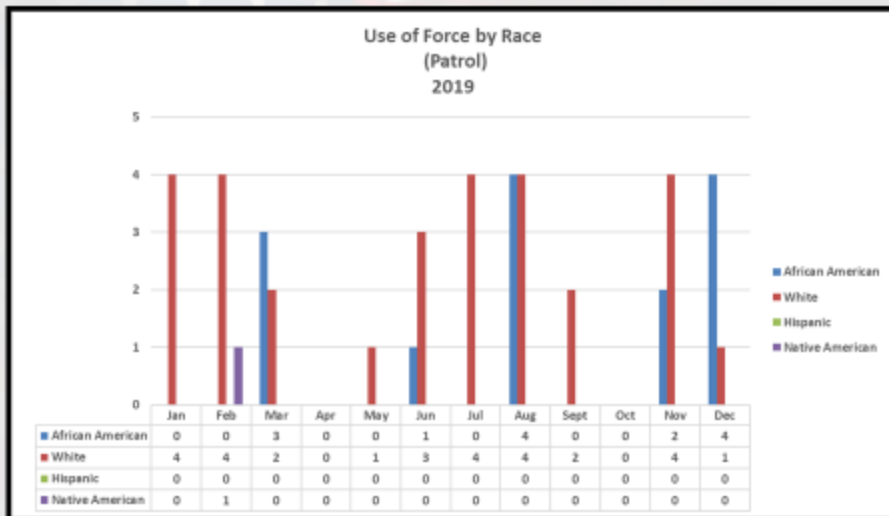


Use of Force Review Process

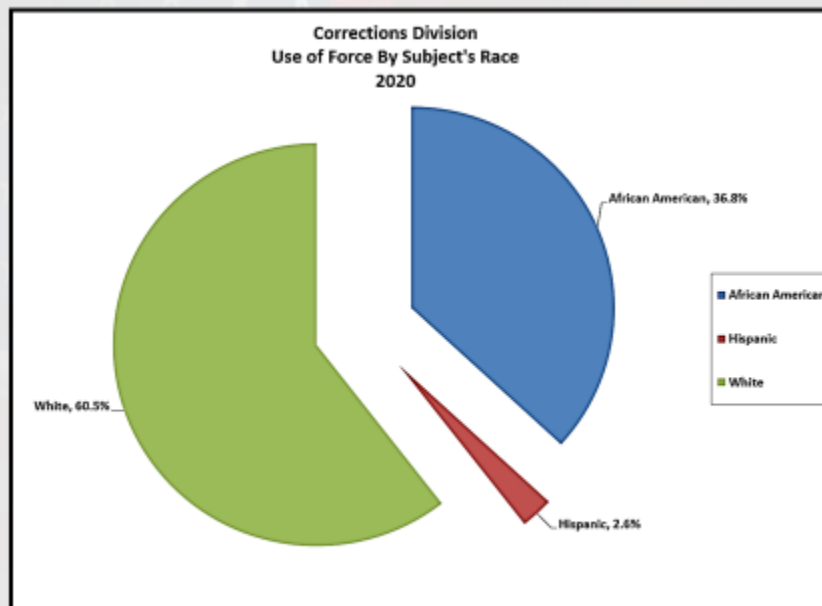
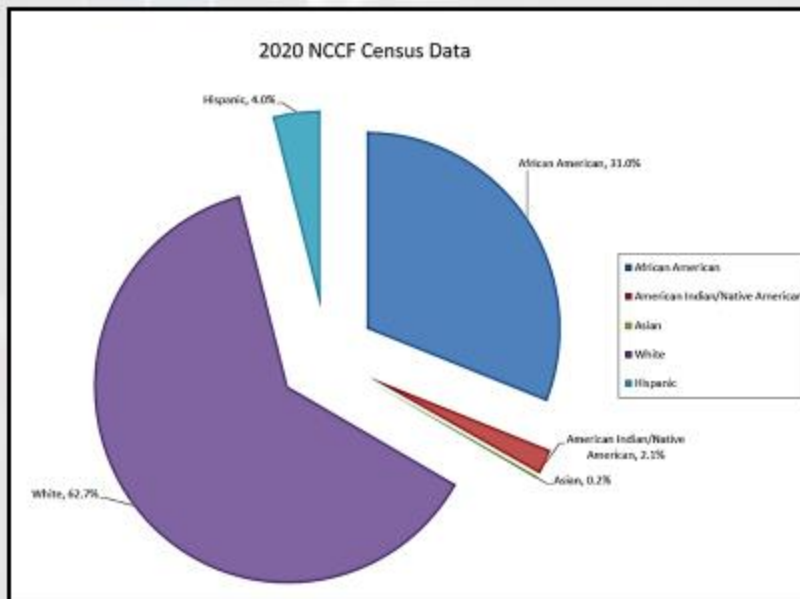
- Established review process for all incidents of Use of Force
- Departmental Use of Force Reports are required by all NCSO personnel
- NCSO Retains all Use of Force Incidents indefinitely in a dedicated computer database
- Administrative personnel can generate reports and set parameters to receive notifications on specific officers who may have more incidents of force than others.







