

Hartford Police Department Organizational Climate Study Two-Year Progress Report

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Conflict of Interest Statement:

The 2020 Hartford Police Department Organizational Climate Study was authored by Dr. Lisa Barao and Dr. Chelsea Farrell. Since this original study, Dr. Barao has assisted the HPD with violence-related data collection and analysis efforts. As a result, Dr. Farrell served as the primary lead for this follow-up organizational climate study. Dr. Farrell and Dr. Strah declare no conflicts of interest relating to this research.

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Executive Summary

In the fall of 2019, the Hartford Police Department (HPD) solicited an independent study to assess their internal climate and evaluate the workplace experiences of sworn personnel. A thorough assessment of the HPD followed, using data collected from interviews, surveys, and administrative records. The [Organizational Climate Study Final Report](#) resulting from this study examined HPD policies and practices and how organizational elements impacted workplace behaviors, perceptions, and experiences of agency employees.

The purpose of the current report is to conduct a two-year follow-up to the original HPD Organizational Climate Study. This report consists of two parts. *Part I: Recommendations Progress Report* provides updates on HPD actions pertaining to each of the 74 recommendations outlined in the original study. *Part II: Survey and Focus Group Results* reviews results from a follow-up officer survey and incorporates discussions from a series of officer focus groups held from 2021-2022. To ensure the validity and reliability of officer feedback, the *Recommendations Progress Report* only includes actions undertaken through October 2022. Since organizational improvement is an ongoing process, the HPD has continued to take steps to address these recommendations (e.g., ongoing modifications to time off policies, employee feedback committees) that may not be mentioned in this report.

We must acknowledge that this progress report and survey cover a period in which the HPD and police departments nationwide have continued to face challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, escalated police-community tensions, rising rates of violent crime, and officer staffing shortages. This context cannot be overlooked, especially in its impact on stressors and frustrations expressed by the HPD's officers. It should also be noted that this report is not intended to serve as an endpoint evaluation of the HPD's work toward organizational improvement. Rather, this report describes ongoing activity and efforts in order to strengthen internal accountability in addressing these areas of improvement. We also surveyed current officer needs and perceptions to provide the HPD with an updated gauge of internal work experiences. The internal and external environments that affect police departments and the law enforcement profession are in near-constant flux. While addressing a previous source of dissatisfaction is necessary and commendable, organizations must stay well-informed of emerging concerns that will inevitably continue to arise and affect officer motivation and morale.

Part I: Recommendations Progress Report

Findings from the Recommendations Progress Report describe the current status of each of the 74 recommendations made to the Hartford Police Department in 2020. Of the 74 recommendations laid out in the initial report, 48 have been implemented or sustained (64.9%), 22 are in progress (29.7%), and only 4 have not yet been started (5.4%). This summary provides a brief overview of actions taken in each of the seven different recommendation areas, but this is not exhaustive. The complete Part I report reviews HPD actions in detail alongside any additional recommendations for addressing these areas.

Recruitment and Selection

The HPD reports that it has updated both printed and online recruitment materials to include additional highlights that emphasize community-based and service functions of the job. Recruiters engage in both women-only and community-based outreach and information sessions to attempt to recruit underrepresented populations like women, racial/ethnic minorities, and/or Hartford residents to the HPD. Recruiters also publicize vignettes about the academy experience and hold virtual physical fitness training sessions for prospective applicants. The HPD has strengthened its selection process by evaluating its psychological examination phase to ensure the absence of discriminatory policies or practices. The HPD also tracks those who voluntarily withdraw from the process to gain insight into withdrawal patterns and reasons.

Critical to recruiting interested and qualified applicants is the ability to offer competitive salary and benefits packages as well as provide adequate work-life balance. In July of 2021, a mid-contract pay increase was provided to all employees at the rank of officer to increase retention. Although this increase only applied to officers, the HPD's approach aligned with findings from the 2020 report which noted the importance of increasing retention for patrol officers with urgency. The HPD and City of Hartford have also taken steps to improve officer salaries and benefits overall—with a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) including an 11% salary increase approved in October 2022—and these improvements are discussed in the Equipment, Resources, and Training section. Due to staffing shortages facing the HPD, officers have reported high levels of stress due to order-ins. In response, the HPD has considered officer and Hartford Police Union (HPU) input to continuously revise order-in policies to balance the necessity of maintaining minimum staffing while preserving as much schedule predictability and control as possible. Still, the formation of internal committees charged with increasing officer satisfaction and retention, especially in patrol, is needed.

Diversity in Promotions and Assignments

To help expose officers to more units and opportunities, The HPD maintains a temporary detective trainee position within the Investigative Services Bureau, though these opportunities have reportedly stagnated due to current staffing shortages. A mentorship program was implemented in December 2020 to pair new officers with senior officers who can provide support and guidance as they navigate the beginning of their careers. These relationships with senior officers are also likely to help officers navigate paths to promotions and special assignments.

To monitor diversity efforts, the HPD maintains a central database of requests for transfers and outcomes of internal position announcements. Ongoing review and analysis of this data is recommended to continue to refine diversity planning. The HPD has also created an Inclusion Officer position charged with fostering inclusion internally within the HPD and externally within the community. This Inclusion Officer has begun soliciting volunteers for an internal diversity and inclusion working group as well.

Transparency, Communication, and Fairness

In an effort to give officers more opportunities to provide feedback, the Planning and Accreditation Division solicits officer input from various departments on several policy and order modifications when feasible and appropriate. The HPD also seeks recommendations from employees through PowerDMS surveys and suggestion boxes. When order modifications are made, the Planning and Accreditation Division communicates the rationale when changes are sent out. Updates are also often discussed during in-person trainings.

To improve internal recognition and praise, the HPD held a formal awards ceremony to recognize officer achievements in 2022, and awards and gun seizure challenge coins are also presented during roll calls. In order to bolster communication between the administration and patrol officers, the HPD reports implementing a Duty Commander Rotation Program to assign Captains or Deputy Chiefs weekly to attend to responsibilities like attending roll-calls, providing training, and discussing ongoing projects. Though one of the objectives of this program is to open lines of communication and increase command staff visits to roll calls, officers themselves did not report noticeable efforts to increase command staff presence at roll calls or build authentic rapport.

Employee evaluations seek to increase transparency and, when implemented effectively, can provide evidence that officers are being treated and awarded positions/promotions fairly. The HPD convened a Performance Appraisal Committee to draft a policy and select performance evaluation management software. This committee selected an appropriate vendor and software and this has been purchased by the HPD. However, the implementation of this system has been delayed to avoid overlap with implementation of the new RMS. Given the ongoing stresses and concerns with the new RMS, as well as how these challenges may affect officer work effectiveness, the HPD has pushed the implementation of the performance management until these issues are rectified. The HPD reports that it hopes to roll out the performance management system in 2023. We encourage the HPD to continue working to put a performance evaluation system in place to ensure that all employees understand job performance expectations and reduce the likelihood of unfair treatment. Satisfactory employee records can protect officers from unfair accusations or denial of positions due to baseless claims of poor work performance.

Workplace Environment

The 2020 climate study suggested the existence of generational tension between junior and senior officers. The HPD's Career Development Division offers a mentorship program on a voluntary basis to help strengthen bonds between these groups. To improve well-being among all officers, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Coordinator is also working to arrange a trial period of an application called "Cordico" designed for first responder/police officer wellness and increasing accessibility to resources and services.

The HPD has also engaged in several activities to enhance departmental inclusion. Expanded cultural competency and diversity training was implemented in 2021. The HPD has also completed locker room renovations to increase the amount of female locker room space and they designed and opened a designated lactation room for female officers in 2022. These changes align with the HPD's efforts to fulfill their pledge to the 30x30 initiative (30% female officers by 2030) by building inclusive infrastructure. Command staff report meeting regularly with leaders

of fraternal organizations like the Hartford Guardians, Hispanic Officers Association, and POWER. Officers note that regular meetings with command staff have tapered, so we recommend opening regular lines of communication via quarterly e-mail check-ins even if there is no business to discuss in person.

Discipline, Misconduct, and Harassment

To make complaint and disciplinary processes more efficient, the HPD has aligned timelines for investigations of internal and citizen complaints, with both now due within 60 days. Since most internal complaints resulted from relatively minor workplace conflicts that festered or minor unintentional misconduct, we reiterate the need for the HPD to focus on the development and incorporation of internal procedural justice and conflict resolution training for both supervisors and officers. It should also explore the implementation of a mediation body or ombudsperson to provide guidance to help officers quash workplace conflicts instead of allowing them to fester. This can be implemented while still adhering to mandated reporting of harassment behavior. To address the second common source of internal complaints related to minor unintentional misconduct, the HPD drafted a new SOP for the Internal Affairs Division in late August of 2022. This procedure provides criteria for handling specific forms of misconduct using Counseling and Re-Training to correct deficiencies. This change offers a useful tool to improve workplace performance by recommending corrective action when investigations indicate unintentional minor deficiencies.

Officer Wellness

As previously mentioned, the HPD's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) coordinator and Planning and Accreditation Division have been charged with researching a smartphone application to increase access to counseling services. The 2020 Organizational Climate Study emphasized that officers in patrol in particular are stressed, overworked, and feel underappreciated. Thus, they should be a central focus of the HPD's efforts to build rapport and strengthen morale to improve officer wellness. A focus group to understand morale within the Patrol Division was also convened in March 2021. The resulting report provided a thorough summary of patrol officer concerns in a variety of areas that echoed findings of the 2020 Organizational Climate Study. However, several officers mentioned that they were unaware of specific responses from the police department leadership based on this report and most focus group study respondents did not mention that this process took place, suggesting that communication around these efforts needs improvement. We recommend that HPD command staff and supervisors focus on building rapport with officers and demonstrating a willingness to listen to and validate job-related concerns.

Equipment, Resources, and Training

The HPD has pursued ongoing adjustments to its order-in policy and maintains staffing level tracking systems in an effort to reduce overload in patrol wherever possible. However, impactful solutions are limited given severe staffing shortages facing the HPD and other departments nationwide since minimum staffing must be maintained in patrol divisions. Notably, the City of Hartford, Hartford Police Department, and Hartford Police Union negotiated a new

collective bargaining agreement in October 2022. This contract includes an 11% pay increase over the course of four years, taking steps to address one of the most prevalent concerns among officers participating in the 2020 Organizational Climate Study—comparatively low salaries and inadequate benefits for officers in Hartford.

The HPD's fleet manager has been tasked with conducted a life-cycle analysis of current vehicles. Though the PD reports obtaining 8 new vehicles and 7 used vehicles, officers continue to express frustrations with the department's cruisers. The HPD has taken steps to redesign cruiser logs and explore additional ways for officers to provide input on vehicle purchases and maintenance issues. A new records management system (RMS) from CentralSquare went live in the City of Hartford in May 2021. Since the system was selected and purchased by the City of Hartford Emergency Services & Telecommunications Department, the new RMS is not fully streamlined for sole law enforcement functionality. HPD officers have reported a number of issues limited their efficiency in responding to calls and writing warrants, and in response, the HPD has been actively working with the vendor to continuously update functions and shape the system in response to officer input.

Part II: Survey and Focus Group Results

To understand changes made over the past two years and their impact on HPD's working culture, we utilized surveys, focus groups, and secondary data analyses. Part II presents an assessment of departmental change over time in six key areas: 1) Staffing and Retention; 2) Transparency, Communication, and Fairness; 3) Workplace Environment; 4) Discipline, Misconduct, and Harassment; 5) Officer Wellness; and 6) Equipment, Resources, and Training.

Staffing & Retention

Staffing data provided by the HPD reports a total of 375 currently employed sworn personnel, which is a 7% staffing reduction from the 404 sworn officers reported during the initial 2020 Organizational Climate Study. Approximately 15% of the current sworn officers are female and 35% are racial/ethnic minorities. These proportions represent slight increases in gender and racial/ethnic diversity in comparison to 2020 data (14.1% were female and 32.9% were racial/ethnic minority officers). According to these data and analyses (non-significant z scores), both female and racial/ethnic minority officers are represented equally throughout the department when compared to the overall gender and racial/ethnic composition of the HPD.

Staffing challenges cannot be understood without carefully considering attrition, both in terms of "expected" retirements and other forms of job separation. In alignment with national trends, the HPD's turnover rate has increased over the last two years. The total number of employees leaving the HPD increased from 27 at its lowest in 2016 and 2017 to 51 at its highest in 2021. The main source of attrition has also changed. Prior to 2019, the main source of attrition was retirement, with few voluntary resignations. In 2021 the HPD lost 51 employees, 43 of which resigned and 2 of which retired. This mirrors law enforcement trends observed nationally, in which a "retention crisis" has resulted in a significant increase in voluntary resignations, while retirements and involuntary separations have largely remained stable.

Recommendations from the initial 2020 Organizational Climate Study emphasized the importance of increasing retention, especially among early career officers. In order to protect the investment associated with recruiting and training new hires, the HPD has worked to implement strategies to retain new recruits. As reported in the Recommendations Progress Report, the HPD's Career Development has created and implemented a voluntary Mentorship Program with graduates of the academy. Focus group data indicates that officers are aware of the HPD's goals and efforts for bolstering retention. The majority of focus group participants indicated that retention issues remain in the HPD despite recently enacted efforts. In addition to the mentorship program, several officers noted that key modifications to the collective bargaining agreement were designed to increase retention. Still, survey respondents frequently mentioned retention issues and staffing shortages as a significant source of workplace stress. Increased resignations and staffing shortages have led to order-in and hold-over policies and practices that further burden officers and increase their likelihood of leaving, thereby perpetuating the existing retention crisis.

Transparency, Communication, and Fairness

Very few differences existed between survey participants' perceptions in this area in 2022 versus 2020. Similar to previous findings, officers perceive moderately low qualities of transformational leadership within the HPD administration. Officers in patrol were significantly more likely to rate the police administration lower on the transformational leadership scale in comparison to officers working in other divisions. Consistent with 2020 findings, focus group participants continued to feel as though communication and transparency from leadership was lacking. Overwhelmingly, respondents highlighted the need for command staff to increase their contact with patrol, to seek their input on changes, and provide recognition for the extra work they've taken on. As discussed in the 2020 climate study, this tension between the police administration and line officers is prevalent in most police agencies, and it is a gap that administrators must deliberately and continuously attempt to bridge. Focus group respondents noted that officers felt unappreciated internally, more so than externally, but they did express gratitude that the HPD was able to hold an awards ceremony to honor current and past award recipients and also noted the efforts of immediate supervisors to praise officers and recognize good work.

Assessments of immediate supervisors were more favorable and indicated that most respondents feel their immediate supervisors demonstrate high levels of internal procedural justice. Focus group participants voiced fewer concerns and frustrations with their immediate supervisors in comparison to the police administration. Direct supervisors were often discussed in more supportive ways and several participants noted that sergeants and lieutenants were generally helpful and approachable. Concerns about adequate leadership skills that were brought up frequently in the 2020 report were not frequently raised in 2022 focus group data.

Survey respondents were also asked questions to assess officers' perceptions of fairness within the HPD both broadly and in terms of treatment and access to opportunities across various group identities (e.g., race, gender). Similar to 2020, results suggest that, on average, officers in the HPD do not strongly agree nor strongly disagree that officers are treated fairly regardless of

gender, race/ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The findings are generally consistent with those in the 2020 report; however, it is important to note that focus group data did not yield a consistent or prevalent concern regarding unfair processes in promotions and assignments. Although similar concerns may have persisted, they were not frequently brought up in interviews, nor were these concerns mentioned in feedback from survey respondents.

Workplace Environment

Overall, the majority of officers continue to feel supported and respected by their peers in the police department. Focus group respondents noted a lack of discord between officers, suggesting that internal peer conflicts may have decreased since the initial 2020 Organizational Climate Study Report. Some officers suggested that recently shared work stressors had brought people together, particularly those related to staffing issues and forced overtime. Others indicated that HPD personnel are civil in their interactions, with minimal workplace conflict reported. Focus groups also highlighted the implementation of peer mentoring among new academy graduates. Respondents generally showed support for this program, though staffing issues were discussed as a potential hindrance to its effectiveness.

Data gathered from focus groups suggests veteran HPD officers may experience distance from new officers in their approach to working in law enforcement. Some officers felt that newer personnel did not apply the same work ethic to policing and did not want to work to the level of expectation set by those who had spent more time with the organization. Focus groups suggested newer officers were more curious about the rationale behind decision-making in policing. These behaviors were seemingly informed by a lack of time spent in policing and a desire to understand their role more. Internal gossip and inappropriate social media posting presented notable concerns for officers in the initial 2020 Organizational Climate Study. However, respondents in September 2022 focus groups did not acknowledge either of these issues as organizational stressors. Although social media does not appear to present a paramount concern among respondents, the HPD should continue this process to increase transparency regarding expectations of HPD personnel's use of social media.

The 2020 HPD Organizational Climate study detailed a number of concerns raised by nonwhite, female, and LGBTQ+ officers with respect to exclusion, marginalization, harassment, insensitivity, and promotional discrimination. In contrast, 2022 focus group participants reported only the latter issue, feeling that women, LGBTQ+, and persons of color are underrepresented in promoted ranks compared to white males in the department. Importantly, changes to physical infrastructure have been observed following the initial report. In 2020, female officers reported that the locker room was of inadequate size for the number of women employed by the Department. Since 2020, a locker room for female officers has been integrated into HPD Headquarters, providing resolution for this issue. Female officers interviewed in 2020 also voiced suggestions for breastfeeding accommodations, as the original 2012 HPD infrastructure had

failed to adequately designate space for lactation rooms. Since this time, the HPD reports that a lactation room has been furnished and is available for use as of October 2022.

Discipline, Misconduct, and Harassment

In 2020, HPD interviewees highlighted a number of concerns related to inconsistency and favoritism in disciplinary processes and internal investigations. In contrast, 2022 focus group participants did not present much discussion around these issues. Instead, participants opted to address the citizen-based complaints and violations of HPD conduct that officers felt had garnered more attention from administrators and City leadership. Respondents noted that conduct violations related to wearing a mask in public interactions and using foul language during a citizen encounter were being punished. In particular, they felt frustration over how these violations were detected. Officers noted that when body worn camera footage is reviewed for a citizen complaint, it could end up resulting in punishment for violating masking rules or using inappropriate language (e.g., swearing) even when that was not the focus of the original citizen complaint. Respondents were also concerned about the increased potential for discipline when failing to submit reports in a timely manner. They noted that they understood this responsibility but highlighted it was unfair to punish delayed reports, as they felt staffing shortages had left them with more work, which led to more paperwork than previous years on the job.

This study utilizes a common characterization of sexual harassment as comprising three different types of behaviors: 1) unwanted sexual attention (e.g., unwanted advances, unwanted touching), 2) sexual coercion (e.g., bribes, threats for sexual activity), and 3) gender-based harassment (e.g., offensive, gender-based and/or sexist jokes and comments). Approximately 4% (N = 6) of the sample reported experiencing one or more of the two sexual attention harassment behaviors at least once in the last year and 2% (N = 3) of the sample reported experiencing one or more of the two sexual coercion behaviors at least once in the last year. Approximately 16% (N = 22) of respondents reported experiencing one or more of the four forms of gender-based harassment at least once in the last year. Approximately 11% (N = 15) of the sample reported at least one form of race/ethnicity-based harassment within the last year. Focus group participants did not mention concerns around gender- and race-based harassment, discrimination, exclusion, or cultural insensitivity in their responses. As a whole, these findings are generally consistent with 2020 findings and similarly indicate a continued need to work toward a harassment-free work environment as even one instance of harassment is problematic and worth addressing.

Officer Wellness

In 2022, the most common worrisome or stress-causing job-related factor among the sample was “insufficient health insurance benefits” with 76% of the sample responding in the affirmative, followed closely by “insufficient salary” with 74%. The third, fourth, and fifth most common stressors among 2022 respondents were “negative portrayal of law enforcement in the media” (63%), “negative public criticism of law enforcement officers’ actions” (60%), and “long

hours” (53%). Two of these stressors, salary and long hours, were highlighted by nearly every focus group participant as well. However, the new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) includes an 11% salary increase over a four-year period to ensure that HPD pay is competitive and fosters retention. The salary changes created by the new CBA were not yet in effect during the data collection phase of this study.

HPD personnel reported the most substantial increase in stress-causing occupational factors from 2020 to 2022 was related to working long hours. While this item was reported as a worrisome factor by 27% of respondents in the 2020 study, data from the 2022 survey indicates 53% of participants found the long hours spent on the job to be a primary stressor, an increase of nearly 26 percentage points. Common morale-related concerns reported by officers included low staffing levels, high workloads, and few opportunities for promotion and advancement. Other topics related to officer morale included feeling unappreciated, poor equipment, and low salary levels compared to other departments.

Survey responses suggest that officers are generally satisfied with their jobs using a scale consisting of seven items. Within this scale, respondents were least satisfied with the amount of support from the police administration and most satisfied with the amount of support from their family and friends. These findings align with results from the 2020 Organizational Climate Study. Compared to the previous study, 2022 respondents reported lower levels of work motivation and slightly higher levels of apprehension pertaining to instances in which use of force may be necessary. Focus group participants suggested that officers have felt more disrespected by the public since 2020 and do not feel supported by elected officials. These feelings have resulted in more apprehension toward the use of necessary coercive tactics.

