

Denver Police Department
Position Paper - Building on Existing Levels of Excellence

The Denver Police Department has grown and developed over time similarly to the vibrant community it serves. Six years ago, under the leadership of Chief Robert C. White, our department implemented substantial changes in organizational culture and operational structure in order to meet the needs of the city. To truly provide the service our community deserves, the next Chief of Police charge is to build on the existing level of excellence, and to raise our department's performance to meet the needs of tomorrow.

The positive transformations of our agency began in early 2012. The goal of the changes centered around building better relationships with our community, and focusing our efforts not just on responding to crime, but on developing strategies to prevent crime from occurring in the first place. The department's overhaul included modification of the operational structure, including implementing the team concept for increased accountability, civilianizing certain positions in order to get more officers on the street, strategic recruiting and the development of leaders, and developing employee wellness and appreciation events.

Under Chief White's leadership, our department incorporated new technology, including body worn cameras, a state of the art crime lab, an advanced training simulator, as well as a new gunfire detection system to address violent crime. The Chief amended the department's policies and procedures regarding Use of Force and de-escalation, implementing a decision-making model and raising the standard of conduct for our officers well above the state statute or law. Potentially, the biggest impact on our department's advancement was the Chief's emphasis on community relations. The Department's new focus on positive contacts with youth, enhanced community service programs, and developing meaningful relationships with our immigrant, refugee, and marginalized communities helped us repair our tattered public image.

Position

My police career has been consistent with Chief Robert C. White's organizational and structural changes, which were designed to improve relationships with our community and increase the prevention of crime. As an innovator and collaborator, I have demonstrated my unwavering commitment by creating or introducing numerous programs and projects designed to further the department's goals of building stronger connections with the people we serve, with the overall purpose of averting crime. My personal philosophy is rooted in my passion for serving our community. I recognize that law enforcement can often be a social services safety net for our residents. And to effectively improve people's lives, we must find new ways to collaborate with city agencies, community non-profits, religious organizations, and service providers in order to meet the needs of our city's most vulnerable. I also believe that innovation does not come from the establishment alone--but from engaging the community, adapting other national models to Denver's needs, and implementing evidence-based programs. We

cannot rest on our past successes. Rather, we must build on them. Not for the benefit of ourselves, or for our department, but for the benefit of the community we serve.

Innovations Designed to Improve Community Relationships and Prevent Crime

Some key police service improvements that encapsulate my commitment are the following:

- Department of Justice Sun Valley Byrne Criminal Innovation Grant – Awarded a \$1M grant to expand police services, collaborate with non-profits and service providers to deliver direct mental health services to the residents of Denver’s poorest neighborhood. Improved the relationship to and perceptions of law enforcement, reducing both crime and the fear of crime.
- Youth Outreach Project, Bridging the Gap – Kids and Cops. (Co-Creator W/Office of Independent Monitor’s Office.) A powerful program designed to break down barriers between young people and law enforcement. The evidence based curriculum includes training for youth and officers on critical topics. The program was recently identified by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) as a promising practice. See - *An Inclusive Approach to School Safety, Collaborative Efforts to Combat the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Denver.*
- Community Culture Academy – To improve how our officers interact with Denver’s diverse population, this 8-hour forum for all new officers, brought together leaders from the Latino, Asian, Muslim, Orthodox Jewish, Homeless, Re-Entry, Mental Health and Youth communities. This program was replicated in all police districts.
- Teen Empowerment Program – A collaboration with the Summer Youth Employment Program, three local non-profits and the Office of Independent Monitor to offer jobs to 15 young people in one of Denver’s most disadvantaged neighborhood.
- Gang Outreach – Collaborated with local middle and high schools to identify youth who could benefit from direct outreach. Officers, mental health clinicians and service providers collaborated by visiting the families providing support and resources before they become gang active.
- Responsible for researching and implementing successful crime prevention strategies resulting in the pilot of Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) in District One, which was replicated citywide. A recent two-year study of Denver’s program shows significant reductions in nearly every DDACTS area across the city.
- Outreach to Offenders – Collaboration with faith-based non-profits to provide support and resources to individuals who are reentering our community.
- Led or implemented many of our departments’ community outreach efforts including the widely popular Women’s Self-Defense course and the Pups on Patrol programs. Both designed to raise awareness and prevent crime.

Areas for Improvement:

The Denver Police Department and its community-based partners do a remarkable job of addressing victims of domestic violence. We have a robust system that includes a dedicated investigative unit that works directly with non-profits and service providers in a Domestic Violence Service center. The team provides the full gamut of services for those in need. To reduce the devastating impacts of domestic violence, I propose implementing a focused deterrence model, using existing resources, to address the other half of the equation. We must continue our efforts in assisting victims, however, data suggests

domestic violence is an ever-growing problem in our community. Over the last three years we are trending-up with an average of 2,415 reported domestic violence assaults annually. Utilizing an evidence based focused deterrence program with conservative estimates could prevent hundreds of domestic violence incidents a year in our community.

In community policing we have made gains in creating a hard-working and diverse police force, and will work to continue active recruitment, providing essential training in order to attract and retain quality officers that reflect Denver's changing population.

I am committed to continue to work with command staff to plan and implement law enforcement programs, in order to carry out the policies and objectives of City leadership and City Council. I will work to review performance and effectiveness, to better formulate polices to alleviate deficiencies.

Another element in the continued building upon the existing level of excellence is the integration of state-of-the-art-technology. It is incumbent upon the department to advance technology systems, to be transparent in the application, and to improve police services.

I will work to supervise and coordinate the preparation and presentation of an annual budget for the Department. The budget development is essential, as the City is experiencing one of its fastest population growths, and as such the police department must be prepared to meet the demands for safety in a fiscally responsible manner, in addition to being proactive in crime prevention throughout the city.

As an advocate of the Chief's vision for the department, I volunteered to further programs and projects that directly advanced the agency's efforts to build strong community relationships and strategies designed to prevent crime. I volunteered to lead the department's study and implementation of the team-policing model in an effort to improve accountability and field supervision. I took it upon myself to initiate strategic recruiting in minority communities by collaborating with a local non-profit to identify, recruit, and prepare candidates for the entry-level police examination.

None of this work can be done without a great team of officers, investigators and supervisors. We include their perspective and ideas to generate or build on the innovative crime prevention and community outreach efforts. Following a series of traumatic events impacting our officers, I implemented the department's yoga for officers program. To improve resiliency and assist our officers, investigators, and supervisors in dealing with the stressful nature of their work, my team recently added a certified therapy dog.

My position and philosophical approach to leading the Denver Police Department consists of building upon the existing levels of excellence through innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity. I believe that we as department and as individuals should be in a constant pursuit for improvement. I have clearly demonstrated this commitment over my entire career, and will strive to improve our agency, our city, and our community to even greater heights as the next Chief of Police in the City and County of Denver.