**NIAGARA COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
USE OF FORCE STATISTICS**





Implementation of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office will be conducted through various public and private community stakeholders. Many facets to Executive Order 203 have already been implemented prior to the order.

Composition of Stakeholder Working Group

- ✓ Members of Niagara County Legislature
- ✓ Emergency Services Director
- ✓ Niagara County Sheriff
- ✓ A resident from each of Niagara County's town and cities
- ✓ District Attorney
- ✓ (5) additional members of the public appointed by the Chairwoman of the Niagara County Legislature
- ✓ Public Defender

Minority Recruitment and Hiring

- Minority hiring committee and Law Enforcement sub committee
- Partner with Niagara Falls High School to bring law enforcement related classes into the school
- Partner with NCCC and Niagara University to assist with establishing a pathway to fulfill educational requirements to become a police officer. Currently Niagara University offers a pre-employment academy which offers college credits to participants and assists with placement into a law enforcement agency.
- Recruitment Checklist to ensure outreach is extended into minority communities

Accreditation

- Committed to maintaining our accreditation standards for law enforcement, corrections, communications, civil and forensic laboratory.
- Standards are set by New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

L.E.A.D.

- Training for deputies to use discretion in cases involving minor criminal charges on offenders who may be suffering from addiction
- Get individuals services instead of facing court proceedings
- Training to start October 2020

Mental Health Response

- NCSO welcomes mental health professionals to ride along with deputies and assist with responding to mental health calls
- Partner with Niagara County Mental Health to locate funding to equip deputies with tablets. Tablets would be utilized by deputies for face to face contact with a mental health professional while in the field
- Continue to partner with Niagara County Mental Health to utilize the Mobile Crisis Unit who will respond to mental health calls with deputies in critical situations

CIT Training/De-escalation

- Hold additional CIT training in January and February 2021 to accomplish goal of more patrol personnel trained
- Training will be offered to dispatch personnel to assist them with screening mental health calls
- CIT training will also have a component specifically directed at contact with Veterans

Anti-Bias Training

- Policies have been implemented to ensure all individuals are treated equally
- Partnership with Niagara University to bring a comprehensive anti-bias training to deputies
- Continue to seek relevant training on these topics to ensure a diverse curriculum of training
- Training started in September 2020 for all personnel

Use of Force Review

- Committed to review every use of force incident that occurs within our agency
- Thorough review to ensure policies and procedures are being followed
- Effective April 1, 2021, The NYS Attorney General Office of Special Investigations has jurisdiction to investigate any civilian death during a police encounter

Explorer Program

- Work to expand program to hold multiple sessions throughout Niagara County
- Assist with career development with youth

NCSO Transparency

- Committed to providing statistical information such as Use of Force, Arrests and Calls for Service
- Statistical Dashboard will be posted to website and mobile app

Expand Inmate Programs

- Committed to maintaining the safety of the inmates at the NCCJ
- Committed to proper education, development of skills to obtain gainful employment

The seal of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office is centered in the background. It features a five-pointed star with a smaller star in the center. The words "HONOR" and "INTEGRITY" are on the top and bottom points of the star, respectively. The words "SHERIFF'S OFFICE" and "NIAGARA COUNTY" are on the left and right points. The seal is surrounded by a circular border with stars.

Continuous Reform Evolvement

- Continue to engage with reform committee periodically to update them on progress and seek input
- Progress measurement tools:
 - ✓ CIT/De-Escalation Training
 - ✓ Minority Hiring
 - ✓ Mental Health program establishment
 - ✓ LEAD Training

Community Involvement

- We will continue to be present at any community event that we are able to attend
- We will provide statistical data via our website and mobile app to ensure transparency with the community

Town Hall Meetings

- Meeting with community members to communicate information about programs and services offered through the Sheriff's Office.

Peer Support

- Committed to ensuring peer support is available to all members of NCSO
- Agency has trained peer support mentors
- Partnership with Catch a Falling Star



www.NIAGARASHERIFF.com