Equipment, Resources, and Training

Overall, officers feel that staffing levels are too low and this hinders their ability to do their job safely and efficiently. While the order-in process has recently been overhauled to include all personnel on a list for mandatory overtime rather than only junior officers, challenges related to low staffing levels have caused a recent excess of order-ins. Focus group participants reported that all patrol shifts are at minimum staffing levels and officers often found themselves overextended in their work. Respondents also noted that reduction of staff has also impacted their abilities to respond to calls and complete paperwork in a timely manner. By attempting to meet the previous standard of call volume with fewer staff, officers may find themselves stretched thin, with little time afforded to complete reports by the end of their shifts.

Similar to the 2020 study, officers continued to express concerns related to department vehicles. Focus group respondents held that many of the Department’s cars have fallen into disrepair and experienced issues with maintenance, worn upholstery, and/or non-working lights and sirens. Focus group respondents also shared feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration in working with the updated CAD/RMS system. Notably, officers working patrol and in specialized divisions ranked CAD/RMS as their second-highest equipment-related priority. Officers often

found CAD/RMS to be time-consuming, lacking in user-friendly elements, and acknowledged that more hands-on training would be helpful for learning to work efficiently on the updated system. Issues related to the CAD/RMS system were described as improving over time, with major frustrations from the initial rollout being resolved, and other challenges popping up as the system has been in use.

Focus group respondents mentioned that HPD Academy administration had been helpful with notifying officers when various training sessions were made available. Some interviewees reported frustration with the lack of training available for new sergeants, lieutenants, and other supervisory positions. Others suggested that staffing shortages have made it difficult to incentivize training for HPD officers when they often felt overworked, and approved training requests would create overtime for their peers in their absence. Some officers felt their training requests were less likely to be approved because of low staffing, unless the training was required and pertained to their immediate position. However, HPD data challenges this latter point, indicating 36/38 training requests were approved in 2020 and 178/198 requests were approved in 2021. Because officers still *perceive* a lack of access to training, it may be helpful to offer transparency in decision-making when requests are denied.

Discussion

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which presented the HPD with new challenges to navigate, the Department has continued efforts on organizational improvement and has worked diligently to implement recommendations. The HPD has worked intentionally to address organizational shortcomings. Despite few major shifts being detected in officer perceptions, the changes made by the HPD in light of recommendations is praiseworthy. The findings associated with minimal shifts to workplace perceptions despite many critical modifications help to uncover a path forward. The findings presented in both parts of this follow-up study demonstrate that implementing and evaluating organizational change is necessary, but many of these changes cannot be “felt” when major challenges related to staffing remain paramount.

Findings clearly highlight that increasing staffing to reduce the burden of being overworked, particularly in patrol, is essential. This does not mean that the HPD should stop their efforts to address recommendations, but rather, it highlights that even well-intentioned efforts may not yield meaningful or measurable changes on desired metrics until primary staffing needs are met. Organizational change is a slow process and requires long term iterative adjustments. We recommend that the HPD continue to work toward addressing recommendations based on the findings presented here. Simultaneously, we recommend that the HPD focus on efforts to prioritize recruitment and retention. The findings in this report can assist the HPD as they continue to implement and assess recommendations going forward. The HPD’s ongoing pursuit of evaluations that utilize employee perceptions to gauge their organization’s climate positions them well for long-term improvement.

Part I: Recommendations Progress Report

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Study

In the fall of 2019, the Hartford Police Department (HPD) solicited an independent study to assess their internal climate and evaluate the workplace experiences of sworn personnel. A thorough assessment of the HPD followed, using data collected from interviews, surveys, and administrative records. The [Organizational Climate Study Final Report](#) resulting from this study examined HPD policies and practices and how organizational elements impacted workplace behaviors, perceptions, and experiences of agency employees. This report detailed findings and recommendations related to: 1) recruitment and selection; 2) diversity in promotions and assignments; 3) transparency, communication, and fairness; 4) workplace environment; 5) discipline, misconduct, and harassment; 6) officer wellness, and; 7) equipment, resources and training.

The purpose of the current study is to conduct a follow up to the HPD Organizational Climate Study. Following the submission of the Organizational Climate Study Final Report in August 2020, the HPD took a number of steps to address recommendations for improvement. The current section is part one of a two-part follow up study. *Part I: Recommendations Progress Report* follows the guidance of the initial report and highlights departmental responses used to address recommendations. The resulting progress report is intended to assist the HPD administration in addressing recommended goals and provide insight on the efforts made in organizational development since the initial report. In conjunction with this Recommendations Progress Report, a two-year follow up study of officer experiences and perceptions was conducted using surveys and focus groups of sworn officers in the HPD. The results of the latter analysis can be found in *Part II: Survey and Focus Groups Results*.

Part I Structure

Part I details findings related to how the HPD has addressed and implemented recommendations provided in the original 2020 Organizational Climate Study Report. The following section details the data sources and analytical methodology used in this evaluation. Findings from the Recommendations Progress Report are then presented to provide insight into the current status of each of the 74 recommendations made to the Hartford Police Department in 2020.

II. METHODS & ANALYTIC APPROACH

The 2020 HPD Organizational Climate Study yielded findings across seven key areas of interest which informed recommendations for organizational improvement within the HPD. Over the last two years, the HPD has taken steps to address these recommendations. The following Recommendations Progress Report describes the responses initiated by the HPD between September of 2020 through October of 2022. Data was obtained through two main sources: 1) administrative data and associated primary data (e.g., policies) and 2) focus groups with officers. This section describes the methodological approach utilized to complete the Recommendations Progress Report.

Administrative Data

We gathered information on each of the recommendations from the police administration. We were given access to the HPD's internal process of tracking the implementation of recommendations, which is referred to as the Organizational Climate Study Recommendation Dashboard. The dashboard includes each key area of findings, the recommendations proposed within each area, the response taken by the HPD to address the recommendation, and the current status of the response. One step to verify the information provided in this dashboard included the review of relevant primary data sources such as policies, emails, and other documentation.

Officer Focus Groups

Although administrative data is incredibly useful for tracking changes and new responses to address recommendations, it is curated by department leadership. In order to gain a broader perspective of changes over time, we also conducted small focus groups with 11 sworn HPD officers and met with the Hartford Police Union in September of 2021 to learn about ongoing challenges and perceptions of changes that occurred over the first year following the initial report. The focus groups were semi-structured in nature and included 16 questions. Participation was voluntary. The researchers emailed all sworn officers with a link to sign up for a focus group and obtained informed consent before the focus group started. Focus groups were not audio recorded. Instead, one researcher asked questions and the other took detailed notes to ensure all information was captured accurately. Notes did not include participant names or other identifying information. Each focus group lasted 1.5 to 2 hours. Information gathered through these focus groups offered important insight into the impact of the report recommendations, perceptions of change over time, and persistent or new challenges facing the HPD.

Analytic Approach

All data gathered for the Recommendations Progress Report was qualitative in nature and allowed the researchers to cross-reference changes described by the administration with relevant documentation and officer perceptions of departmental change over time. Based on this

process, each recommendation received a status designation by the research team. The three possible designations are 1) implemented or sustained, 2) in progress, or 3) not yet started.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED: The HPD has continued existing practices or it has taken action to fully address the recommendation.

IN PROGRESS: The HPD has taken steps to begin addressing the recommendation, but additional action is required.

NOT YET STARTED: The HPD has not yet taken action to address the recommendation.

The following section of this document describes the findings from the Progress Report by discussing the actions taken by the department, the feedback received from department members, and any further recommendations for action.

III. PROGRESS REPORT

As described above, the Recommendations Progress Report presents findings from the analysis of administrative data up to November 2022 and focus group data gathered in September 2021 and September 2022. Each recommendation from the original study is presented below along with our assessment of the actions taken by the HPD and feedback from personnel. To clearly designate the status of each recommendation, we note whether the recommendation was implemented/sustained, is in progress, or has not yet been started based on our assessment of the information analyzed.

We also want to note that we recognize the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and commend the HPD's efforts to implement recommendations during a period of significant change and unpredictability. This progress report is intended to assist the police administration as they continue working to address these recommendations and provide transparency on the current efforts.

It is critical to emphasize that long-term change takes time. Thoughtful and careful planning to address recommendations is key as rushed efforts may not yield the expected benefits. This mindset is important for improving the overall organizational climate of the HPD. This mindset also means that recommendations designated as implemented or sustained are not necessarily complete. To ensure that changes have the intended impact, even recommendations that are "implemented/sustained" or "in progress" should be ongoing rather than short-term, assessed to determine their effectiveness, and adjusted as needed.

Of the 74 recommendations laid out in the initial report, 48 have been implemented or sustained (64.9%), 23 are in progress (31.0%), and only 3 have not yet been started (4.0%). The details used to determine the designated status for each recommendation are provided below.

Recruitment and Selection

Recommendation 3.1: Develop recruitment presentations and materials that highlight the service/helping features of working in the HPD. Redesign brochures, flyers, and online pages to include photos and vignettes that highlight service.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that its presentations, brochures, and flyers have been updated. They state that the Recruiting Unit regularly posts vignettes on social media platforms that highlight police officers and recruits engaging with the community. The HPD indicates that their goal is to portray the varied functions within the department through these publications and postings. In particular, they note highlighting service to the community as well as the available career paths they offer such as Community Service Officers, Cadets, Honor Guard, and other specialized units.

The Recruiting Unit plans to add a link on the department website to ensure visitors to the webpage have access to the vignettes. The Recruiting Unit continues to host bi-weekly live streaming on Instagram where they invite sworn personnel from patrol and specialized units to speak about themselves and their work at the HPD. Recruitment flyers are also posted or provided in various public capacities such as Public Compstat meetings, on social media platforms, and at events such as career fairs and city athletic events.

The HPD does excellent work engaging with followers on social media platforms like Instagram. Further improvement to recruitment efforts could be aided by allowing more crossover between content on the HPD website and social media sites. For example, make sure that links to Recruiting Unit pages are accessible and highlighted on the department website. Ensuring that all platforms are updated regularly with information pertaining to training sessions and practice exams is key. The HPD should also continue to update platforms with relevant multimedia examples of service aspects of the job. Highlighting such features consistently is likely to attract candidates who may not realize they are fit for police work. Simultaneously, consistent and positive representation in recruitment materials and on public platforms also benefits community engagement broadly and fosters positive police-community relations.

Recommendation 3.2: Routinely host ‘Living Room Conversations’ away from the police department in neighborhood locations of civic importance.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reported two ways they approached this recommendation. They stated that the Recruiting Unit routinely hosts recruitment information sessions in the community, including at churches, schools, local organizations, Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Program meetings, and community centers. They also indicated coordinating community meetings and events through the Community Service Bureau such as a “Faith in Blue event” and other meetings with Hartford community groups. The meetings with community groups were described by HPD as being led by the host community group. The HPD reported that community groups often present an issue or concern that relates to crime or quality of life, and they brainstorm solutions together. They also highlighted recent events with faith organizations and places of worship regarding active shooter protocols.

Although the recruitment events are important, they are tangential to the goal of this recommendation. The focus of ‘Living Room Conversations’ is not explicitly recruitment. Instead of informational sessions, living room conversations center around particular community and policing topics with the aim of bridging gaps and building understanding between police and the community. These efforts should translate to community members better understanding the goals and values of the police and generate more willingness to assist, cooperate with, or join the HPD. The second approach described by the HPD does begin to address the goal of this recommendation. In particular, police-community events hosted and led by community groups to discuss concerns and potential

solutions with members of the HPD should continue to take place. The HPD should assess the distribution of these meetings to ensure all Hartford neighborhoods and varied community group interests are given the opportunity to discuss their concerns and build relationships with the HPD.

Recommendation 3.3: Host recruitment sessions that address and discuss the unique concerns that women, racial/ethnic minorities, and Hartford residents might have about working in law enforcement.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that the Recruiting Unit periodically hosts women-only information sessions and has sent recruiters to various businesses and community locations to increase recruitment efforts from underrepresented groups. Specifically, recruiters have spoken at barber shops and salons, churches, schools, and community centers. Although the pandemic forced these efforts to pause, the HPD intends to continue with this outreach model.

The women-only informational sessions are one component of the HPD's Recruitment Unit's efforts to increase women in the department. They also offer women-only practice written exams, agility preparation, and self-defense sessions. Other supportive sessions offered by the Recruitment Unit include report writing workshops, mock oral boards, and financial literacy info-sessions co-hosted with the Urban League. Many of these opportunities were offered in the Summer and Fall of 2022. The HPD plans to maintain these activities and should continue to engage in efforts that make these informational sessions more accessible (e.g., social media sessions and live streams). The HPD should also consider evaluating these sessions by gaining feedback from participants and incorporating suggestions when possible.

Recommendation 3.4: Convene a workgroup to explore changes to scheduling and time-off procedures that can improve work-life balance for current and future officers.

IN PROGRESS

The COVID-19 environment and escalations in police-community tensions over the past few years have made recruitment, retention, and fostering work-life balance difficult for many departments nationwide. The HPD's officers also report high levels of stress due to staffing shortages, order-ins, and an inability to secure time off to recover from these stressors. The HPD recognizes this as a critical issue and has worked to change different processes to improve work-life balance despite significant staffing shortages. The restrictions associated with staffing shortages and contractual obligations make it difficult to implement meaningful change. The HPD has revised their order-in policy over the last two years and although order-ins appear to be down on paper, the HPD recognizes that these efforts "have probably only mitigated work-life balance from becoming intolerable."

Due to staffing shortages, order-ins have increased, particularly for junior officers initially. To prevent junior officers from being constantly ordered-in, the HPD issued General Order 8.09 in June of 2021. This order adjusted the order-in procedure to include all members of the Patrol Division, regardless of seniority. The HPD reports that after consultation with the union, Command Staff, and various officers, this modification did not resolve the issue. A new system was then developed after further discussion with the union, Auxiliary Services, and the Command Staff. This new system was designed to reward volunteering to fill vacant shifts on patrol. Specifically, if an officer volunteers to fill a vacant shift they are recorded as a “1” and if they volunteer to fill two vacant shifts, they are recorded as a “2”, etc. This information is maintained by the Auxiliary Services Division and pertains to the four weeks prior. When a vacant shift is not filled using volunteerism, an order-in is used to fill it. The order-in process is then based on the recorded number, starting with the list of officers recorded as “0” (did not volunteer for any vacant shifts). When the list of “0s” is exhausted, they move on to the “1s” and so on. Additionally, this revised system incorporated a “pass” for each order-in cycle. Each officer gets one “pass” to decline an order-in, but they must take the next order-in shift when they are called upon. Although the goal of these changes is to reduce the risk of officers missing important, pre-scheduled events/obligations (e.g., family events) and increase schedule predictability and control of scheduling by having officers volunteer for vacant shifts, the result does not actually reduce the hours being worked.

Although this process indeed reduces the number of order-ins, volunteering for extra vacant shifts does not reduce the burden or stress associated with officers being overworked. More details pertaining to officers’ perceptions of changes to the order-in process can be found in Part II. To summarize, this solution only adds some level of scheduling control/predictability, but it does not reduce the number of hours patrol officers are working, overall.

A working group that prioritizes patrol officers is needed to better understand the personal impact these changes have made and strategize other tactics to improve work-life balance. Although the HPD reports that these changes were made through consultation with other officers, the consultation or working group did not include patrol officers. The HPD must prioritize work-life balance for members of patrol in order to maintain the personnel they currently have and increase retention of newly hired officers. It is important to note that the root cause of this issue is not the order-in policy per se, but rather in staffing shortages that prompt an overreliance on order-ins to provide necessary police services at below-minimum staffing.

Recommendation 3.5: Develop brochures and online documents that demystify the police academy experience for potential applicants.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD states that it uses social media platforms to produce 15-second vignettes about the police academy, including aspects like the classroom experience and physical fitness.

A Sergeant has been assigned to increase the HPD's online footprint and has recently incorporated social media "reels." The "JoinHPD" page on the Department website also has a summary of academy life and there is a specific website for disseminating information on the Academy experience. Plans to add photographs of the new Academy, new technology, and other related training improvements are underway. The Recruiting Unit will be working to embed links on the Department website to redirect visitors to the academy-related vignettes.

In conjunction with the changes already made by the HPD to increase their online presence in connection with the academy experience, we recommend that the HPD continue to work to demystify academy process. For example, though a summary of the academy is included on the HPD website, it may give potential recruits more insight to see an example schedule and a sample curriculum. There should also be more direct efforts to address elements that women in particular might be concerned about. For example, what does a typical workout look like, and what if a recruit is struggling with this element? How much ground-fighting, weapons training, etc. will be required in the training process? Often, these stereotypically masculine aspects of the academy can steer potential female recruits away. We recommend portraying these elements as important and necessary aspects of law enforcement, while making clear that this is only one small part of the broader police academy experience.

Recommendation 3.6: Host community focus groups centered on police recruitment strategies and messaging.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that it has partnered with national minority groups, HPD fraternal organizations, and local community groups to discuss recruitment strategies and will continue these efforts. The Recruiting Unit also sponsors practice written police exams and mock oral board examinations.

Recommendation 3.7: Continue to hold physical fitness sessions for prospective applicants. Incorporate these sessions into social media platforms to target those who might be unable to attend sessions due to work/familial responsibilities.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that it hosts physical fitness sessions at Bulkeley High School. However, due to the pandemic, live sessions were postponed temporarily. The Recruiting Unit later transitioned to online live fitness sessions to provide this opportunity in the pandemic context. The HPD reports that they have transitioned back to in-person physical fitness sessions. Given the HPD's use of virtual fitness sessions during the pandemic, it may be useful to consider offering this option on a routine basis to accommodate those who may not be able to attend in person for a variety of reasons. The HPD can reassess the need for virtual sessions based on attendance and demand.

Recommendation 3.8: Assess the psychological examination phase for exam components that might disproportionately affect racial/ethnic minority candidates.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that a review of the 2016-2018 police officer candidates who failed their psychological examinations was conducted by the Planning and Accreditation Division. They concluded that all disqualified candidates were disqualified based on automatic disqualifiers or were justified in writing by the examiner based on standardized procedures that are considered best practices for evaluating psychological exams in this context. Given the subjectivity of the latter disqualification type, they assessed these non-automatic disqualifiers further and concluded that candidates of color were disqualified at a rate within 1% of the white candidates disqualified for the same reason. The 2018 Diagnostic Analysis for the City of Hartford and HPD conducted by the DOJ-OJP Diagnostic Center is also being reviewed. As vendor contracts expire, the HPD has reported that it will assess other vendor options as well.

Recommendation 3.9: Continue the use of exit interviews with those withdrawing from the selection process and maintain a database for tracking and assessing patterns in these withdrawal reasons.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that the Backgrounds Division has tracked police candidate withdrawals from the background investigation phase since 2015. The Department will continue to request police applicant withdrawals and no-shows from the application phase to the start of the background investigation phase. The HPD reports that some challenges exist in maintaining consistent reporting from the City of Hartford's Human Resources Department.

Internally, the HPD has created a process where the Backgrounds Division provides withdrawals to Career Development. Career Development then reaches out to the individual for an exit interview and tracks the information collected using an Excel database.

Within the current process, we also recommend that the HPD embed the ability for timely analysis of data. Assessing patterns present in this database is important. Consider creating codes for withdrawal reasons to easily tally reasons and develop plans of action.

Recommendation 3.10: Compose an Employee Engagement and Retention Committee. Charge committee members with assessing employee needs and planning methods to boost engagement and satisfaction.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that action on this item has just started. A committee led by Career Development is in the process of being formed by soliciting volunteers from the HPD. Given that officers in our focus groups expressed numerous frustrations – some within and some outside of the control of the police administration – that have led to increased dissatisfaction and decline in morale within the police department, this Committee should be a priority to solicit honest officer feedback and respond appropriately.

Recommendation 3.11: Continue the use of exit interviews with all employees who resign and retain this information in a database for tracking patterns.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD experienced increased attrition in FY21 and FY22, and reports that it is making efforts to speak with as many employees as possible to identify the reasons for their departure and attempt to develop solutions to address common reasons for leaving.

As noted in Recommendation 3.9, Career Development is now reaching out to all individuals separating from the HPD to conduct a voluntary exit interview. The information gleaned from these interviews is being tracked in an Excel database. The HPD should also implement annual reviews of this data to reevaluate retention strategies. It is critical to ensure that this process goes beyond simply recording the reason for departure and to capture details of contributing factors to ensure in-depth data is gathered through these exit interviews.

Recommendation 3.12: Conduct “stay interviews” with early career officers every 18 months to assess what is going well and to identify any areas of concern for individual employees.

IN PROGRESS

In December 2020, HPD’s Career Development offered their voluntary Mentorship Program with the Police Academy graduates in 2020-1, 2021-1, and 2021-2. This program involves pairing a veteran officer with a graduating police recruit during their field training phase. The HPD notes that a similar program will continue moving forward at the beginning of the basic training academy session through the end of their police officer probationary period. The HPD also reports plans to add “stay interviews” with the newest group participating in the mentorship program and for officers currently on probation. The information gathered from these interviews will be tracked by Career Development. We recommend ensuring that these interviews take place through officers’ third year, which is a period in which turnover risk is highest.

