



## Successful Practices & Strategies

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# New Castle County Police Department

Wilmington, Delaware

<http://www.nccpd.com>

### Community policing element

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Problem solving and organizational transformation

### Problem/issue

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A need to decrease crime and the fear it causes in our communities within authorized budget and staffing levels.

### Problem description

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With stagnant crime rates and a reduced workforce due to attrition and the economic downturn, a new method of policing was needed to better serve all community members. It was believed that by returning to a proactive style of community policing focusing on quality-of-life concerns reported by our neighborhoods would prevent larger crimes from occurring.

### Community policing strategies implemented

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Targeted analytic policing system (TAPS) maps are created on a weekly basis. This style of policing approach is working in New Castle County. Our officers are armed with these maps along with attending weekly operations meetings. This enables our officers and police commanders to address the most serious crimes occurring in New Castle County.

With the commanders of every section of the police department in attendance, their various areas of expertise are drawn upon to determine the best methods to address each hot spot. Each commander considers available resources and discusses and decides which methods are best to address the issues. These approaches include, but are not limited to, assigning officers to the community, utilizing specialized units such as the Mounted Patrol to patrol the area, directing officers from the Patrol Division to team up and maintain a presence in the community, assigning undercover officers, having the Community Services Unit intervene, and considering property abatement.

### Change and/or impact as a result of these community policing efforts

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Overall crime in New Castle County decreased by 8.2 percent from 2013 to 2014. Moreover, overall crime was down by 16.1 percent over the course of 2012 to 2014. Our in-progress, quality-of-life complaints were down 11.5 percent from 2012 to 2014. Also, the overall dispatched calls for service



were down 9.9 percent. Compared to 2013, vehicle theft was down 12.6 percent in 2014, theft was down 13.8 percent, assaults were down 6.5 percent, burglaries were down 3.2 percent, and robberies were down 1.6 percent. Additional officers allowed us to make an impact in the communities we serve.

The results of the TAPS program were impressive. Crime decreased by 16.1 percent in the first and the second year after this style of policing was implemented into our everyday policing philosophy.

### Lessons learned through program implementation

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The department had found was that quality-of-life calls—which include reports of disorderly subjects, speeding cars, loud radios, suspicious persons or vehicles, fights, people loitering on a street corner, and reported drug dealing, along with property crime—were among the top concerns of our community members and political leaders. If these relatively minor issues were left unchecked, it was believed that they would grow into more serious crimes. This information confirmed what was already suspected, that traditional reactive 911-driven policing was failing. The agency had to get officers off of the “911 treadmill” of responding to crimes that had already occurred or where someone had already been victimized and instead find ways to proactively police our communities. Based on this information, Setting implemented the TAPS system. The TAPS goal was simple: address the low-level quality-of-life issues plaguing communities and more serious and violent crime would subsequently also decrease. Colonel Setting, who had come on as chief in December 2012, set the additional goal of double-digit decreases in crime and calls for service and to address what our community members were telling us mattered most to them. The challenge was to develop innovative ways to attack these quality-of-life crimes while staying within the current budget and staffing levels.

The results of TAPS were impressive, with double-digit decreases in most crime categories. We have seen a 15.5 percent decrease in overall crime as compared to the overall crime in June 2014 and a 35.3 percent decrease since before TAPS was implemented. In addition, TAPS has been improved with a focus on property crimes, which are a top reported concern of our communities. This effort has led to a 36.7 percent reduction in burglaries, a 26.4 percent reduction in thefts, and a 22.6 percent reduction in vehicle thefts.

We remain grateful for the support and guidance that the COPS Office has provided. The COPS Office continues to play an important role in providing critical resources that are needed to improve upon these impressive results and allow for even greater service to our communities.

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