Recommendation 3.13: Carefully examine surrounding salary and benefits packages. Work with the City to ensure fair compensation relative to surrounding and similar departments. Communicate the consequences for failing to offer comparable benefits.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

See Recommendation 9.3

Diversity in Promotions and Assignments

Recommendation 4.1: Explore and implement job rotation and/or job shadowing programs to expose officers to more opportunities and social networks.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

Beginning in 2017, the HPD implemented a temporary detective trainee position within the Investigative Services Bureau (Major Crimes Division, Vice and Narcotics, Crime Scene Division, or Special Investigations Division). Trainees job shadow investigators and assist senior investigators with higher level investigations, perform research and analysis of evidence gathered, and conduct other related work. These trainees may also be considered to fill vacancies within these divisions.

Though this program has stagnated as a result of staffing shortages, there are two current participants, and officers and detectives spoke highly of the detective trainee program during our interviews. We recommend expanding this initiative further when personnel resources allow. Shadowing programs can and should also be conducted within other divisions (e.g., traffic, community service officers, etc.).

Recommendation 4.2: Ensure that the most highly desired units (e.g., Major Crimes, VIN) are a focus of job rotation and other career development opportunities.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that it has offered job shadowing opportunities within the Investigative Services Bureau, including MCD, since 2017. However, we also recommend expanding career development opportunities geared toward these positions. Outside of job shadowing, officers may also be directed toward and considered for specialized training relevant to investigations, technology, crime analysis, vice, narcotics, etc. The HPD should also consider more informal and low-stakes opportunities to shadow specialized units. For example, allowing patrol officers to work a shift in divisions specified as areas of interest.

Recommendation 4.3: Solicit interest for the creation of a mentor network. Pair mentors with early career officers based on skills and interests.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that the Career Development Unit initiated a mentorship program in December 2020. The program began with three senior officers (one detective, one

sergeant, one officer) who volunteered their time to meet with new officers and serve as a guide and support system throughout FTO training and the beginning of their careers. The HPD reports that three graduates took advantage of the opportunity in 2020-1. This mentorship program has continued with seven participants in 2021-1 and two participants in 2021-2. Probationary officers are sent a letter from Career Development that includes an overview of the mentorship program and a form to complete if they would like to participate. A letter to all members of the HPD is sent out to solicit volunteer mentors. This letter summarizes the primary responsibilities of the mentor and emphasizes that the role is for support, rather than traditional FTO responsibilities.

In addition to the current volunteer-based mentorship program, the HPD could also consider linking all new officers with a mentor without the requirement that officers first express interest. Engagement with those mentors can be up to the officers, but offering all a designated resource should they need it may serve as an additional mentorship channel.

Recommendation 4.4: Maintain databases of applicants and outcomes for all internal positions. Assess reasons for position/promotion denial annually to develop new plans for career development.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that it has maintained a central database of requests for transfer applicants and outcomes of internal position announcements since 2014. The HPD also maintains a list of applicants for positions such as FTO and detective trainee. The HPD reports that promotional decisions are further recorded in personnel files and MUNIS applications, but an annual review of these data sources is not conducted and this data is not used to inform career development plans. Tracking data is important, but regular review and analysis is crucial. We recommend implementing a structured review schedule to assess disparities. While the HPD provides informal counseling to those who are not awarded promotions or assignments, we also recommend implementing a structured method of improving career development opportunities informed by officers' demonstrated goals and interests.

Recommendation 4.5: Form an HPD Diversity Task Force composed of officers invested in improving departmental diversity through fair, transparent, and just methods. Charge this task force with soliciting officer input, overseeing new initiatives, and monitoring diversity progress.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD states that it recently created an Inclusion Officer position. This role is currently occupied by a sergeant who is tasked with fostering inclusion internally, within HPD, and externally, within the community. The Inclusion Officer has solicited volunteers to form a working group to facilitate inclusion and fairness within the department. The HPD reports

that this working group will meet to work on implementing the tasks outlined in this recommendation.

Transparency, Communication, and Fairness

Recommendation 5.1: Command staff should seek input on potential orders and changes to policies from officers at all ranks in the HPD. Feedback should be solicited through multiple manners (e.g., forums, email) to ensure officers have the ability to offer input on changes prior to them being finalized.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that the Planning and Accreditation Division has continued to solicit officer input from various departments on several policy and order modifications “when feasible and appropriate.” One previous example was the creation of a committee to develop and implement the HPD’s Body Worn Camera policy. Since the initial report, the HPD has utilized this recommendation to create a committee charged with designing a new performance evaluation system (*see Recommendations 5.7 and 7.1*) and selecting body armor. Broadly, Planning and Accreditation has made an effort to be accessible to officers across ranks and solicits ideas for policy changes. If substantive changes are made that are not required by law, the Hartford Police Union is often contacted for input.

The HPD also reports seeking recommendations from employees through PowerDMS surveys and suggestion boxes. Roll call is also a time where opinions from officers may be gathered.

Committees are an excellent way to solicit feedback from personnel and increase agency over changes, there are also other useful channels to solicit feedback from those not serving on specific committees. We recommend that the HPD continues the use of committees for the initial phases of policy/order modifications and make this standard practice. In addition, we recommend the HPD utilize forums and email to provide ample channels for all sworn personnel to have a chance to learn about proposed changes, make suggestions, and ask questions before being finalized. We understand the PowerDMS is used to notify personnel about changes and requires personnel to read the new policy and sign off on it to acknowledge they read it. This practice should continue; however, it should not be the first time personnel are made aware of policy changes. Forums can be utilized for committees to present their work to other interested personnel and solicit feedback. Additionally, an email inbox monitored by the relevant committee would provide a supplementary avenue for personnel to provide input and ask questions. Given that focus groups repeatedly noted that they did not feel they had the opportunity to provide input on policy changes, it is important for the HPD to ensure that all sworn personnel are aware of all avenues of contribution. Additionally, the HPD should re-assess whether the modalities for providing input need to be modified in the future.

Recommendation 5.2: Modifications to policies and procedures should be disseminated to officers with thorough explanations as to why such changes are being made. Additionally, the expected benefits of any change should be included to create buy-in and reduce punitive tone.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that the Planning and Accreditation Division has included the rationale behind General Order modifications or updates when the policy or order is sent out to department personnel. When important policy changes are made, the HPD reports that they are often discussed in person through in-service training. Potential benefits associated with the policy change are also discussed when applicable. We reviewed several examples and recommend that the HPD continue to provide the rationale for changes, offer clarification to assist personnel with understanding what actually changed, and create opportunities for personnel to ask questions.

Recommendation 5.3: Command staff should consider the means of delivering updates to employees. E-mails are useful and create a paper trail, but face-to-face interactions can provide more detailed information, relay rationale, and facilitate input/feedback.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

In early 2021, the HPD implemented a Duty Commander Rotation Program. This program designates specific personnel at the rank of Captain or Deputy Chief on a weekly basis to provide overall command supervision and includes a number of responsibilities such as, responding to all critical incidents, monitoring resource management, ensuring inspections of equipment and vehicles are completed, and randomly reviewing submitted reports and body worn camera videos. Although many of the responsibilities of the Duty Commander are tangential to the proposed recommendation, one of the responsibilities—“Attend roll-calls, providing training, making announcements, discussing on-going projects and Departmental developments”—does outline a channel for command staff to deliver updates to personnel face-to-face.

The HPD reports an increase in formalized roll call trainings, specifying five formal roll call training topics in 2021 and seven in 2022, to date. These are designed to supplement the information to policy changes disseminated through PowerDMS. To ensure consistent training, information for formal roll call training is tracked and channeled through the Captain of Patrol.

Another way that the HPD has worked to increase face-to-face interactions for updates is by moving the location of three captain offices to the first floor in closer proximity to the roll call/report writing area. The physical location serves to foster increased contact and opportunities to provide feedback and ask questions about policy changes. Lastly, as a way to present the rationale behind some decision-making processes regarding policy changes, District Commanders now invite officers to attend Compstat meetings.

Recommendation 5.4: Command staff should develop a strategy to increase their visits to roll calls and build authentic rapport and relationships with rank-and-file officers. Such a strategy should be long-term and adaptive to needs.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that an additional objective of the Duty Commander Rotation Program (see *Recommendation 5.3*) is to increase command staff visits to roll calls. The January 15, 2021 Intradepartmental Memorandum notes one of the objectives for the Program is to “open lines of communication between rank and file officers and command staff and build morale and camaraderie, while setting clear expectations so officers can be successful.” Although this program arguably increases the interaction between command staff, particularly Deputy Chiefs, and the rank-and-file, the responsibilities of the Duty Commander do not directly align with Recommendation 5.4. Moreover, interviewed officers did not report noticeable efforts to increase command staff presence at roll calls or build authentic rapport.

This recommendation is designed to facilitate transformational leadership by increasing interactions and building relationships between the police administration and the rank-and-file. We recommend that the HPD make this a priority. The Chief, Assistant Chiefs, and other members of the Command Staff should regularly attend roll calls in a rapport-building capacity, rather than an oversight capacity. We recognize the vast responsibilities of the command staff and therefore, such a schedule should be adaptable. Importantly, we also recommend that the Chief and Assistant Chiefs make an effort to attend roll calls outside their scheduled time to offer the rank-and-file recognition and support.

Recommendation 5.5: Utilize formal annual award ceremonies and regular informal acknowledgements via email or recognition during roll call to highlight officers’ positive actions and good work.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD recognizes the value of both formal and informal forms of recognition for positive actions and good work. To recognize and motivate outstanding police work, supervisors are encouraged to use CompStat meetings, Unusual Occurrence Reports, and staff meetings to commend officers. Commanders are also tasked with filling out award forms. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, award ceremonies were not initially possible following the 2020 report, but an awards ceremony was successfully held in March of 2022. The HPD also reports presenting awards during roll call and implementing a “gun coin” program that acknowledges officers who seized an illegal firearm with a coin during roll call. This process was started in April of 2022.

Additionally, we recommend the HPD create a schedule to recognize outstanding internal and external work that may not rise to the standard of formal commendations. For

example, monthly or quarterly opportunities to recognize the strong work or admirable dedication of personnel in a more informal way (i.e., bulletin board, roll call, email, etc.).

Recommendation 5.6: Increase supervisor training to include/expand curricula focused on how to become a more effective leader and mentor.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that leadership training has been and continues to be an objective. They report that supervisors have been able to attend the FBI LEEDA training program and intend to make in-house supervisory training an annual event. Additionally, in 2020 the Hartford Policy Academy conducted supervisor-specific training on crowd control and critical incidents. All supervisors were required to attend supervisory training in March, June, or September of 2022. They have also reported sending supervisors to various related training opportunities including one attendee at the PERF/SMIP, one attendee at the Southern Police Institute AOC, and one attendee at the FBI's National Academy. In the last year, the HPD has also issued the following supervisory training: 1. Dean Crisp Leadership Training; 2. Intentional Leadership; and 3. Supervision, Leadership, and Mentoring seminar (POSTC). Lastly, the HPD reports more supervisory training being offered including Supervisory Liability training provided by Daigle Law Group.

Recommendation 5.7: Implement a performance evaluation management system for all personnel. This should be inclusive of periodic reviews, clear communication about expectations, progress monitoring, and conversations regarding feedback.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD convened a Performance Appraisal Committee to draft a policy and select a performance evaluation management software. This committee selected an appropriate vendor and software and this has been purchased by the HPD. However, the implementation of this system has been delayed to avoid overlap with implementation of the new RMS. Given the ongoing stresses and concerns with the new RMS, as well as how these challenges may affect officer work effectiveness, the HPD has pushed the implementation of the performance management until these issues are rectified. The HPD reports that it hopes to roll out the performance management system in 2023. It is unclear how or if this system will immediately or eventually include subordinate feedback regarding their supervisors. This recommendation is listed as "In Progress" because the Performance Appraisal System has not yet been implemented. We appreciate the HPD's careful considerations prior to rolling out this system. We would encourage the HPD to continue working to implement this performance evaluation management system and consider ways to discuss and address any concerns regarding through clear policies and operating procedures. The intentions behind this recommendation are to ensure all employees understand their job performance, and to generate conversations regarding improvement based on multiple evaluators and indicators of performance. Moreover, these types of performance evaluation systems can also serve an important purpose in

organizations where accusations of unfair treatment are made by fostering the collection of detailed records regarding performance and progress and increasing transparency.

Recommendation 5.8: Design and implement consistent posting and application procedures for positions and assignments.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD has completed a revision to General Order 8.12: Processing Requests for Reassignment. This order outlines the procedures for posting assignments and applying to assignments. It is important to ensure that these procedures are followed and re-assessed as needed.

Recommendation 5.9: Offer interviews to all candidates who meet basic qualifications for a position or assignment. If the number of applicants exceeds interview capabilities, make the criteria for interview invitation clear and transparent.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

Revised General Order 8.12: Processing Requests for Reassignment indicates that all applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a given position will be notified and scheduled for an oral interview. This order also notes that criteria and reasoning for final selection “will be objective and impartial and will be communicated to all applicants not selected” if the number of applicants exceeds interview capabilities.

Recommendation 5.10: Continue the use of assessment center testing processes for supervisory promotions.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The assessment center testing process for supervisory promotions has continued. Although the HPD notes that City Human Resources is ultimately in control over this, the Chief will recommend the continuation of this process.

Recommendation 5.11: Continue and consider expanding the use of the detective trainee program.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

See Recommendation 4.1

Workplace Environment

Recommendation 6.1: Increase training and programs for methods of informal conflict resolution.

NOT YET STARTED

This recommendation advises conflict resolution programs and training because a substantial portion of Internal Affairs incidents could have been handled informally prior to escalation. Although the HPD reports plans to engage in a training to help build a stronger understanding of brain development and behavior to promote officer wellness, this does not directly address the recommendation. The recommendation is focused on training to develop ways of addressing workplace disagreements to avoid further escalation. Action to address this recommendation has not yet begun.

Recommendation 6.2: Explore semi-annual opportunities for team-building sessions and events both at work and outside of work.

IN PROGRESS

The Department's various fraternal organizations and the Police Union sponsor social gatherings, community fundraisers, and competitive sporting events. Outside of these events, operational staffing requirements and staffing shortages currently limit the ability of the HPD itself to organize these activities. The HPD notes that they are struggling to get employee attendance for required in-service training due to staffing shortages and are unable to pursue similar opportunities until staffing increases. The HPD should continue to support and encourage events hosted by the Department's various organizations that strengthen connections among officers.

Recommendation 6.3: Build mentorship programs that focus on strengthening bonds and increasing mutual understanding between younger and more senior officers.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD's Career Development Division offers a mentorship program on a voluntary basis (see *Recommendation 4.3*). The program pairs a veteran officer with a graduating police recruit during their field training phase. The HPD reports that a similar program may be offered on a voluntary basis moving forward from the start of the basic training academy session through the end of their police officer probationary period (18 months). The HPD notes that a third phase could be developed to expand the program as a pilot for officers and detectives in years 3-5, first year detectives, and first year supervisors, in an effort to prepare officers for advancement and promotion.

Recommendation 6.4: Review and strengthen policies regarding workplace gossip and social media activity.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD acknowledges that controlling workplace gossip is extremely difficult for any employer. Their recommended resolution is a mandatory annual review of City of Hartford harassment policies and those specific to the Department. The HPD also reports

that the Code of Conduct review committee is currently underway and one aspect of their charge is to consider if social media/technology should be added to the document.

Recommendation 6.5: Direct additional administrative and peer support resources toward officers targeted in online outlets.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Coordinator, in conjunction with therapists, monitors situations that become public in nature through media outlets. Once identified, the affected officers are referred to counseling. If an officer advises they are seeking therapy because they have become subject of media stories, the therapist advises the EAP coordinator. The HPD also reported that the EAP Coordinator is working to arrange a trial period with an app called “Cordico” designed for first responder/police officer wellness.

Recommendation 6.6: Implement cultural competency curricula to aid officers in identifying and/or addressing insensitive and offensive comments.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that a private vendor was contracted to produce an online training program for the Department covering cultural competency and diversity. This is a two-hour block of training for which officers received credit toward recertification with POSTC. This training program was released in 2021 and all HPD officers completed the program. The training program was also considered required material for recent promotional processes. The 2021 Captain and Lieutenant promotional exams asked questions based on this training material.

Recommendation 6.7: Charge the Diversity Task Force (see Section IV) with creating specific divisional/positional diversity goals in consideration of their roles, responsibilities, and impacts.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

See Recommendation 4.5

Recommendation 6.8: Offer support and seek ways to expand open communication channels with the Hartford Guardians and Hispanic Officers Association.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that it has implemented quarterly meetings with all fraternal organizations. The HPD feels that this has been a great opportunity for open conversation where new ideas can be given attention. These meetings can also serve as an informal line of communication between officers and command staff.

Our focus groups and conversations with command staff indicate that these meetings have tapered off over the past several months. While some organizations may not have quarterly business or concerns to discuss, the HPD should utilize proactive e-mail contact quarterly to extend meeting invitations for those who wish to discuss any items or concerns of importance. Even when organizational leaders do not wish to meet in person, this activity will keep lines of communication open.

Recommendation 6.9: Continue working to address the infrastructure shortcomings that negatively impact the experiences of female officers.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that the Personnel Division will continue to liaison with the Public Works Department and advocate for infrastructure improvements. The City completed locker room renovations this year to increase the amount of female officer locker room space. The HPD has also created a designated lactation room for female officers and furnished the space with the necessary components. These changes align with the HPD's efforts to fulfill their pledge to the 30x30 initiative (30% female officers by 2030) by building inclusive infrastructure. This is important as recruiting female officers is the first step, but retaining them by building an inclusive workplace is an essential second step. The HPD should seek input from personnel using these spaces to ensure they are operating as intended.

Recommendation 6.10: Consistently review and revise sexual harassment policies to ensure they communicate intolerance and emphasize strong disciplinary responses, but implement such policies alongside informal channels for reporting harassment behaviors to reduce the risk that victim reporting will decrease as disciplinary severity increases.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

HPD policy regarding sexual harassment is established by the City of Hartford (COH006). The HPD reports that channels of reporting are established in the sexual harassment policy: oral or written reports to the department head, the deputy department head, chief operating officer, or the Human Resources and Labor Relations Department. The HPD reports that the creation of additional reporting channels would violate City policy.

Recommendation 6.11: Offer support to the newly developed POWER group as it seeks to increase connection among female officers.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that Chief Thody encouraged the formation of POWER and has met with the president of POWER, Officer Tiffany Wilson, several times since the inception of the group. Chief Thody has quarterly standing meetings and/or check-ins scheduled with her and other leaders of fraternal organizations going forward (*See Recommendation 6.8*).

Discipline, Misconduct, and Harassment

Recommendation 7.1: Performance evaluation systems are needed throughout the HPD. 360 evaluations will allow subordinates to provide feedback on their supervisors. All officers should be evaluated regularly to increase officer accountability, utilize objective criteria for personnel decisions, increase transparency, and build feedback systems.

IN PROGRESS

See Recommendation 5.7

Recommendation 7.2: The HPD should consider modifications to the promotion policy to increase transparency for all candidates who are denied a promotion regardless of the number skipped.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that their existing promotion policy is required for accreditation and is administered by City Human Resources and the Labor Relations Department. HPD has reported making suggestions to City Human Resources to ensure the eligibility requirements, application, and testing process are accurately published. We recognize that the HPD cannot directly control this.

The HPD reports that supervisory promotional processes utilize an outside testing vendor that offers transparent instructions for the assessment process. Additionally, this vendor allows candidates to receive their written exam scores upon leaving the testing room. The other assessment portion is video recorded and scored by a panel outside of Connecticut who is not affiliated with the HPD or City. An appeal process is provided to those who do not agree with their score, inclusive of the assessment center rescoring the assessments.

Lastly, HPD reports that candidates who are skipped are offered the opportunity to speak with the Chief to learn more about the rationale behind the decision.

Recommendation 7.3: Supervisory training needs to be bolstered and an increased focus on internal procedural justice is critical.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that procedural justice has been added to the POSTC mandatory curriculum training as a new topic. As of July 2021, all officers will take part in at least one hour of training tri-annually on procedural justice. The HPD reports that the academy does not yet have an in-house instructor for this topic but is planning to identify an instructor to send to a “train-the-trainer” opportunity when it becomes available. Additionally, procedural justice will become part of annual supervisory training. The HPD also reports that 21st Century Policing is required reading for promotional exams which

highlights both internal and external forms of procedural justice and referenced the DLG Supervisor Liability Training as one that addresses procedural justice.

It is unclear whether the new POSTC training topic on procedural justice incorporates both external and internal procedural justice. Although both are critically important, we recommend that the HPD review the new curriculum to determine if internal procedural justice is included and adequately covered. Internal procedural justice is centered around fairness in decision-making processes and focuses on treating personnel with respect, creating space for all voices when making decisions, along with demonstrating neutrality and trustworthiness when making decisions.

Recommendation 7.4: Conflict resolution training/counseling should be implemented and required for all HPD employees.

NOT YET STARTED

The HPD indicated that a collaboration with the City's Human Resources and Labor Relations to educate officers on subjects like discrimination and harassment is possible. The HPD reported that part of the training would help educate officers on how to handle such workplace incidents. We recommend that the HPD prioritize training specific to conflict resolution. Conflict resolution skills can be taught outside the scope of the described City training. (*See Recommendation 6.1*).

Recommendation 7.5: Remedial options for addressing workplace conflict are needed in the HPD. A mediation body or police ombudsperson should be considered.

NOT YET STARTED

The HPD reports that this recommendation is impractical based on the City's zero-tolerance policy on harassment. We recognize that incidents of harassment must follow City-specific reporting procedures. This recommendation is intended to facilitate positive working relationships among employees by offering an avenue to address minor workplace disagreements such as differences of opinion, misunderstandings, and miscommunications that may not involve allegations of harassment. Findings from the 2020 Organizational Climate Study suggested that minor disagreements or personality differences often spiraled into larger and longer-term conflicts. Establishing a mediation body or ombudsperson can provide guidance to help officers quash workplace conflicts instead of allowing them to fester, and policies may be established to advise officers that disclosures of harassment behavior must be reported by the mediator. We encourage the HPD to continue exploring these programs.

To address internal complaints related to minor unintentional misconduct, the HPD drafted a new SOP for the Internal Affairs Division in late August of 2022. This procedure provides criteria for handling specific forms of misconduct using counseling and re-training to correct deficiencies. Although this change offers a useful tool to improve

workplace performance by recommending corrective action when investigations indicate unintentional minor deficiencies, it does not directly target the need to reduce workplace conflict noted in this recommendation.

Recommendation 7.6: An external review of the HPD's harassment training should be conducted to determine if any curricula deficits exist and then subsequently addressed. Additionally, appropriate conduct learned during harassment training must be modeled and reinforced in practice across all areas of the department.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that all employees completed a series of workplace harassment trainings that were developed by City Human Resources. In addition, the Corporation Counsel reviews harassment and other mandatory topics annually. We recognize that the training may be outside of HPD's control. We recommend that the HPD work collaboratively with City Human Resources and Corporation Counsel to ensure the harassment training aligns with the needs unique to a police department setting. This will illuminate whether additional training on harassment is necessary for the HPD.

Recommendation 7.7: Participatory training sessions focusing on appropriate workplace behavior should take place annually, especially for those in supervisory roles who must set an example to others.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports the use of several methods to inform employees of City and Department policies and procedures including written communication, PowerDMS modules, and videos. They note that training will be dictated by City Human Resources and POSTC. Although the aforementioned methods are useful for disseminating information about workplace policies and procedures, we recommend the use of participatory training that fosters direct involvement from employees through scenario-based activities. The intention is to cover common workplace interactions that may be more susceptible to inappropriate conduct. Additionally, individuals in supervisory roles should participate to ensure they are modeling appropriate workplace behavior to subordinates.

Recommendation 7.8: The HPD should increase cultural competency and sensitivity training for all officers.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that all officers have completed a two-hour training on cultural competency and diversity hosted by an outside vendor. The HPD contracted a private vendor for this training and it gives officers credit toward POSTC recertification. We recommend the continued use of this training and future evaluation to determine effectiveness.

Recommendation 7.9: In order to ensure a fair investigatory process, investigations into misconduct and disciplinary action resulting from an investigation should not be influenced by political pressure or media attention.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that employees can file a union grievance if they are unsatisfied with the results of an internal investigation and hearing. Additionally, civil lawsuits against the City and Department can be filed if officers feel their case was influenced by political pressure or media attention. The HPD reports that any additional efforts to comply with this recommendation, such as an independent review board, would require changes to the CBA. We recommend the HPD and Hartford Police Union work collaboratively to determine if additional measures are needed.

Recommendation 7.10: Misconduct reporting procedures should be reviewed and reiterated to all HPD employees. Expeditious reporting of misconduct is critical.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that the Planning and Accreditation Division will establish a yearly review of General Order 3.01, Use of Force – General, and Duty to Intervene. HPD reports that they will review these orders annually to ensure HPD employees understand the procedures for reporting misconduct and make necessary adjustments. HPD also reports that General Orders related to citizen complaints have not been modified due to Federal Consent Decree. However, officers are now required to report any type of misconduct under the Police Accountability Bill. Training for Duty to Intervene was distributed to all sworn personnel in November 2020. The HPD also reports that misconduct reporting procedures are taught to all new recruits and reiterated in other in-service trainings.

Recommendation 7.11: IAD should immediately assess the working relationship between the parties involved in a complaint and prioritize cases accordingly.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that recent changes have aligned the timeline requirements for I-Files and citizen complaints. Both are now due within 60 days. HPD notes that IAD now assesses the working relationship of parties involved upon intake and makes appropriate changes when needed and feasible. Specifically, IAD considers the amount of contact the parties could potentially have if no adjustments were made. HPD reports that this process is part of IAD's standard operating procedures.

Recommendation 7.12: IAD investigators should take extra care to separate the time and location of interviews to minimize the likelihood of deductive identification and contact between parties involved.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that IAD works to develop a schedule to help ensure that involved parties do not cross paths when taking part in IAD interviews. They also note that IAD is located in a dead-ended hallway which adds some level of isolation from other employees.

Recommendation 7.13: The HPD should be mindful of how they can maintain the integrity of IAD. Efforts should be undertaken to increase IA separation to reduce the likelihood of becoming overly responsive and sympathetic to either management or line officers.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD notes that although the location of IAD is sufficiently separated from day-to-day activities of line officers, it is the closest office to management. To alleviate the concerns underlying this recommendation, more physical separation would be required, but this would require physically moving IAD which is not feasible at this time. The HPD reports that all IAD investigators are trained to remain fair and impartial.

Officer Wellness

Recommendation 8.1: Develop collaborative and creative long-term strategies to make officer salaries and benefits in the HPD competitive.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

See Recommendation 9.3

Recommendation 8.2: Although proactive strategies to reduce stressors are critical, not all stressors can be addressed. The HPD should make visible efforts to remove barriers to help-seeking and provide accessible and free counseling options to assist officers.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reported that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) coordinator and Planning and Accreditation staff were charged with researching a smartphone application to increase access to counseling services. The EAP Coordinator is working to arrange a trial period with an app called “Cordico” which is designed for first responder/police officer wellness. They submitted a request for funds to obtain the app. (*See Recommendation 6.5*).

Recommendation 8.3: Although it is nearly impossible to control external stressors (e.g., negative media portrayal), internal gossip can be addressed through cultural shifts that focus on accountability and transparency. Recommendations throughout this report that aim to improve the organizational climate overall can help create a department that does not tolerate harmful internal gossip.

IN PROGRESS

See Recommendation 6.4

Recommendation 8.4: The HPD should develop strategies to bolster rapport between supervisors and subordinates, particularly in patrol, to identify and address areas of concern that impact job satisfaction.

IN PROGRESS

A focus group to understand morale in the Patrol Division was convened in March 2021. This focus group was organized internally by a Patrol supervisor who solicited participation from a diverse group of officers across shifts and varying lengths of tenure. The resulting report provided a thorough summary of patrol officer concerns in a variety of areas that echoed findings described in the 2020 Organizational Climate Study. The 2020 Organizational Climate Study emphasized that officers in patrol are stressed, overworked, and feel underappreciated. Thus, they should be a central focus of the HPD's efforts to build rapport and strengthen morale. The patrol focus group report provides valuable feedback for the police administration and supervisors to take steps to address relayed concerns.

Although this approach is useful to gain additional insight into officer experiences and concerns, it was not mentioned in focus groups with sworn personnel. However, several officers mentioned this focus group report in conversations with researchers during roll call visits. These officers praised the work of Patrol Division supervisors to solicit and report this honest feedback, but many described a lack of direct response by the police administration and felt that this input was not validated or valued.

We recommend that the HPD focus on building opportunities for more informal conversations between supervisors and subordinates to build rapport and demonstrate a willingness to listen to job-related concerns. We also recommend that the HPD take steps to provide feedback and validation of concerns brought up in the Patrol focus group along with taking any additional action necessary and feasible to address these concerns.

Recommendation 8.5: A task force consisting of primarily patrol officers should be developed to seek officer input on challenges and solutions to increase job satisfaction, work motivation, and reduce cynicism.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that the Patrol Division Morale Focus Group was convened for this purpose. (*See Recommendation 8.4*).

Equipment, Resources, and Training

Recommendation 9.1: Explore deployment schedules and staffing needs to reduce task overload, especially in patrol.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that it would only be able to fully address this issue with a fully staffed relief list, but current patrol staffing numbers do not allow for this. The HPD notes that it must ensure priority staffing in patrol and avoid reassigning officers currently in patrol in order to address task overload to the best of its ability. The Administration noted that a potential solution may be to consider deploying walk beats under the patrol umbrella. Walk beat officers would be able to take calls for service, fill vacancies, and help reduce forced overtime. Though staffing shortages have created frequent order-ins, the HPD has noted that order-ins are not a long-term solution.

During our focus groups, officers frequently identified order-ins as a significant area of concern and frustration. In June 2021, under G.O. 8.09, the HPD implemented a procedure to fill vacancies via reverse seniority. In October 2021, the HPD issued a memo suspending this order-in process through January 1, 2022, with Chief Thody noting that, “it has become clear to me that alterations to the order-in process are necessary to protect work-life balance.” This memo outlines a method to fill Patrol overtime in which officers who volunteer and are hired for overtime shifts are able to reduce the likelihood that they are ordered-in for an involuntary shift.

Under the new procedure (*see also Recommendation 3.4*), officers are marked by the number of overtime shifts they have taken in the four weeks prior (e.g., a “1” for one shift, a “2” for two shifts). The policy states that when a shift cannot be filled using volunteering officers, “an officer listed as ‘0’ for that week will be ordered-in first. This process will continue until all of the ‘0’s’ for that week have been ordered in, at which point officers listed as ‘1’ will be ordered in next.” The HPD also reports the opportunity to skip/pass one order-in per cycle, but if they pass, they must come in for the next shift they are ordered in for. This is a commendable effort to be responsive to concerns brought by officers and the Hartford Police Union, however, focus group data reveals that the only added benefit is the reduced uncertainty patrol officers have regarding their schedule. If they volunteer for an extra shift or two, they know when they are working and can better plan family and life engagements. This is an important benefit, but it does not appear to have reduced the demand experienced by patrol officers. Moreover, this approach will reduce order-ins, but replaces them with volunteered overtime and may incentivize working two extra shifts per week, contributing to fatigue.

We understand the staffing challenges that the HPD has to navigate are complex and patrol shifts must be filled to ensure adequate coverage and public safety, but this change is not a long-term solution. Increasing staffing within patrol is critical in order to meaningfully reduce the burden patrol officers are experiencing.

Recommendation 9.2: Given officers’ concerns regarding how retirements may affect staffing levels, ensure that recruitment and staffing plans are revised annually to plan for years at risk for significant agency turnover.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that staffing level tracking has been in place and is actively monitored throughout the year. Recruitment and staffing plans are updated annually during the budget process. The Department has not been able to reach its hiring goals and vacant budgeted positions remain unfilled; however, the renovated and expanded academy can now accommodate larger and concurrent classes. The HPD reports that the largest recruit class in years is set to graduate in January of 2023 (23 recruits). They also report using staffing tracking and recruitment efforts to fill vacancies as fast and productively as possible to be well-positioned for anticipated retirements. These steps are critical, but it is also important to recognize the reality of the current staffing situation. Given the elevated rate of voluntary resignations and anticipated retirements, the HPD will have to work aggressively to hire above their full strength size to increase and maintain adequate staffing. *(See Follow Up Part II for additional details regarding attrition and agency turnover).*

Recommendation 9.3: Collaboratively engage the HPD, City of Hartford, and the Hartford Police Union to develop and adopt comparative salary and benefits packages to improve officer hiring, retention, and job satisfaction.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that the Planning and Accreditation Division obtained copies of collective bargaining agreements, salary tables, and benefit packages from capital region police departments for comparison. In July of 2021, a mid-contract pay increase was provided to all employees at the rank of officer to increase retention. Although this increase only applied to officers, the HPD's approach aligned with findings from the 2020 report which noted the importance of increasing retention for patrol officers with urgency. As of October 30, 2022 a new collective bargaining agreement between the City and HPU was put in effect. The new contract gives all ranks above officer a pay increase to maintain the wage gap between ranks. The contract also includes an 11% pay increase over the course of four years. The HPD reports that these increases put the Department's pay at a competitive rate in line with comparable departments in the state.

We commend the HPD for their efforts to increase employee salaries and would encourage them to continue to assess ways to ensure their department is competitive in terms of pay and benefits over time.

Recommendation 9.4: Conduct a comprehensive life-cycle analysis of the HPD fleet and solicit officer input regarding operational and maintenance shortcomings. Make the report of this examination available to officers.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that the Fleet Manager has been tasked with conducting a vehicle life-cycle analysis through consultation with the DPW Fleet Vehicle Superintendent and MUNIS software to determine: average miles driven, total cost of ownership, recurring causes of motor vehicle accidents. The report will be made available when completed, but preliminary data indicate that the average mileage and age of all marked vehicles, including spare vehicles, is 78,000 miles and 8 years. The average mileage and age of primary line cars is 69,000 miles and 7 years.

Despite recent supply chain issues, the HPD reports that they have obtained 8 new vehicles and 7 used vehicles to incorporate into the fleet. They also report obtaining enough funds from car accidents involving cruisers to pay for 3 additional new vehicles.

We recognize the complexity of current market delays related to supply chain issues and commend the HPD for procuring these vehicles. Based on findings from focus groups, we would encourage the HPD to keep this recommendation a priority and ensure that new vehicles are allocated to the patrol division, as their vehicles experience the most wear and tear.

Recommendation 9.5: Collaborate with internal fleet management and the City of Hartford to improve procedures for reporting, tracking, and resolving cruiser maintenance issues.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD redesigned their cruiser log form to better track and hold supervisors accountable for periodic maintenance on fleet vehicles. We recommend that the HPD solicit feedback as to whether this has actually improved cruiser maintenance procedures. We also recognize that resolving vehicle maintenance issues is outside of the HPD's direct purview.

Recommendation 9.6: Solicit officer input regarding the models and features of future fleet purchases.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD reports that they have a standing Fleet Committee. They note that they could use the PowerDMS software application to conduct a survey soliciting officer input on practicality or current vehicles and what considerations should be made in future purchases. The HPD also noted that it will consider expanding the role of the Fleet Committee to help disseminate information (e.g., deployment reasoning, purchase process, vehicle research, etc.), but given current supply chain issues, they are unable to obtain specific vehicles and need to consider what is realistically available.

Recommendation 9.7: Ensure that an RMS system is fully operational and deployed department-wide as soon as possible to minimize officer frustration and task overload.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The new CAD/RMS system from Central Square went live in May of 2021. The system was selected and purchased by the City of Hartford Emergency Services & Telecommunications Department. HPD officers had initially reported a number of issues limiting their efficiency responding to calls and writing warrants. To address these issues, the HPD has been actively working with the vendor to continuously update functions and shape the system in response to officer input. The HPD reports that everyone received training on the new system. Focus group data suggests that additional avenues for assistance with troubleshooting CAD/RMS issues may be worth exploring.

Recommendation 9.8: Make procedures for reporting issues like broken computers and supply shortages more efficient. Enforce a timeline for response and resolution by administrative personnel.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD notes that a procedure was issued by e-mail to all employees outlining steps for reporting IT issues and supply shortages. An e-mail provided by the HPD specifies that any supervisor in need of supplies should gain authorization from the HPD's designated point of contact. They have designated a point of contact within the department for employees who cannot get IT issues resolved in a timely manner. Additionally, the HPD reports that they are in the process of replacing outdated desktop computers.

Recommendation 9.9: Consider additional opportunities for the Uniform Committee to solicit and review line officer feedback, explore uniform options, trial new equipment options, and provide recommendations to the administration. Ensure that reports of recommendations and trials are made available to officers for review.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that their uniform committee hosted numerous uniform manufacturers to provide detailed presentations about their products. Various officers then participated in wear tests and submitted feedback to the uniform committee. The committee decided to retain their existing manufacturer, but they did switch to an off-the-shelf shirt and pants which reduced approximately 6 months of lead time in the uniform ordering process. They are also made with a different performance material and the HPD reports that responses have been positive. The department reports that it has also purchased 200 winter coats for patrol, traffic, CSOs and command staff. The HPD says that the Uniform Committee will continue to meet on a regular basis with the goal of always improving, and bettering the uniforms, equipment, and the process. In addition, we recommend that the HPD find ways to disseminate summaries of product presentations, evaluations, and purchasing decisions to foster more positive perceptions of the decision-making process.

Recommendation 9.10: Collaboratively engage the HPD, City of Hartford, and the Hartford Police Union to explore reasonable amendments to the uniform allocation/allowance procedures.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that they have created an email address to collect officers' uniform concerns. Per the new CBA effective October 30, 2022, a new uniform stipend with online ordering system was made available to enable officers to have more control over obtaining the equipment and uniforms they need.

Recommendation 9.11: Officers desire more training in high-stakes law enforcement situations. Increase training in areas like active shooter response and crowd/riot control so that officers will be more likely to deploy measured, rational, and informed responses to potential use-of-force encounters.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that all supervisors received riot/crowd control training in 2021 and the Department is currently conducting an active shooting training. In addition, the HPD reports recent training related to stop stick deployment and vehicle extraction.

The HPD reports that it values the use of hands-on simulated training because it will provide a significantly higher benefit than a static classroom setting. They feel that simulation and practical applications are ideal as they reinforce training and allow for a more comprehensive learning experience. After considering potential locations to appropriately conduct simulation training at HPD operated facilities, the HPD decided to repurpose an old locker room from their property at 50 Jennings Road. The current active shooter training is reportedly utilizing this space for simulation training.

Recommendation 9.12: Develop and implement training in response to officer feedback regarding the need for more education in cultural understanding, bias, and de-escalation actions. Seek the involvement of both police practitioners and area experts to collaborate in deploying these training sessions.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD has administered an online training module to heighten cultural understanding among officers (*See Recommendation 6.6*). The HPD also reports that Chief Thody brought Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) to HPD in 2014 and oversaw instruction of the program to the entire department as well as state's attorneys and other outside entities. Since that time, all recruits attending the Hartford Police Academy have completed training in Fair and Impartial Policing and POSTC has recently incorporated the program into Basic Recruit Training. The FIP curriculum focuses on implicit bias and methods to counter the effects of bias in officer decision-making. Though officers receive a core level of de-escalation training in the Training Academy, we recommend the department seek additional opportunities to develop and implement further curricula to expand and practice these skills.

Recommendation 9.13: Develop additional training curricula to enhance officer confidence in responding to people with physical/intellectual disabilities and people with mental illness. Seek the involvement of both police practitioners and area experts to collaborate in deploying these training sessions.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD reports that the Training Academy has worked collaboratively with representatives from the Connecticut Department of Development Services and the Capital Region Mental Health Center to provide enhanced training opportunities for all officers concerning interactions with persons with developmental/intellectual disabilities and mental illness. Still, officers reported less confidence in this area despite this training. We recommend reviewing training and seeking opportunities to increase practical applications of the information and techniques learned in these sessions. The Department should also seek opportunities to debrief encounters involving subjects with physical/intellectual disabilities or mental illness as an avenue for reinforcing lessons learned.

In tandem with the changes noted above, the HPD is now working with crisis response teams (CRT) which consist of unarmed civilians (i.e., a social worker and peer). These teams can respond independently to calls for service related to mental health and seek police assistance if needed. The HPD reports that this increase in coverage is helpful.

Recommendation 9.14: Emphasize opportunities for officers to become involved with programs that collaboratively engage the police as partners in developing community solutions to crime and welfare issues.

IN PROGRESS

The HPD acknowledges that while many supervisors and officers assigned to the Community Service Bureau (CSB) deal with community problem-solving, officers assigned to the patrol division do not have the same level of exposure to these issues. This is primarily due to a high volume of calls for service. Ideas to increase exposure and expertise in community problem-solving include Community Service Officer rotations, adding a CSB rotation to the FTO process, and CSB ride-a-longs. The HPD has not yet implemented any of these options; however, the HPD reports that the Chief has instructed District Command to involve patrol in community meetings to increase their direct involvement with the community.

Recommendation 9.15: Continue to emphasize the values and behaviors of procedurally just policing through annual or biannual training curricula.

IN PROGRESS

Surveys and interviews with sworn HPD officers made clear that personnel value the tenets of procedurally just policing, and periodic training can help reinforce these values. The HPD does not currently administer procedural justice training. However, the State of Connecticut POSTC now includes one-hour of procedural justice training as a requirement for police officer recertification. Additionally, the Fair and Impartial Policing training is a part of the police academy. Beyond this requirement, we recommend that the HPD seek more intensive training to review and apply procedurally just policing tactics. Course plans for 8- to 24-hours of procedural justice training are freely available via organizations like the National Initiative for Building Community Trust & Justice. Building this course and administering it department-wide will be a more time-intensive task, but it should serve as a long-term goal.

Recommendation 9.16: Review training request and time-off procedures collaboratively among the HPD, City of Hartford, and the Hartford Police Union. Explore opportunities to reduce barriers to training and expand career development for officers.

IMPLEMENTED OR SUSTAINED

The HPD provided data to support that the majority of submitted training requests (often upwards of 90%) are approved. They also report an increase in the number of requests for training (2018 – 91 requests with 4 denials; 2019 – 60 requests with 7 denials; 2020 – 36 requests with 2 denials). For example, in 2021 the HPD reported 198 requests for training, which is significantly higher than in the prior three years. Of the 198 requests, 178 were approved and 20 were denied.

This information suggests improvement, but it is important to disseminate this information to ensure that officers feel that their requests will be taken seriously as focus group data suggested that training opportunities remained limited. The HPD should consider approaches to address this perception, including sharing these statistics and encouraging first-line supervisors to highlight specialized training opportunities relevant to particular career paths and encouraging officers to submit requests, even when the training may not be directly applicable to patrol functions.

Part II:

Survey and Focus Group Results

I. Introduction

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to conduct a two-part follow-up to the 2020 Hartford Police Department (HPD) Organizational Climate Study and changes made over the last two years. Specifically, this study uses a mixed methods approach to examine the changes implemented by the HPD since the completion of the initial study. To understand the changes and their impact on HPD's working culture, surveys, focus groups, and secondary data analyses are utilized. Findings that highlight the specific changes implemented in reaction to the original HPD Organizational Climate Study are presented in *Part I: Recommendations Progress Report* and findings that assess officer perceptions of their workplace over time are presented in the current study, *Part II: Survey and Focus Group Results*.

Report Structure

The two-year follow up study presents an assessment of departmental change over time in six key areas: 1) Staffing and Retention; 2) Transparency, Communication, and Fairness; 3) Workplace Environment; 4) Discipline, Misconduct, and Harassment; 5) Officer Wellness; and 6) Equipment, Resources, and Training. Before presenting findings across these areas, the methodological and analytical approach is explained. Each finding section then includes results from both qualitative and quantitative analysis with a specific emphasis on changes between 2020 and 2022. The report concludes with a discussion of the findings.

II. Methods & Analytic Approach

This two-year follow-up study employed a methodological approach and analytical strategy that aligned with the initial study completed in August of 2020. Specifically, we follow the same concurrent nested mixed methods design that includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses. Quantitative data from officer surveys offer direct insight to examine changes over time within the six areas of interest. More detailed and in-depth understandings within these areas are gleaned from qualitative data gathered during officer focus groups. We also incorporated updates using administrative data from the Dashboard discussed in the Recommendations Progress Report and any documentation associated with changes from September 2020 through September 2022. All three data sources are analyzed together to develop a comprehensive interpretation of the results. The key methodological and analytical distinction between the initial study and the two-year follow up is the focus on change over time.

Officer Surveys

All sworn officers received an email invitation from the researchers to participate in the follow-up survey. Work email addresses were provided by the HPD for all sworn personnel. At the time of survey administration, 375 sworn personnel were reportedly actively employed by the HPD. The e-mail invitation contained an overview of the study's purpose and a link to participate in an electronic survey using Qualtrics survey software. Officers were first prompted to read a consent form that highlighted the confidential, anonymous, and voluntary nature of the survey. The consent form also noted that responses would have no impact on their employment and that they could reach out to the researchers, via the provided contact information, for further information. Additionally, one of the researchers attended roll calls to explain the study components and offered the opportunity for officers to ask questions.

The survey remained open from August 26, 2022 through September 16, 2022. During this time, sworn personnel received the original invitation and four additional reminders. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, all sworn personnel received reminders even if they had already participated in the survey. The survey was completed by 136 officers, yielding a response rate of approximately 36%. This response rate is acceptable for organizational research and was higher than the initial study's response rate of 28%.

Table 2.1 presents descriptive statistics and Table 2.2 presents job-specific characteristics for the survey respondents. Approximately 58.1% of the sample self-identified as White (N = 79), 8.8% as Black/African American (N = 12), 17.7% as Hispanic or Latino (N = 24), and 23.5% preferred not to provide this information (N = 32). The racial/ethnic makeup of this sample mirrors the sample collected in the 2020 Report which was 58.2% White, 8.2% Black/African American, and 17.3% Hispanic or Latino. Although it is difficult to determine with certainty given the percentage of respondents who did not disclose their race/ethnicity, the sample appears to be representative of department-wide demographics as provided in Table 3.1 which indicates that 65.5% of sworn personnel are White and 34.5% are officers of color.

Participants were asked to self-identify their biological sex and 70.6% of the sample identified as male (N = 96), 15.4% identified as female (N = 21), and 14% chose not to provide this information (N = 19). The sample comports with department-wide demographic information, provided in Table 3.1, as 14.7% of HPD sworn personnel are female (N = 55).

We want to recognize that some focus group respondents indicated that officers may be unwilling to provide demographic information on the survey for fear of being identified. Despite our efforts to explain that the purpose of demographic information was to understand our sample and its representativeness, rather than connect specific responses to specific demographics, we understand the concern and posit that the non-response to demographic questions was likely due to this concern.

Table 2.1. Characteristics of Survey Respondents (<i>n</i> =136)		
	Frequency	Percent
Race		
Black/African-American	12	8.8%
White	79	58.1%
Bi-racial or multiracial	4	2.9%
Other	9	6.6%
Prefer not to answer/Missing	32	23.5%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	24	17.7%
Not Hispanic/Latino	83	61.0%
Prefer not to answer/Missing	29	21.3%
Sex		
Female	21	15.4%
Male	96	70.6%
Prefer not to answer/Missing	19	14.0%
Age		
21-29	20	14.7%
30-39	33	24.3%
40-49	42	30.9%
50+	21	15.4%
Prefer not to answer/Missing	20	14.7%
Education		
High School/GED or some college	40	29.4%
College degree + (assoc., bach., grad.)	92	67.6%
Missing	4	2.9%

Table 2.2 presents the job-related characteristics of the survey sample. Approximately 42.6% indicated that they held the rank of officer (N = 58), 22.8% were detectives (N = 31), 24.3% held the rank of sergeant or above (N = 33), and 10.3% chose not to disclose their rank (N = 14). Generally, this aligns with the sample from the original Organizational Climate Study Report (36.4% officers, 25.5% detectives, 24.5% sergeant or above), however, a slightly larger proportion of this sample held the rank of officer. Those working in patrol represent 38.2% of the sample in comparison to working in any other division (49.3%).

Table 2.2. Job-Specific Characteristics of Survey Respondents (*n*=136)

	Frequency	Percent
Rank		
Officer	58	42.6%
Detective	31	22.8%
Sergeant and above	33	24.3%
Prefer not to answer/Missing	14	10.3%
Division		
Patrol	52	38.2%
Any other division	67	49.3%
Prefer not to answer/Missing	17	12.5%
Length of Service		
5 years or less	26	19.1%
6 to 10 years	17	12.5%
11 to 15 years	27	19.9%
More than 15 years	59	43.4%
Prefer not to answer/Missing	7	5.1%

Officer Focus Groups

In the same invitation email described above, officers were also provided with a link to sign up for one of four focus group sessions. Participation was completely voluntary and was not contingent on survey participation. Using the same protocol described in the Recommendations Progress Report, we conducted four additional focus groups with a total of 10 sworn officers in September of 2022. These focus groups gave us the opportunity to get updated officer views and perceptions of departmental change.

Researchers took detailed notes during the focus groups to ensure accurate data collection of officer responses to 18 questions. The focus groups were semi-structured so officers could include additional insight beyond the information directly asked through the prepared questions. Notes did not include any names or identifying information. Focus groups lasted between 1-2 hours and took place off-site. Three focus groups were held at the Hartford Public Library and one took place at the Hartford Police Academy.

Administrative Data

In alignment with the Recommendations Progress Report data collection process, we utilized the updated Organizational Climate Study Recommendation Dashboard to ensure we had the most recent information pertaining to the responses the HPD has taken to address recommendations and the current status of each response. During this process, we also requested and received the necessary documentation to corroborate the information in the

dashboard such as updated policies, programming guidelines, and email correspondence regarding events, changes, etc.

Analytic Approach

The results presented below are based on a mixed-methods approach that considers quantitative findings and qualitative findings simultaneously. Quantitative data from officer surveys was analyzed using StataSE 17 software. Analyses presented below include descriptive statistics, mean scores for survey items and scales, independent sample t-tests, one-way ANOVAs, and post hoc tests. The survey data allows us to use these analytic techniques to assess officer perceptions towards topics like fairness, internal procedural justice, leadership, communication, and resources. Surveys also included demographic questions which facilitates drawing comparisons between various groups of officers (e.g., across rank, or by gender) to determine similarities and differences in perceptions.

Qualitative data drawn from focus groups was analyzed using an inductive coding approach. The notes from focus groups were reviewed and coded by two of the researchers to determine common themes related to perceptions of various aspects of the organization's climate. The themes produced by both researchers were compared through a peer debriefing process and adjusted as needed to ensure consistency in final themes. Open coding was conducted using NVivo software.

Limitations

It is important to note that, as with all research, several data constraints exist that limit the interpretation of results and conclusions drawn. First, only 36% of sworn personnel participated in the survey and only 10 officers participated in a focus group. It is therefore possible that the opinions expressed are not fully representative of the entire HPD population. Second, data provided on both surveys and focus groups may suffer from nonresponse bias. Those motivated to participate may have had particularly positive or negative experiences within the department, and opinions of those who feel more moderately or neutrally may be missing from the data.

Third, those who did participate may have been concerned their responses would not remain anonymous and may have been fearful of responding honestly. In an attempt to alleviate concerns, anonymity and confidentiality were emphasized in all e-mail solicitations and consent forms. Still, fear of potential social and professional consequences may have prevented complete honesty from respondents. Lastly, this study is structured to assess employee views and perceptions of the organization. Therefore, responses are biased to be more critical of administrators and immediate supervisors than they are of officers' own behaviors, actions, and inactions. With this acknowledgment in mind, even if the police administration might disagree with some criticisms made by officers, officers' perceptions are valid and vitally important for the

police administration to be able to understand where supervisory and communication breakdowns occur.

III. STAFFING & RETENTION

Introduction

Beyond striving for sufficient staffing and strong retention, departments nationwide are also working toward increasing diversity and representation throughout their ranks and divisions. Building a diverse department that represents the community being served is difficult, but critical for organizational fairness and inclusion. These goals extend beyond the rank-and-file and include higher ranks and leadership roles. Equal accessibility to various job opportunities signals to officers of all races/ethnicities, genders, and other sources of identity that their skills and contributions matter and are valued by the department. This section examines diversity representation in promotional ranks and division assignments using administrative data. Qualitative data is also utilized to add context about staffing, retention, and diversity from the officers' perspectives. Results are contrasted with findings from the 2020 HPD Organizational Climate Study.

Staffing and Diversity Across Ranks

Staffing data provided by the HPD reports a total of 375 currently employed sworn personnel, which is a 7% staffing reduction from the 404 sworn officers reported during the initial 2020 Organizational Climate Study. According to national data for departments serving 100,000 to 249,000 people, the average number of officers per 1,000 residents is 1.7.¹ Although the HPD falls within the bounds of national averages for departments serving similarly sized populations, these data do not consider other critical staffing factors like urbanity, population density, square miles, nor crime rates. A complete staffing and deployment assessment is beyond the scope of the current study, but additional detail regarding perceptions of personnel resources can be found in Section VIII: Equipment, Resources, and Training.

As displayed in Table 3.1, approximately 14.7% of the current sworn officers are female (N = 55) and 34.5% are racial/ethnic minorities (N = 129). These proportions represent slight increases in gender and racial/ethnic diversity in comparison to 2020 data (14.1% were female and 32.9% were racial/ethnic minority officers). In comparison to departments that serve a similar sized population (HPD serves approximately 120,000 citizens), the HPD's proportion of female officers and racial/ethnic minority officers is higher than the national average (12% female and 26.9% racial ethnic minority officers nationwide for department that serve 100,000 to 249,999 people in 2016).²

Demographic data provided by the department was utilized to assess diversity within ranks. First, the sex and race of officers were examined for each. Then, two-sample tests of

¹ Hyland and Davis, "Local Police Departments, 2016: Personnel." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019.

² Hyland and Davis, "Local Police Departments, 2016: Personnel."

proportion were conducted to determine whether groups were statistically significantly over- or under-represented at any particular rank compared to their representation in the department overall (Table 3.1). These tests consider both sample size and proportion in determining statistically significant differences.

According to these data and analyses (non-significant z scores), both female and racial/ethnic minority officers are represented equally throughout the department when compared to the overall gender and racial/ethnic composition of the HPD. These findings are similar to the 2020 findings with the exception of sergeant. The 2020 Organizational Climate Study noted that racial/ethnic minority officers were statistically significantly underrepresented ($z = 2.12, p = .034$). The current departmental demographic data no longer indicates this finding. Focus group findings were mixed with some respondents indicating that they feel as though all ranks are diverse and clear efforts to increase diversity were being made, while others noted that officers of color, women officers, and non-heterosexual officers were underrepresented in leadership roles despite making it onto eligible promotional lists (e.g., Captains List).

Table 3.1. Examination of Female and Racial/Ethnic Minority Officer Representation						
SEX						
	Male		Female		<i>z</i>	<i>p> z </i>
HPD Total (n=375)	320	85.3%	55	14.7%		
Chief of Police	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0.59	0.557
Assistant Chief	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0.59	0.557
Deputy Chief	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	-0.58	0.564
Captain	5	100.0%	0	0.0%	0.93	0.354
Lieutenant	20	87.0%	3	13.0%	0.22	0.823
Sergeant	49	89.1%	6	10.9%	0.75	0.451
Detective	60	87.0%	9	13.0%	0.37	0.712
Officer	180	83.3%	36	16.7%	-0.65	0.517
RACE/ETHNICITY						
	White		Nonwhite		<i>z</i>	<i>p> z </i>
HPD Total (n=375)	245	65.5%	129	34.5%		
Chief of Police	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1.02	0.305
Assistant Chief	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1.02	0.305
Deputy Chief	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	-0.65	0.517
Captain	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	0.68	0.498
Lieutenant	18	78.3%	5	21.7%	1.26	0.208
Sergeant	42	76.4%	13	23.6%	1.60	0.109
Detective	46	66.7%	23	33.3%	0.19	0.847
Officer	132	61.1%	84	38.9%	-1.07	0.284

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Broadly, focus group respondents noted that paths toward promotion are not always clear, which makes it difficult to mentor or supervise officers interested in particular forms of career advancement. For example, some respondents noted that decreased use of the detective trainee program due to staffing issues made it difficult for officers to find a path toward becoming a detective, and it appeared as if the process is “not as formalized” as it should be. Similarly, focus group respondents frequently noted the challenges associated with other promotional ranks or assigned positions. All of the challenges appeared to be connected to staffing issues according to respondents; however, some also noted that prerequisites for certain assignments allowed for too many subjective criteria, such as a “positive work history.” Staffing shortages have clear repercussions for other areas of any department, including limiting promotional and assignment opportunities. These effects can hinder the advancement of early-career officers and agency efforts to increase diversity department-wide.

The findings presented here compare demographics across rank to demographics across the entire department, but it does not draw comparisons to the city demographic makeup. The City of Hartford’s population is approximately 37% Black, 30% White and 45% of the population is Hispanic or Latino.³ As the HPD continues to work toward increasing diversity and creating a department that mirrors the surrounding community, as departments nationwide are similarly striving to do, it is important to consider recruitment strategies in tandem with retention strategies. Retaining diverse officers so that they can progress in accordance with their career aspirations is important for diversifying leadership and signaling career possibilities in law enforcement to potential recruits.

Retention and Attrition

Staffing challenges cannot be understood without carefully considering attrition, both in terms of “expected” retirements and other forms of job separation. Table 3.2 displays the department’s turnover rate and types of attrition from 2016-2021. In alignment with national trends, the HPD’s turnover rate has increased over the last two years. The total number of employees leaving increased from 27 at its lowest in 2016 and 2017 to 51 at its highest in 2021. The main source of attrition has also changed. Prior to 2019, the main source of attrition was retirement, with few voluntary resignations. This shifted in 2019 when 15 officers resigned, 6 retired, and 2 were terminated/administratively separated. This pattern continued in 2020 and 2021 as the turnover rate increased. In 2021 the HPD lost 51 employees, 43 of which resigned and 2 of which retired. This mirrors law enforcement trends observed nationally, in which a “retention crisis” has resulted in a significant increase in voluntary resignations, while retirements and involuntary separations have largely remained stable.⁴

³ U.S. Census Bureau. “Hartford City, Connecticut Population Estimates,” (2021).

⁴ Scott Mourtgos, Ian Adams, and Justin Nix, “Elevated police turnover following the summer of George Floyd protests: A synthetic control study,” *Criminology & Public Policy* 21 (2021).

Table 3.2. Sources of Officer Attrition					
Fiscal Year	Retired	Resigned	Terminated/ Admin Separation	Total	Agency Turnover Rate
FY 16	25	1	1	27	6.4%
FY 17	22	4	1	27	6.6%
FY 18	19	9	2	30	7.3%
FY 19	6	15	2	23	5.0%
FY 20	2	38	1	41	10.3%
FY 21	2	43	6	51	11.5%

Information from to Figure 3.1 and 3.2 was used to better understand future retirement patterns. Figure 3.1 depicts survey participant responses to a question asking when they would be eligible to retire. Of survey respondents, approximately 16% indicated they were eligible to retire within the next five years and 48% indicated they were eligible to retire in 5 to 10 years. Participants were then asked to indicate their intentions to retire or resign regardless of their normal retirement date. Respondents were allowed to select more than one option from the list in Figure 3.2. Nearly one-third (32.4%) of respondents indicated they will likely seek employment with a different law enforcement agency within the next 5 years and 27.6% of respondents indicated they will likely seek employment outside of law enforcement within the next 5 years. Because respondents could select more than one statement, these values do not necessarily suggest that over 50% of the respondents plan to leave the HPD within the next 5 years. However, these values do indicate that a concerning proportion of respondents may be considering leaving the HPD and law enforcement broadly. Nearly all of the focus group respondents indicated that they valued their job, but many voiced concerns about peers who were considering leaving for other law enforcement agencies that would offer better benefits, higher pay, and/or “easier” working conditions in departments with lower call volumes.

Among survey respondents, 60% of those who stated they would likely retire *before* reaching 20 years of service (YOS) would not be eligible to retire within the next 10 years. 57% of those stating they would retire upon *reaching* 20 YOS will be eligible to retire in the next 5-10 years and 17% will be eligible to retire within the next 5 years. 58% of those stating they would retire upon reaching 25+ YOS will be eligible to retire in the next 5-10 years. This information is important for the HPD to consider as they prioritize recruitment and retention efforts with intention and foresight. Focus group data indicates that some officers are concerned that staffing issues will be exacerbated by impending retirements, whereas other respondents noted that the HPD is tracking this information and planning accordingly. A common sentiment was the inability to hire and retain personnel in a way that compensates for the elevated number of recent retirees/resignations.

Figure 3.1. Retirement Eligibility of Survey Respondents

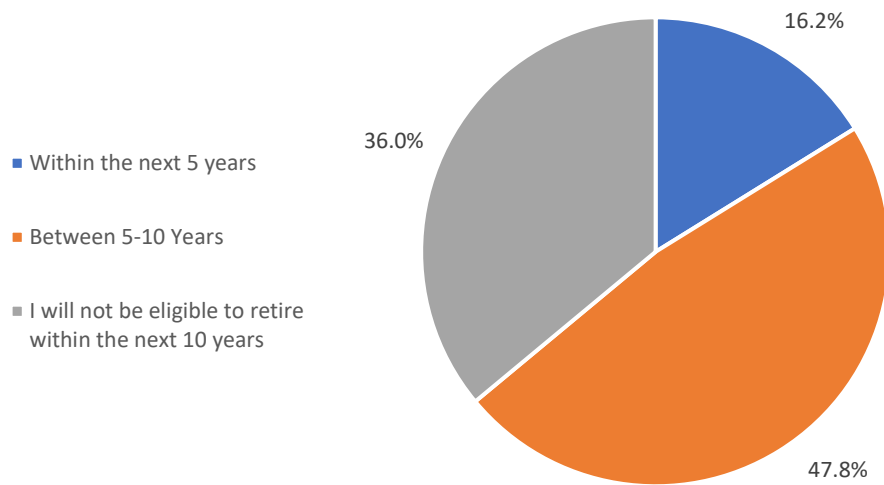
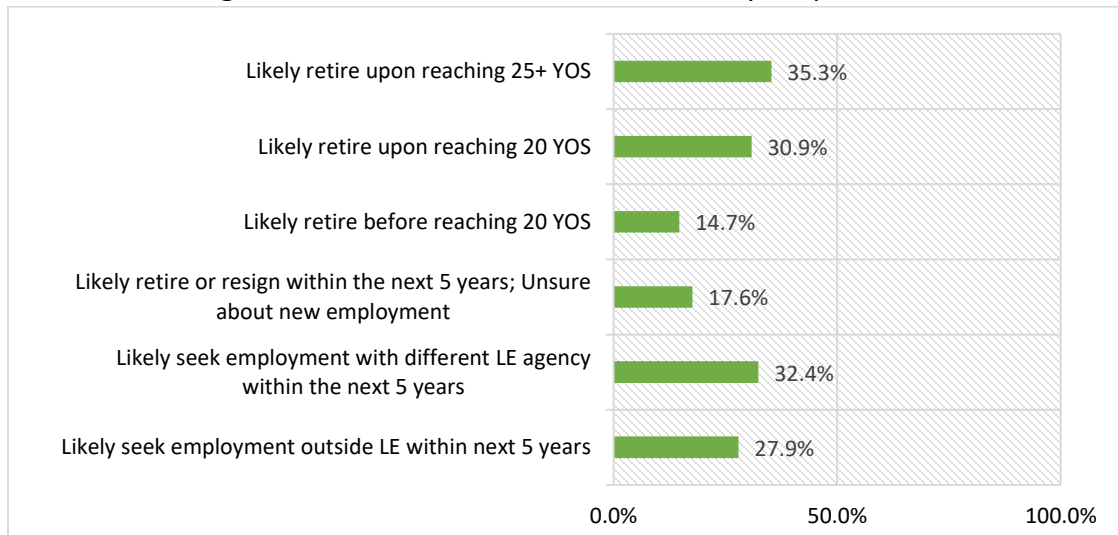


Figure 3.2. Retirement Intentions of Survey Respondents



Recommendations from the initial 2020 Organizational Climate Study emphasized the importance of increasing retention, especially among early career officers. In order to protect the investment associated with recruiting and training new hires, the HPD has worked to implement strategies to retain new recruits. This is critical as it is estimated that the HPD loses approximately \$120,000 when they lose an officer with up to three years of experience. As reported in the Recommendations Progress Report, the HPD's Career Development has created and implemented a voluntary Mentorship Program with graduates of the academy. Across three

academy classes, the HPD reports that 12 academy graduates have taken part in the Mentorship Program that pairs volunteer senior officers with volunteer graduates who are interested in offering/participating in informal mentoring to navigate early career experiences with support in the HPD.

In addition to pairing graduates with mentors, Career Development reported that they hope to broaden the Mentorship Program and pair recruits with mentors even earlier upon entering the academy. They suggested that this would offer needed mentorship during the academy and has the potential to be particularly effective for recruits from under-represented groups. Although they have yet to formally implement stay interviews, the HPD reports plans to implement these with the most recent groups participating in the mentorship program, and those who are currently on probation. They intend to track information gleaned from stay interviews to guide additional strategies for increasing retention.

Focus group data indicates that officers are aware of the HPD's goals and efforts for bolstering retention. The majority of focus group participants indicated that retention issues remain in the HPD despite recently enacted efforts. The Mentorship Program was mentioned by several officers. Generally, officers viewed the program as especially useful for giving new officers a sounding board for questions that they may not want to ask their FTO. Participants agreed that it was important to ensure the Mentorship Program had flexibility to meet participant needs, and to avoid over-structuring the experience, as too much structure may defeat the purpose and ultimately mirror the field training process. It is important to note that a few participants were unaware the Mentorship Program was in operation. It would be helpful to highlight this work across the department to increase awareness of this initiative, which signals clear efforts to increase retention. As with all organizational changes, retention issues cannot be fixed overnight. Consistent long-term multifaceted changes that are regularly evaluated and modified when needed are critical for increasing retention and reducing turnover rates over time. (Additional information regarding the Mentorship Program can be found in Section V: Officer Wellness).

In addition to the mentorship program, several officers noted that key modifications to the collective bargaining agreement were designed to increase retention. Still, survey respondents frequently mentioned retention issues and staffing shortages as a significant source of workplace stress. Increased resignations and staffing shortages have led to order-in and hold-over policies and practices that further burden officers and increase their likelihood of leaving, thereby perpetuating the existing retention crisis. Officers' perceptions of departmental contributions to and consequences borne by this crisis are described throughout the following sections. Given the staffing shortages in Hartford and the recruitment and retention crisis facing most metropolitan police departments nationwide, it is worth emphasizing that the HPD must prioritize creative and aggressive recruitment strategies alongside holistic improvements to the existing workplace environment to be able to overcome its current personnel challenges.

To further aid the HPD in prioritizing workplace improvements to increase satisfaction and the likelihood of retention among incumbent officers, the 2022 survey asked respondents to

reflect on the concerns that were highlighted in the 2020 climate study and rank the following nine concerns in order of their importance. Table 3.3 displays these concerns based on their average ranking. Results indicate that salary, on average, is the primary concern among respondents followed by health insurance, and retirement eligibility. Overtime pay/procedures, time off procedures, and order-in procedures were also ranked as important concerns as the average respondent placed them 4th-5th in their ranking of all nine concerns. Procedures for assignments, promotional procedure, and uniform allowance/stipend were ranked the lowest.

Table 3.3. Ranked Importance of 2020 Climate Study Concerns

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Concern</i>	<i>Mean</i>
1	Salary	1.92
2	Health insurance	2.77
3	Retirement eligibility	3.97
4	Overtime pay/procedures	4.42
5	Time off procedures	4.75
6	Order-in procedures	5.80
7	Procedures for assignments (e.g. detective)	7.00
8	Promotional procedures	7.01
9	Uniform allowance/stipend	7.36

These findings generally align with focus group results, with the exceptions of retirement eligibility and order-in procedures. Focus groups did not regularly reference concerns related to retirement eligibility, but one of the most commonly discussed sources of frustration was order-in procedures. To increase retention, we had recommended that a workgroup be convened to explore changes to scheduling and time-off procedures to improve work-life balance. Although order-in procedures were modified (additional discussion of concerns associated with order-ins can be found in Section VII: Officer Wellness), focus group participants frequently discussed concerns about their lack of time off. It was reported that officers were regularly being overworked through order-ins or volunteering to fill extra vacant shifts to avoid being ordered-in. Some even stated that a primary reason people were leaving was due to burnout resulting from the extra shifts required to maintain appropriate staffing. Focus group respondents noted challenges associated with taking time off and some reported that it was primarily due to staffing shortages. Specifically, one participant said that the administration indicated (either formally or informally) that taking leave and time off would be much easier when staffing increases to 400-440 sworn personnel.

Given the relative salary differences between the HPD and surrounding police departments, it is not surprising that salary remains a primary concern for the average HPD officer. As discussed in the Recommendations Progress Report and Section VII of this report, the sworn personnel at the rank of officer received a mid-contract pay increase in July of 2021. This increase was intentional and aimed to increase retention of newer officers and was directly

informed by the results of the 2020 report. Despite these retention-focused intentions, several officers reported that isolating a pay increase to the officer rank resulted in intradepartmental tensions, especially among detectives and sergeants whose unaffected salaries were then nearly equivalent to those of officers. In the new CBA, which went into effect in October of 2022, sworn personnel above the rank of officer received a pay increase to regain the wage gap between ranks. This may have alleviated some of the concerns associated with the mid-contract increase for officers only. Additionally, the new CBA includes an 11% increase over a four-year period to ensure that HPD pay is competitive and fosters retention. These efforts are laudable and speak to the HPD's focus on addressing concerns paramount to the department. Additional discussion regarding HPD pay and benefits can be found in Section VII: Officer Wellness.

IV. TRANSPARENCY, COMMUNICATION, AND FAIRNESS

Introduction

Effective organizational management relies on transformational leadership and internal procedural justice. These foundational goals are critical for both the police administration and immediate supervisors. Relatedly, perceived fairness is a critical aspect of a just organizational climate. Higher ratings of organizational fairness are linked to higher levels of employee compliance, acceptance of decisions, and organizational commitment. The following section is divided into two subsections, Transparency & Communication and Perceptions of Fairness. Analyses and results are presented within each subsection and comparisons to the 2020 HPD Organizational Climate Study findings are drawn.

Transparency & Communication

This section reviews core practices and characteristics important to leadership and supervision including transformational leadership and internal procedural justice. Perceptions of leadership are assessed at the administrative level and the immediate supervisor level.

Police Administration

Transformational Leadership

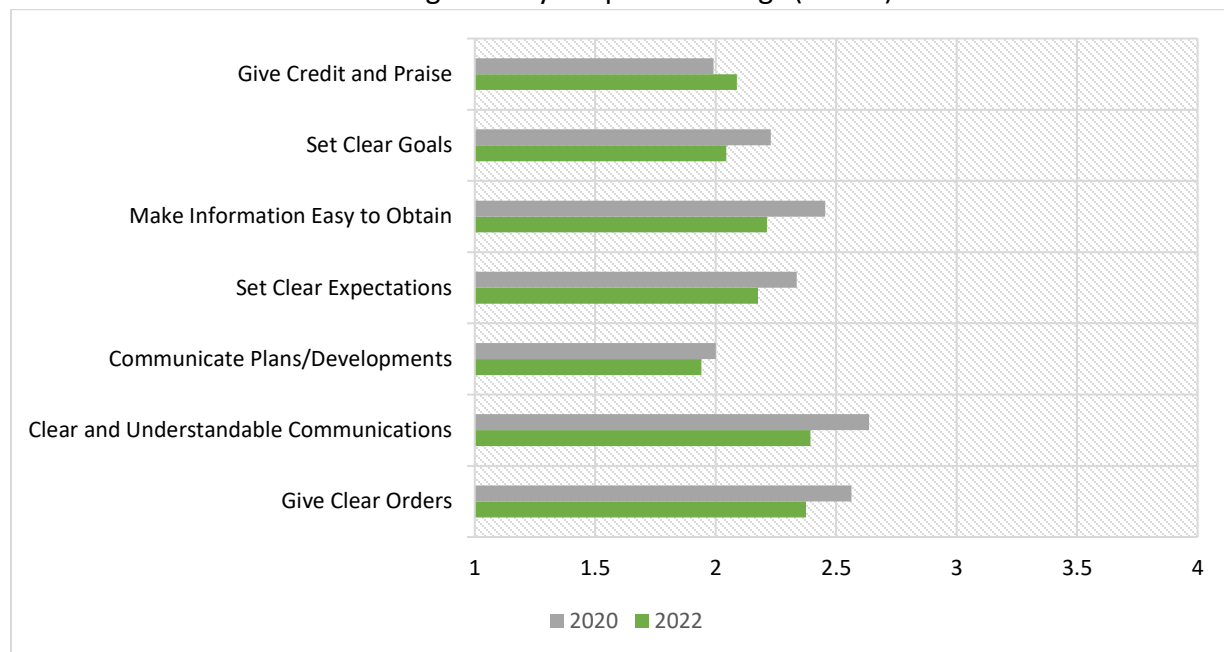
Transformational leadership refers to the extent to which the command staff creates a shared vision, encourages open communication, and effectively prepares officers for regular job tasks and new challenges.⁵ Because the police administration (e.g., Chief, Assistant Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Captains) exercises the most responsibility for directing the vision and activities of the police department, we assess transformational leadership at the police administration level.

Survey respondents were asked a series of 15 questions regarding their perceptions of HPD administration. These questions are designed to assess transformational leadership through three subscales: 1) clear communication, 2) fairness and honesty, and 3) training and cooperation. Respondents rated each of the 15 items on a scale from 1 – 4 where 1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree. Higher values indicate that officers perceive the police administration to more strongly demonstrate the characteristics and practices associated with transformational leadership. These items are identical to those asked on the 2020 survey, and results from the previous survey are included in each figure for comparison.

⁵ S. Hakan Can, Helen Hendy, and M. Berkay Ege Can, "A Pilot Study to Develop the Police Transformational Leadership Scale (PTLS) and Examine Its Association with Psychosocial Well-Being of Officers," *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 32 (2017).

Examples of survey items in the clear communication subscale include: Most communications from them (the administration) are difficult to understand,⁶ they (the administration) let us know exactly what is expected of us, they (the administration) give us clear goals for our work (Figure 4.1). A summative scale with strong reliability ($\alpha = 0.87$) was created using seven items. The mean score on the clear communication subscale was 15.2 on a scale from 7 – 28 (midpoint = 17.5), suggesting that respondents view the police administration’s communication as moderately unclear.

Figure 4.1. Transformational Leadership: Clear Communication Items
Average Survey Response Ratings ($n=136$)

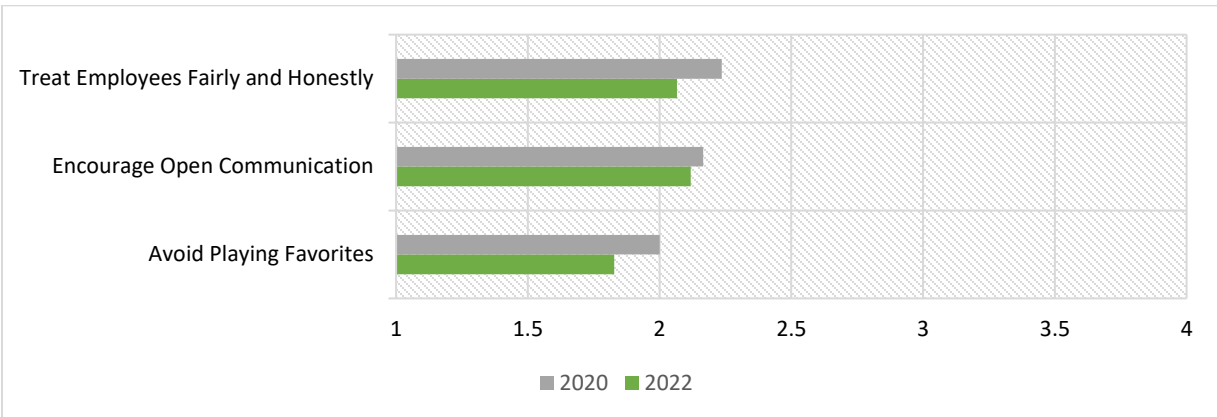


The fairness and honesty subscale utilizes items such as: the administration treats employees with fairness and honesty and they tend to play favorites⁷ (Figure 4.2). A summative scale with strong reliability ($\alpha = 0.81$) was generated using three items. The mean score for the full sample was 6.8 on a scale from 3 – 12 (midpoint = 7.5), indicating that respondents perceive the administration as somewhat unfair.

⁶ This item was reverse coded.

⁷ This item was reverse coded.

Figure 4.2. Transformational Leadership: Fairness & Honesty Items
Average Survey Response Ratings ($n=136$)



The third subscale measures training and cooperation using a summative scale of five items including: they provide training and resources for us to improve our work, they encourage us to speak up about departmental concerns ($\alpha = 0.90$) (Figure 4.3). The mean score on this subscale for the full sample was 9.7 on scale from 5 – 20 (midpoint = 12.5), suggesting that the administration’s practices of fostering cooperation, teamwork, and necessary training opportunities are inadequate.

Figure 4.3. Transformational Leadership: Training & Cooperation Items
Average Survey Response Ratings ($n=136$)

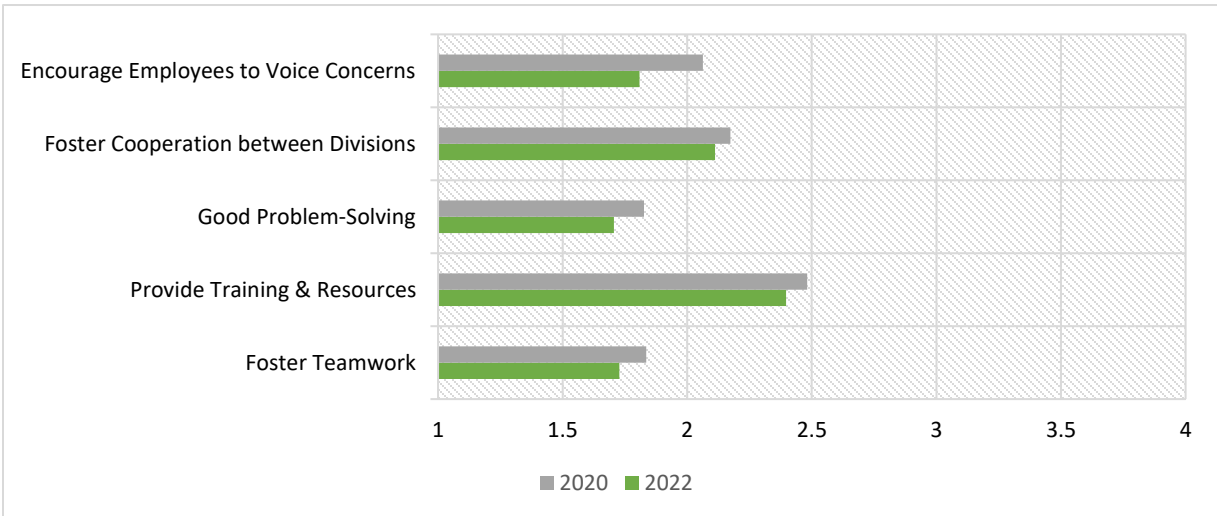
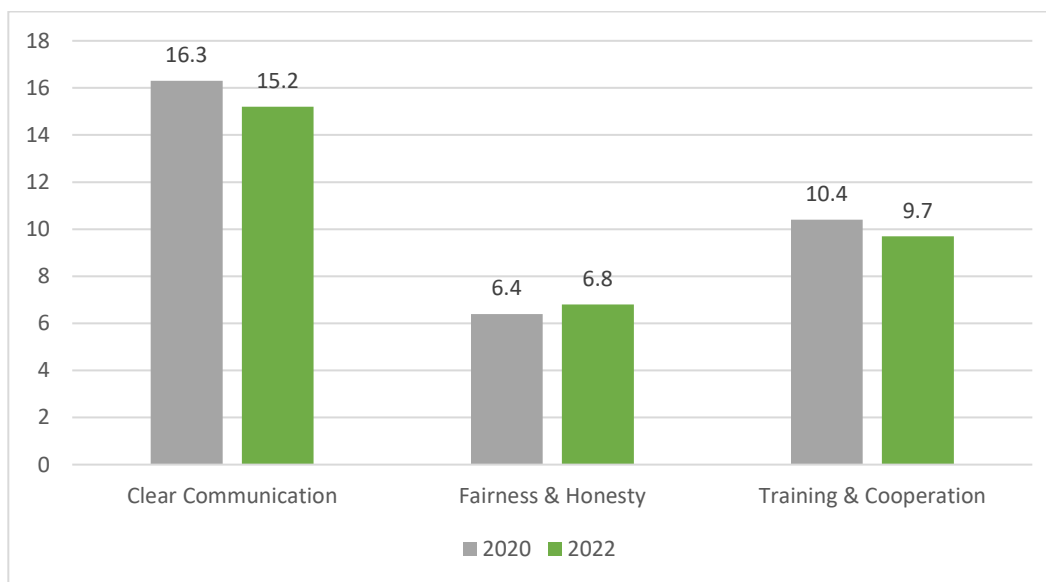


Figure 4.4. Transformational Leadership: 2020 vs. 2022 Subscale Comparisons



The full transformational leadership scale was assessed using all 15 aforementioned items, resulting in a scale ranging from 15 – 60 (midpoint = 37.5) and a mean score of 31.6 for the full sample ($\alpha = 0.94$). This suggests that overall, respondents do not perceive the police administration to regularly demonstrate the qualities and practices associated with a strong level of transformational leadership. When compared to ratings from the 2019-2020 HPD survey, each subscale remained stable with no significant changes—either negative or positive—in any area (Figure 4.4).

The mean scores on the full transformational leadership scale were compared across sex and racial/ethnic groups. T-test results indicated there were no statistically significant differences between groups' perceptions of transformational leadership as it relates to the police administration. The subscales that make up the transformational leadership scale were also examined for differences by sex and race/ethnicity, but none were detected.

However, the mean scores on the transformational leadership scale were also compared by division. Similar to findings discussed in the 2020 study, officers in patrol ($N = 52$) versus officers in other divisions or units ($N = 68$) were again statistically significantly more likely to rate the police administration lower along measures of transformational leadership ($t = -6.00, p = .000$). Controlling for age, race/ethnicity, sex, and education level in an ordinal logistic regression model, an officer's division remains a significant predictor of their perception of transformational leadership within the administration (Coef. = -2.48, $p = .000$). Officers in patrol are significantly more likely to rate the police administration lower on the transformational leadership scale in comparison to officers working in other divisions.

Communication

Consistent with 2020 findings, focus group participants continued to feel as though communication and transparency from leadership was lacking. The divide between line officers and the police administration has persisted. More specifically, focus group participants noted that HPD officers generally have good relationships with the public and feel appreciated by them, but they felt that a more important area of concern pertained to a schism between the rank-and-file and administration. One respondent noted “the administration needs to connect with us more” to increase morale and another noted “they have never felt more unappreciated.” Survey participants echoed these sentiments in their written feedback with officers highlighting a “clear divide between ... command staff and patrol,” stating that they felt a “lack of leadership from upper command staff” and wanted the department to “put officers first and give them a sense of support and camaraderie.”

The quantitative findings related to patrol’s perceptions of HPD administration are reinforced by qualitative findings. Nearly all focus group participants noted that patrol is overworked, not appreciated, and not consulted on matters that directly impact them. Overwhelmingly, respondents highlighted the need for the Chief and Deputy Chiefs to increase their contact with patrol, to seek their input on changes, and to recognize the extra work burden they take on. Stressors inevitably compound in patrol. As survey respondents noted, “the burden of understaffing [is placed] on uniformed officers,” “the overall well-being of patrol officers has taken a huge hit,” and the current political climate could make “many officers fear being the first to arrive to a critical incident as they do not want scrutiny of their performance.” Due to these compounding concerns, officers stated that it was, “more important than ever for the administration to show officers actual support.”

In alignment with the initial 2020 report, officers desired increased transparency and explanations to accompany changes that directly impacted them, prior to changes being enacted. Although focus group participants noted that they know they are allowed to “go upstairs” to discuss concerns, they stated that they do not have the time to do so given the hours they work. Survey participants reiterated that they felt that the command staff was disconnected from “what officers have to deal with on a day-to-day basis” and that they “never ask the lower ranks think and always assume they know best.” Though these statements reflect personal perceptions only, these perceptions matter. Officers are likely to be more accepting of changes—even those they do not fully support—if they feel that they have a voice in the decision-making process and/or understand the reasons for the change.

Some respondents noted an example of increased Chiefs’ presence at roll calls following a negative incident and others noted several emails from the Chief recently that

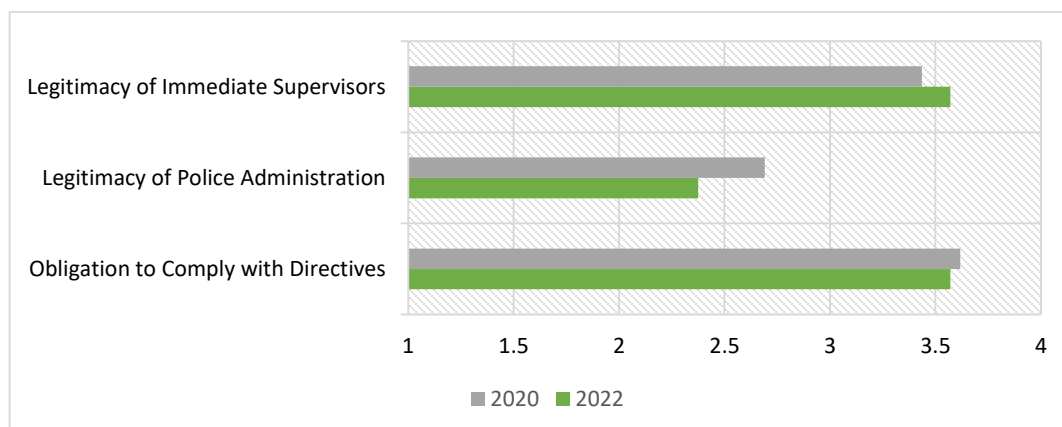
highlighted strong work. It should also be noted that respondents often discussed some variation in communication across different parts of the administration and leadership. For example, accreditation was mentioned more than once as soliciting input from some supervisors and officers. Relatedly, focus group respondents also posited that one reason members of police administration do not interact with patrol frequently face-to-face is because they are aware that morale is low and may not be able to offer satisfactory solutions. However, respondents also noted that increasing interaction between command staff and patrol was a zero-cost opportunity to build morale by increasing awareness of the challenges patrol is facing and demonstrating a true interest in making meaningful change.

Legitimacy & Support

Legitimacy refers to the degree to which officers feel their supervisors are qualified and entitled to exercise authority over them. When officers feel that their leadership is legitimate, they are more likely to feel that they share common values with their supervisors and have a shared sense of duty and obligation toward their supervisors' directives.⁸

Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement (from 1 – 4) with the following 3 statements assessing leadership legitimacy: 1) it is wrong to ignore your supervisors' directives, 2) I am confident in the good intentions of my police administration, and 3) I am confident in the good intentions of my immediate supervisors (Figure 4.5). A summative scale utilizing these three statements was used to generate a legitimacy scale. Identical questions were asked in 2020, and these responses are included in the figure for comparison.

Figure 4.5. Leadership Legitimacy Items:
Average Survey Response Ratings (n=136)



⁸ Trinkner, Tyler, and Goff, "Justice from Within: The Relations between a Procedurally Just Organizational Climate and Police Organizational Efficiency, Endorsement of Democratic Policing, and Officer Well-Being."

The mean for the full sample was 9.3 on a scale ranging from 3 – 12 (midpoint = 7.5), suggesting that on average, respondents view department leadership as legitimate. Gender differences and variation across racial/ethnic groups were analyzed. No significant differences on mean scores on the legitimacy scale were detected across gender, nor across racial/ethnic groups.

Recognition & Praise

Findings from the 2020 report indicated that officers wanted more acknowledgement for their positive actions and felt that praise was lacking. Qualitative analysis and findings from the Recommendations Progress Report demonstrate some changes in this area. Although focus groups demonstrate that many feel unappreciated, they also noted that the HPD held a formal award ceremony, and some noted an increase in other forms of recognition and praise.

Focus group respondents noted that officers felt unappreciated internally, more so than externally, and these feelings were often specified to administration. Relatedly, participants noted they didn't feel that leadership views patrol as an asset, which is problematic given their critical role in the department. One participant said that viewing patrol as an asset and showing appreciation from the top-down would be helpful in preventing early resignations, highlighting that someone viewed as an asset is therefore viewed as someone worth retaining.

Despite these feelings, respondents noted that they were happy that the HPD was able to hold an official awards ceremony to honor current award recipients as well as past recipients who had not been recognized in a ceremony. Some respondents also mentioned that first-line supervisors were doing a better job recognizing when officers did good work or went above and beyond. One supervisor said that they are making a conscious effort to increase praise and recognize their officers because they know they are not receiving that recognition from administration. Other examples of more informal forms of recognition were noted as well. For example, the Career Development Division indicated that they have been trying to highlight and recognize the work of officers informally, in actions like hanging pictures of on-duty officers at community events, and in the hallway of the main level at HPD headquarters. Another participant also mentioned the gun coin recognition effort. Challenge coins are awarded for successful illegal gun seizures and these coins periodically distributed to officers in front of their peers during roll calls.

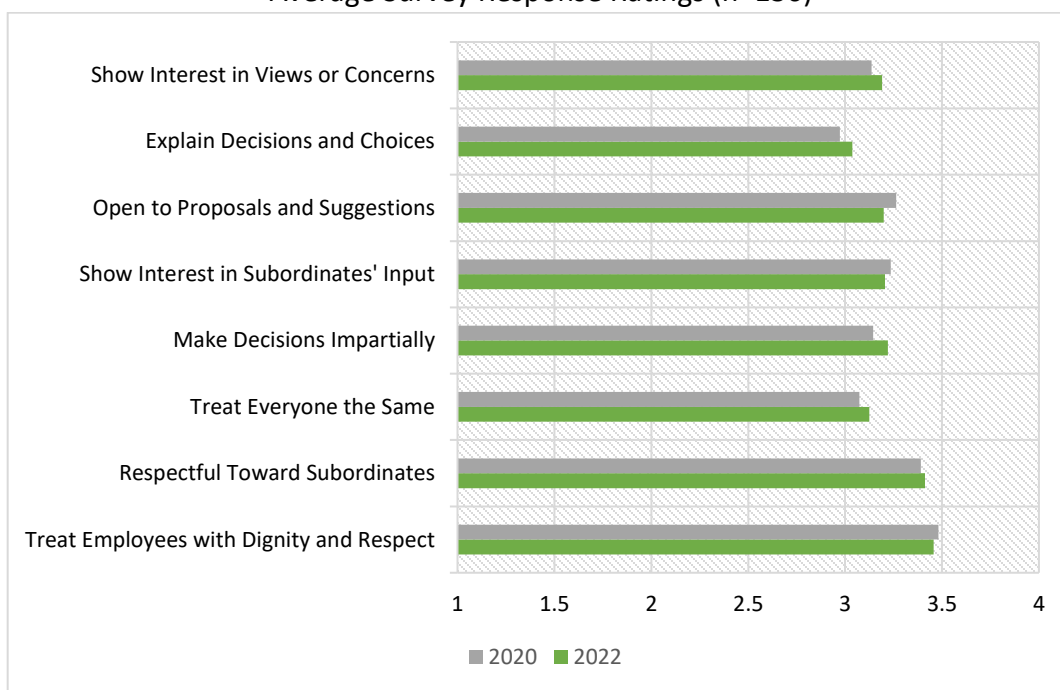
Immediate Supervisors

Internal procedural justice refers to four central elements: treating officers with dignity and respect, demonstrating neutrality in decision-making, allowing workers to have a voice in the decision-making process, and demonstrating trustworthy motives. Immediate supervisors (e.g., sergeants and lieutenants) are also responsible for creating a supportive work environment, and

supervisors' style of leadership can powerfully impact officers' job satisfaction and perceptions of fairness. Therefore, we assess behaviors linked to internal procedural justice at the immediate supervisor level.

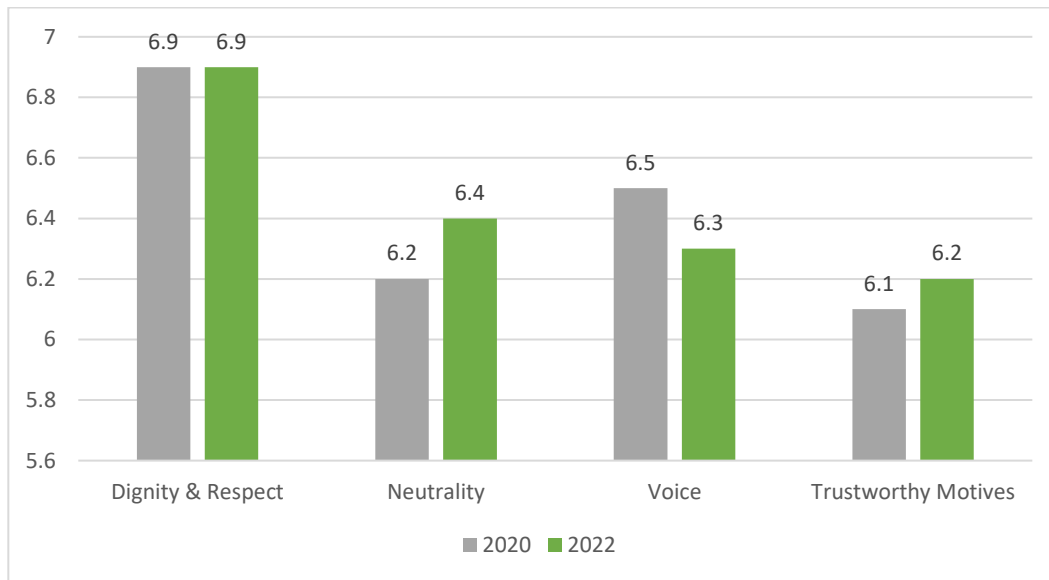
Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with eight statements to assess internal procedural justice among their immediate supervisors. A composite scale was generated from the following four subscales: 1) dignity and respect, 2) neutrality, 3) voice, and 4) trustworthy motives. Each subscale ranges from 2-8 with a midpoint of 5. Higher values indicate that respondents agree that their immediate supervisors treat their subordinates with dignity and respect, are impartial when making decisions, are interested in what subordinates have to say, and sufficiently explain the decisions they make, respectively. Identical items were asked on the 2020 survey, and these responses are included in the figure for comparison.

Figure 4.6. Internal Procedural Justice Items
Average Survey Response Ratings (n=136)



The mean rating for the full sample was 6.9 on the dignity and respect subscale, 6.4 on the neutrality subscale, 6.3 on the voice subscale, and 6.2 on the trustworthy motives subscale (Figure 4.6). These results suggest respondents perceive that their immediate supervisors treat subordinates with dignity and respect, are moderately impartial when making decisions, are interested in what subordinates have to say, and are moderately trustworthy in their motives behind decision-making. When compared to ratings from the 2020 HPD survey, each scale remained stable with no significant changes in any of the included subscales (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7. Internal Procedural Justice: 2020 vs. 2022 Subscale Comparisons



A composite scale of internal procedural justice was generated using the four subscales. The internal procedural justice scale assessing immediate supervisors had a mean of 25.8 on a scale from 8 – 32 (midpoint = 20). This result suggests respondents rate their immediate supervisors moderately high in terms of internal procedural justice, which aligns with the 2020 findings (mean = 25.7).

These findings remained consistent across years and data sources. Focus group participants voiced fewer concerns and frustrations with their immediate supervisors in comparison to the police administration. Direct supervisors were often discussed in more supportive ways and several participants noted that sergeants and lieutenants were generally helpful and approachable. Concerns about adequate leadership skills that were brought up frequently in the 2020 report were not frequently raised in 2022 focus group data. Additionally, participants who held supervisory roles noted they were actively working to support their officers and understood why patrol often feels disconnected from administrative decisions.

Perceptions of Fairness

This section presents findings related to officers' perceptions of fairness within the HPD both broadly and in terms of treatment and access to opportunities across various group identities (e.g., race, gender).

General Fairness

First, survey respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: I believe that this agency treats its employees the same regardless of race or ethnicity. On a scale from 1 – 4 with 4 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree,⁹ the overall

⁹ Response options were: 4=strongly agree, 3=somewhat agree, 2=somewhat disagreed, and 1=strongly disagree.

sample mean was 2.2. Given that the midpoint or neutral point on this scale is 2.5, this indicates that on average, respondents somewhat disagreed that employees were treated the same regardless of race and ethnicity.

To assess fairness in terms of treatment of men and women at the HPD, survey respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: I believe that this agency treats its employees the same regardless of gender. The mean response for the full sample was 2.3, suggesting that respondents somewhat disagreed that men and women were treated the same.

Survey respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: I believe that this agency treats its employees the same regardless of sexual orientation. Using a scale from 1 – 4 where higher values indicate stronger agreement with the statement, the mean response was 3.0. This suggests that respondents somewhat agreed that employees were treated the same regardless of sexual orientation. However, men and white officers were significantly more likely to agree that officers were treated the same regardless of sexual orientation when compared to women and racial/ethnic minority officers. The average responses for all three measures of general fairness were consistent with findings from the 2020 report.

Job-Related Opportunities

Race/ethnicity

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale from 1 – 4 (1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree) with the following two statements: 1) In this agency, white officers receive more opportunities than nonwhite officers and 2) In this agency, nonwhite officers receive more opportunities than white officers. The mean response for the first statement for the full sample was 1.6, suggesting respondents somewhat disagreed that white officers receive more opportunities than nonwhite officers. The mean response for the second statement was 2.7, indicating respondents somewhat agreed that nonwhite officers receive more opportunities than white officers. Similar to the 2020 survey, results indicated significant differences across racial/ethnic groups in terms of their mean response to the statement that white officers receive more opportunities than nonwhite officers. White respondents were significantly more likely to disagree that White officers receive more opportunities than nonwhite officers when compared to racial/ethnic minority respondents ($t = 2.98, p = .004$).

Gender

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale from 1 – 4 (1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree) with the following two statements: 1) In this agency, female officers receive more opportunities than male officers and 2) In this agency, male officers receive more opportunities than female officers. The mean response for the first statement for the full sample was 2.9, suggesting respondents

somewhat agreed that female officers receive more opportunities than male officers. The mean response for the second statement was 1.9, indicating that respondents somewhat disagreed that male officers receive more opportunities than female officers. Findings suggest male respondents are significantly more likely than female respondents to agree that females are given more opportunities than male officers ($t = 2.98, p = .004$). Similarly, results indicate female respondents are significantly more likely than male respondents to agree that males are given more opportunities than female officers ($t = -2.98, p = .004$).

Positions, Assignments, & Promotions

Survey respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 – 4, with 1 being extremely unfair and 4 being extremely fair, how fairly officer assignments to specialty units are handed out in their department. The mean response for the full sample was 2.1, suggesting officers tend to view assignment distribution as somewhat unfair. Approximately 29% of respondents indicated assignment distribution was extremely unfair, 32% indicated it was somewhat unfair, 33% indicated it was somewhat fair, and 6% thought it was extremely fair. Findings revealed that officers in divisions and units other than patrol were significantly more likely than patrol officers to view the assignment process as fair ($t = 4.33, p = .000$).

Survey respondents were also asked: how fair are the officer promotion procedures in this department (on a scale from 1 – 4, 1 = extremely unfair and 4 = extremely fair)? The mean response for the full sample was 2.4, suggesting officers tend to view the promotion procedures as somewhat fair. Approximately 20% of respondents indicated the promotion procedures were extremely unfair, 29% indicated they were somewhat unfair, 37% indicated they were somewhat fair, and 14% thought they were extremely fair. Officers in divisions and units other than patrol were significantly more likely than patrol officers to view the assignment process as fair ($t = 4.33, p = .000$).

The findings are generally consistent with those reported in the 2020 report; however, it is important to note that focus group data did not yield a consistent or prevalent concern regarding unfair processes in promotions and assignments. Although similar concerns may have persisted, they were not frequently brought up in interviews, nor were these concerns mentioned in feedback from survey respondents. With that said, one area of concern was the Chief's selection process once provided with an eligibility list and the length of time these lists remain viable before a new test is initiated. Increased transparency into how these final selections are made was desired by several respondents. As far as promotional testing is concerned, focus group participants did not frequently voice frustrations with the current process. One respondent highlighted that they felt promotional testing was fair because it was conducted by an outside agency that graded the first part automatically and used an external board to evaluate the video-recorded second part. This comports with the information presented in the Recommendations Progress Report. In terms of assignments, the major concern was related to lack of opportunities given staffing shortages, and some focus group respondents also

noted that some assignment prerequisites were too broad, which opened the door for increased subjectivity that could be interpreted as unfair.

V. WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

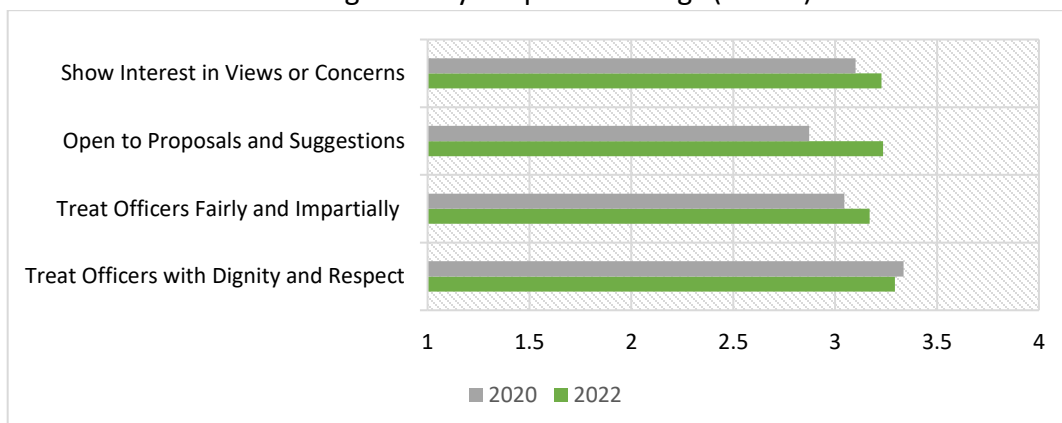
The resolution of workplace concerns is critical for effective organizational management. This section details findings related to the HPD workplace environment, primarily with respect to peer support, collegiality, and effective communication between staff. This includes discussions around coworker support, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Results address peer support, conflict, and mentoring, issues surrounding generational disconnections between officers, internal gossip, social media, and group-specific concerns for female, nonwhite, and LGBTQ+ officers. Analyses and results are organized by subsection and contrasted with results from the 2020 HPD climate study.

Peer Support & Relationships

We first assess qualities of internal procedural justice demonstrated by officers' peers. A composite scale was generated from four items that addressed dignity and respect, neutrality, voice, and trustworthy motives. Higher values indicate that respondents agree that their peers: treat them with dignity and respect, treat fellow officers fairly and impartially, are open to input and suggestions, and show interest when they express their views and concerns (Figure 5.1). These questions were also asked on the 2020 survey, and previous results are presented in the figure for comparison.

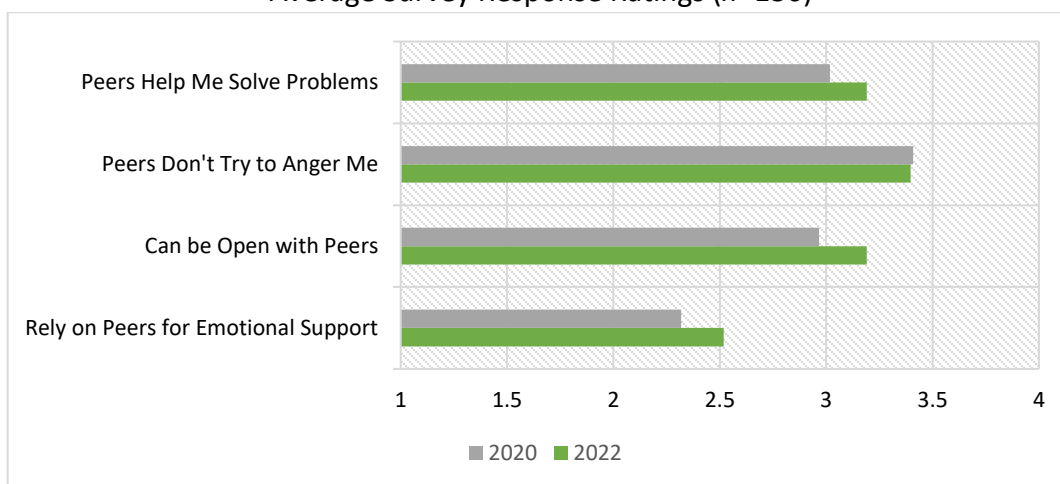
These responses suggest that on average, respondents somewhat agree their peers treat them with dignity and respect, treat them fairly and impartially, are open to input, and show interest in their views. The composite scale for peer internal procedural justice yielded a mean of 12.9 on a scale from 4 – 16 ($\alpha = 0.93$) with a midpoint of 10. This indicates respondents rate their peers moderately high in terms of internal procedural justice. On this composite scale there were no significant differences across respondent sex or race/ethnicity. Findings from the composite scale for peer internal procedural justice were consistent with 2020 findings (mean = 12.4), albeit slightly higher.

Figure 5.1. Internal Procedural Justice Items
Average Survey Response Ratings ($n=136$)



To assess whether officers viewed their peers as supportive, survey respondents were also asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements: I rely on my peers for emotional support, we are very open about what we think about things, my peers seem to like to make me mad, and my peers are good at helping me solve problems (Figure 5.2). These four items were used to create a scale of peer support wherein higher values indicate stronger peer support. The mean for the full sample on the peer support scale was 12.3 on a scale from 4 – 16 ($\alpha = 0.71$). This suggests that respondents view their peers as generally supportive and represents an increase from 2020 results (mean = 11.7). Mean comparisons across respondent sex and race/ethnicity suggest that this finding holds across groups and no significant differences were detected.

Figure 5.2. Peer Support Items
Average Survey Response Ratings ($n=136$)



Qualitative findings align with the quantitative survey findings presented above. Focus group respondents noted a lack of discord between officers, suggesting that internal peer conflicts may have decreased since the initial 2020 Organizational Climate Study Report. Some officers suggested that recently shared work stressors had brought people together, particularly those related to staffing issues and forced overtime. Others indicated that HPD personnel are civil in their interactions, with minimal workplace conflict reported.

Focus groups also highlighted the implementation of peer mentoring among new academy graduates. Respondents generally showed support for this program, though staffing issues were discussed as a potential hindrance to its effectiveness. While the program had initially been implemented with the goal of weekly meetings, one respondent participating as a peer mentor found they were unable to find agreeable times to meet this goal with their mentee due to both experiencing heavy workloads. Another respondent noted that few officers had enlisted as program mentors thus far, which may be another noted side-effect of enhanced workloads caused by low staffing levels. Focus group participants suggested this problem may be remedied

by incentivizing mentor positions, which might result in higher enrollment and program successes. They also noted that participation may grow over time as the program persists and as staffing stressors decrease.

Intergenerational Disconnect

Data gathered from focus groups suggests veteran HPD officers may experience distance from new officers in their approach to working in law enforcement. Some officers felt that newer personnel did not apply the same work ethic to policing and did not want to work to the level of expectation set by those who had spent more time with the organization. Interviewees also noted that recent hires are more likely to ignore the boundaries of paramilitary structure, as if they are trying to build friendships with supervisors rather than observing the hierarchical standards of the organization. This evidence of intergenerational disconnect was consistent with 2020 Organizational Climate Study findings.

A new theme that emerged in the focus groups suggested newer officers were more curious about the rationale behind decision-making in policing, and more likely to show enthusiasm for learning about their role in law enforcement. Focus group participants noted that the behaviors of junior officers were not outwardly disrespectful in the behaviors described. Rather, these behaviors were seemingly informed by a lack of time spent in policing and a desire to understand their role more.

Internal Gossip & Social Media

Internal gossip and inappropriate social media posting presented notable concerns for officers in the initial 2020 Organizational Climate Study. However, respondents in September 2022 focus groups did not acknowledge either of these issues as organizational stressors. The 2020 Organizational Climate Study reported that officers interviewed in 2019-2020 were “concerned with activity on public blogs that allow site visitors to post comments anonymously.” These anonymous comments often targeted officers in the department and created a “toxic” internal environment. Officers reported strong levels of visceral stress and anger resulting from the “feeding frenzy” that took place within the comment section of this blog. Since the publication of the initial Organizational Climate Study, activity on the site mentioned by officers has slowed and the widespread negative impacts have dissipated. As discussed in the Recommendations Progress Report, the HPD reported that the Code of Conduct review committee is currently considering if/how provisions on social media/technology should be added to the document. Although social media does not appear to present a paramount concern among respondents, the HPD should continue this process to increase transparency regarding expectations of HPD personnel’s use of social media.

Group-Specific Issues: Non-White, Female, & LGBTQ+ Officers

The 2020 HPD Organizational Climate study detailed a number of concerns raised by nonwhite, female, and LGBTQ+ officers with respect to exclusion, marginalization, harassment, insensitivity, and promotional discrimination. In contrast, 2022 focus group participants reported only the latter issue, feeling that women, LGBTQ+, and persons of color are underrepresented in promoted ranks compared to white males in the department. Though department-wide demographics show statistically proportional representation at all ranks, these existing perceptions highlight the need consistently work to improve transparency and fairness in all promotional and assignment processes.

Importantly, changes to physical infrastructure have been observed following the initial report. In 2020, female officers reported that the locker room was of inadequate size for the number of women employed by the Department. Since 2020, a locker room for female officers has been integrated into HPD Headquarters, providing resolution for this issue. It should be noted that several focus group respondents noted that this change has placed some male supervisors in the same locker room as male subordinates and that such interactions are not ideal long-term. We recognize the spatial restrictions that exist within an already established building and that solutions to address all locker room concerns may be ongoing.

Female officers interviewed in 2020 also voiced suggestions for breastfeeding accommodations, as the original 2012 HPD infrastructure had failed to adequately designate space for lactation rooms. Since this time, the HPD reports that a lactation space has been allocated and furnished with equipment and seating as of October 2022.

VI. DISCIPLINE, MISCONDUCT, AND HARASSMENT

Introduction

This section presents findings related to discipline, misconduct, and harassment. HPD personnel views on these topics are assessed using data gathered via surveys and focus groups. Addressing organizational weaknesses that contribute to cases of workplace discrimination and/or harassment is important not only to the finances of the department, but even more crucially, to upholding officer and community trust in the police institution. Likewise, procedural fairness in disciplinary processes is critical for organizational wellness and employee morale. Analyses are organized in categories of discipline and harassment. Results are contrasted with findings from the 2020 HPD climate study.

Discipline

To assess perceived fairness in disciplinary processes, survey respondents were asked: how fairly are the regulations defining officer misconduct applied in this department? A scale from 1 – 4 was used where 1 = extremely unfair and 4 = extremely fair. The mean response for the full sample was 2.3, suggesting that on average, respondents fall between somewhat unfair and somewhat fair on this question. Approximately 26% indicated that regulations defining officer misconduct were applied extremely unfairly, 31% indicated these were applied somewhat unfairly, 34% indicated these were applied somewhat fairly, and 9% thought these were applied extremely fairly. Taken together, respondents were split nearly in half with 57% of respondents indicating the disciplinary process was unfair (either somewhat or extremely) and 43% of respondents indicating the disciplinary process was fair (either somewhat or extremely). Officers working in patrol were significantly more likely to feel the disciplinary process was unfair ($t = 2.79, p = .006$).

In 2020, HPD interviewees highlighted a number of concerns related to inconsistency and favoritism in disciplinary processes and internal investigations. In contrast, 2022 focus group participants did not present much discussion around these issues. Instead, participants opted to address the citizen-based complaints and violations of HPD conduct that had recently garnered more attention from administrators and City leadership. Respondents noted that conduct violations related to wearing a mask in public interactions and using foul language during a citizen encounter were being punished. In particular, they felt frustration over how these violations were detected. Officers noted that when body worn camera footage is reviewed for a citizen complaint, it could end up resulting in punishment for violating masking rules or using inappropriate language (e.g., swearing) even when that was not the focus of the original citizen complaint. They voiced concerns that body-worn camera footage examined to assess citizen complaints was also being used to detect other minor officer infractions. This was perceived as an unfair practice by focus groups participants, as the potential infraction and associated punishment was unrelated to the complaint that prompted the footage review. Some noted that they felt such practices were motivated by the external political environment. Respondents were

also concerned about the increased potential for discipline when failing to submit reports in a timely manner. They noted that they understood this responsibility but felt that increased workloads due to short staffing made it particularly challenging to balance report writing expectations.

Survey respondents voiced greater frustrations with the disciplinary process. Participants stated that “the single most detrimental” action taken by the HPD toward its officers was the way in which officers were perceived to be “targeted” and disciplined for “minor and completely unrelated offenses.” Respondents mentioned that when citizen complaints were investigated, “every possible little thing is found” and officers face harsh discipline for minor violations “even if the complaint [itself] is not valid.” Similar to concerns voiced in the 2020 Organizational Climate Study, officers also reported feeling like they would face harsher discipline when incidents were made public and that the department has a tendency to “discipline officers for minor violations just to appease politicians.”

Several officers noted that body-worn camera video associated with incidents subject to citizen complaints were scrutinized for minor violations unrelated to the nature of the original complaint and that discipline could even target officers who were simply present on scene but were not subject to the allegations of the original complaint. A frequently cited example was the discipline of ancillary officers on-scene who may have failed to activate their body-worn cameras. In this follow-up study, we did not collect Internal Affairs Division (IAD) case data and we cannot objectively investigate the reality of these claims. Any objective violation of departmental policy, regardless of how minor, can be met with formal disciplinary action, and it is the prerogative of the department to do so. However, the HPD and its IAD should be mindful in weighing the costs and benefits of formal disciplinary actions for unintentional and minor policy violations when informal actions and training might better resolve problems without decreasing officer motivation.

Examination of Workplace Harassment

Sexual & Gender-Based Harassment

This study utilizes a common characterization of sexual harassment as comprising three different types of behaviors: 1) unwanted sexual attention (e.g., unwanted advances, unwanted touching), 2) sexual coercion (e.g., bribes, threats for sexual activity), and 3) gender-based harassment (e.g., offensive, gender-based and/or sexist jokes and comments). Since singular direct inquiries regarding whether a respondent feels he/she has experienced sexual harassment yield much lower rates of reporting than questions regarding behavioral experiences,¹⁰ this study used eight behaviorally descriptive items.

¹⁰ Remus Ilies et al., “Reported Incidence Rates of Work-Related Sexual Harassment in the United States: Using Meta-Analysis to Explain Reported Rate Disparities,” *Personnel Psychology* 56, no. 3 (2003).

Table 6.1. Sexual Harassment Incidents (Counts) by Sex and Race/Ethnicity					
	Full Sample	Female	Male	White	Non-White
Make unwanted attempts to engage in sexual activities	5	5	0	3	1
Touch you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	2	1	0	1	0
Make you feel like you were being bribed to engage in sexual behavior	1	1	0	1	0
Make you feel threatened for not being sexually cooperative	2	1	1	1	0

Survey respondents were asked about sexual harassment with eight questions about victimization experiences during the prior year. Two statements pertained to sexual attention harassment, two questions pertained to sexual coercion harassment, and four statements pertained to gender harassment. Approximately 4% (N = 6)¹¹ of the sample reported experiencing one or more of the two sexual attention harassment behaviors at least once in the last year and 96% (N = 130) of the sample reported never experiencing any sexual attention harassment behaviors in the prior year. Approximately 2% (N = 3) of the sample reported experiencing one or more of the two sexual coercion behaviors at least once in the last year. Sexual coercion items asked whether someone had made the respondent feel they were being bribed to engage in sexual behavior and whether someone had made the respondent feel threatened for not being sexually cooperative. Although findings related to sexual attention harassment align with 2020 results, the presence of sexual coercion behaviors was not found in the 2020 HPD Organizational Climate Study.

Table 6.2. Gender-Based Harassment Incidents (Counts) by Sex and Race/Ethnicity					
	Full Sample	Female	Male	White	Non-White
Repeatedly tell sexist stories/jokes	6	4	1	2	2
Make offensive remarks about appearance, body, sexual activities	11	6	4	7	3
Refer to people of your gender in insulting or offensive terms	8	5	1	4	1
Put you down or act condescending because of your gender	8	5	0	5	0

¹¹ Note: These are not sums of the full sample values as the same respondent may have responded to both statements, but is only counted once.

Approximately 16% (N = 22) of respondents reported experiencing one or more of the four forms of gender-based harassment at least once in the last year and 84% (N = 114) of the sample reported never experiencing any form of gender-based harassment in the prior year. 43% (N = 9) of female respondents reported gender-based harassment and 9% (N = 9) of male respondents reported gender-based harassment within the last year. These findings are generally consistent with 2020 findings and indicate a continued need to work toward a harassment-free work environment as even one instance of harassment is problematic and worth addressing.

Table 6.3. Race-Based Harassment Incidents (Counts) by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

	Full Sample	Female	Male	White	Non-White
Make negative or offensive comments regarding your race or ethnicity	14	2	8	1	8
Subject you to offensive jokes regarding your race or ethnicity	11	3	5	2	5
Touch you or make you feel uncomfortable because of your race or ethnicity	0	0	0	0	0
Physically threaten or assault you because of your race or ethnicity	0	0	0	0	0

This study also examines the prevalence of race-based harassment in the police department. We utilize two behaviorally descriptive measures of physical harassment and two behaviorally descriptive measures of verbal harassment. All four measures specify that the behavior occurred based on racial grounds—that it would not have occurred but for the perceived race, ethnicity, or nationality of the victim.¹² As with sexual harassment behaviors, we rely on a broad estimate of the prevalence of race-based harassment and include any behaviors that have occurred at least once in the past year. Respondents were asked how often in the past 12 months did someone at work victimize them based on their race/ethnicity. Approximately 11% (N = 15) of the sample reported at least one form of race/ethnicity-based harassment within the last year, while 89% (N = 121) of the sample indicated that they never experienced any race/ethnicity-based harassment in the last year. None of the respondents indicated experiencing physical forms of race-based harassment.

¹² Kimberly Schneider, Robert Hitland, and Phanikiran Radhakrishnan, "An Examination of the Nature and Correlates of Ethnic Harassment Experiences in Multiple Contexts," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 85, no. 1 (2000); Donna Chrobot-Mason, Belle Ragins, and Frank Linnehan, "Second Hand Smoke: Ambient Racial Harassment at Work," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 28, no. 5 (2013).

As noted in the prior section (V: Workplace Environment), focus group participants did not mention concerns around gender- and race-based harassment, discrimination, exclusion, or cultural insensitivity in their responses. The lack of qualitative responses in this area may indicate these issues are attracting less attention across the organization than previously recognized. Still, survey data suggests that harassment behaviors do occur. As noted in the 2020 Organizational Climate Study, any number of harassment incidents above zero is too many and organizations must consistently work to reduce these behaviors.

VII. OFFICER WELLNESS

Introduction

Policing is a stressful occupation.¹³ Officers are often responsible for the lives of others, managing adverse conditions and situations, and operating in a strict, hierarchical environment. Occupational stressors may adversely affect officers' behaviors, job performance, and levels of depression and burnout. At present, many of the issues noted in relation to officer wellness stem from staffing issues at the HPD; lacking resolution of these issues, many of the stressors noted by officers may continue to cause stress and worry for HPD personnel. Although this follow-up report does not evaluate the adverse impacts of job stressors, knowledge of officers' sources of stress may be helpful to build understanding of HPD cultural concerns and develop solutions to increase job satisfaction, performance, and retention.

Worries/Sources of Stress

Survey respondents were asked: Which of the following factors about a career in law enforcement worries you or causes you stress? They were instructed to "check all that apply" from a list of 16 items. Table 7.1 below lists 2020 and 2022 data for all 16 items and indicates the percentage (and number) of respondents who selected yes, this factor about a career in law enforcement worries them or causes them stress. In 2020, the most common worrisome or stress-causing job-related factor among the sample was "negative portrayal of law enforcement in the media" with 73% (N = 80) of the sample responding in the affirmative. The second, third, and fourth most common stressors in 2020 were "insufficient health insurance benefits," "negative public criticism of law enforcement officers' actions," and "insufficient salary" respectively. Approximately 65 – 67% of respondents indicated these factors as stressors. The fifth most common stressor among officers was "possible favoritism within law enforcement agencies" with 49% (N = 54) responding in the affirmative.

In 2022, the most common worrisome or stress-causing job-related factor among the sample was "insufficient health insurance benefits" with 76% (N = 103) of the sample responding in the affirmative, followed closely by "insufficient salary" with 74% (N = 101). The third, fourth, and fifth most common stressors among 2022 respondents were "negative portrayal of law enforcement in the media" (63%, N = 86), "negative public criticism of law enforcement officers' actions" (60%, N = 82), and "long hours" (53%, N = 72). These findings comport with the information presented in Section III: Staffing and Retention regarding 2022 survey respondents' rankings of primary concerns found in the 2020 HPD Organizational Climate Study.

¹³ Bruce Arrigo and Karyn Garsky. "Police Suicide: A Glimpse Behind the Badge." Critical Issues in Policing: Contemporary Readings, edited by R. Dunham and G. Alpert, 609-626. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1997.

Table 7.1. Descriptive Statistics for Worrisome or Stress-Causing Job-Related Factors				
	Yes (2020 Survey)		Yes (2022 Survey)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Insufficient salary	71	64.6%	101	74.3%
Insufficient health insurance benefits	74	67.3%	103	75.7%
Long hours	30	27.3%	72	52.9%
Shift work	20	18.2%	17	12.5%
Personal health or medical limitations	27	24.6%	30	22.1%
Difficulty meeting family obligations	52	47.3%	63	46.3%
Threat of injury	46	41.8%	35	25.7%
Threat of death	45	40.9%	33	24.3%
Family members' negative views regarding LE	10	9.1%	10	7.4%
Friends' negative views regarding LE	11	10.0%	11	8.1%
Negative public criticism of LE officers' actions	73	66.4%	82	60.3%
Negative portrayal of LE in the media	80	72.7%	86	63.2%
Paramilitary environment	1	0.9%	2	1.5%
Possible corruption within LE agencies	19	17.3%	9	6.6%
Possible favoritism within LE agencies	54	49.1%	45	33.1%
Fear of discipline from supervisors or administrators	27	24.6%	48	35.3%

Contrasted with 2020 survey results, 2022 findings indicate improvement in several areas related to officer stress. A lower percentage of respondents indicated stress in several notable areas: the potential for departmental corruption (2020: 17.3%, N = 19; 2022: 6.6%, N = 9), perceptions of favoritism in the department (2020: 49.1%, N = 54; 2022: 33.1%, N = 45), negative portrayals of law enforcement in the media (2020: 72.7%, N = 80 ; 2022: 63.2%, N = 86), threat of injury (2020: 41.8%, N = 46 ; 2022: 25.7%, N = 35), and threat of death (2020: 40.9%, N = 45; 2022: 24.3%, N = 33).

HPD personnel reported the most substantial increase in stress-causing occupational factors from 2020 to 2022 was related to working long hours. While this item was reported as a worrisome factor by 27.3% of respondents in the 2020 study (N = 30), data from the 2022 survey indicates 52.9% of participants (N = 72) found the long hours spent on the job to be a primary stressor, an increase of 25.6 percentage points. The percentage of respondents indicating insufficient salaries and insufficient health insurance benefits were stressors for them increased approximately 7-10 percentage points from 2020 to 2022, making these the top two concerns in 2022.

Long hours were also identified as one of the primary sources of occupational stress by focus group participants. Upon further examination, this issue appears to be largely related to staffing shortages and the order-in process. Several officers mentioned concerns related to HPD staffing issues, as many officers have left the Department since 2020, without replacement. Some officers reported working a minimum of 56 hours each week, often taking on voluntary overtime shifts to earn credits as a means of preventing ordered overtime on other days of the week. As outlined in the Recommendations Progress Report, this newly implemented system of earning credits was intended to reduce the number of order-ins and add some level of predictability and agency over officer schedules. Essentially, officers can now volunteer to fill vacant shifts which will designate them as a 1 or 2 on the list (depending on the number of shifts they volunteer for), rather than a 0. When a vacant shift cannot be filled through volunteering, officers are ordered in based on their designated number, starting first with 0s, then 1s, and finally 2s. Officers are also given a single pass opportunity every four-week cycle, but focus group respondents noted that the use of a pass is not always possible depending on staffing demands especially when City events require additional coverage.

This system indeed reduces the number of order-ins, but it replaces them with volunteered overtime. It does add agency and some predictability so that officers can volunteer to ensure they can attend important family events or other obligations, but it does not lessen the number of hours officers end up working. Some focus group participants noted that this system was better than previous order-in policies and was fairer than using seniority, but they felt as though it was not a long-term solution to their staffing shortages. In fact, several officers felt like the motivation for the policy change was to show that order-ins were down on paper, rather than to truly alleviate work overload for officers.

Issues related to inadequate staffing were identified as a principal element of stress and concern for each focus group, affecting officer wellness and burnout. Several officers noted feeling tired from working long hours and not sleeping enough. Staffing issues also affected officers' work/life balance in this manner, as many found it difficult to use vacation days with the understanding that it would generate more overtime work for their peers. Similarly, low staffing levels often left officers feeling limited in the amount of comp time they were permitted to use, and apprehensive about taking time off for reasons related to mental health, as they knew this would affect the officers ordered in to backfill their shifts. Focus group respondents also felt more should be done to promote officer wellness, as the HPD programs implemented have not done enough to alleviate concerns related to wellness and burnout.

Focus group respondents recognized that concerns related to staffing have recently been associated with low officer morale. Common morale-related concerns reported by officers included low staffing levels, high workloads, and few opportunities for promotion and advancement. Other topics related to officer morale included feeling unappreciated, poor equipment, and low salary levels compared to other departments. Notably, this last concern, insufficient salary, presented one of the highest increases among stressful job-related factors. It should be noted that HPD contract negotiations were ongoing during the research period, and salary-related issues addressed may not reflect current concerns among HPD officers. Since this time, all ranks above officer have received a pay increase to appropriately reflect wage gaps between ranks that arose from a mid-contract pay increase for officers only. Finally, the new contract includes an 11% pay increase for personnel over the next four years to improve retention and start to raise HPD pay to a level that is comparable to other departments in the state (see Part I: Recommendations Progress Report for additional details).

Participants noted these areas for improvement had also been relayed by peers who recently left the department to work for other law enforcement agencies. Issues related to staffing and officer wellness should be a focal point for administrators moving forward. By addressing these concerns HPD may benefit from increased officer morale and retention.

Job Satisfaction

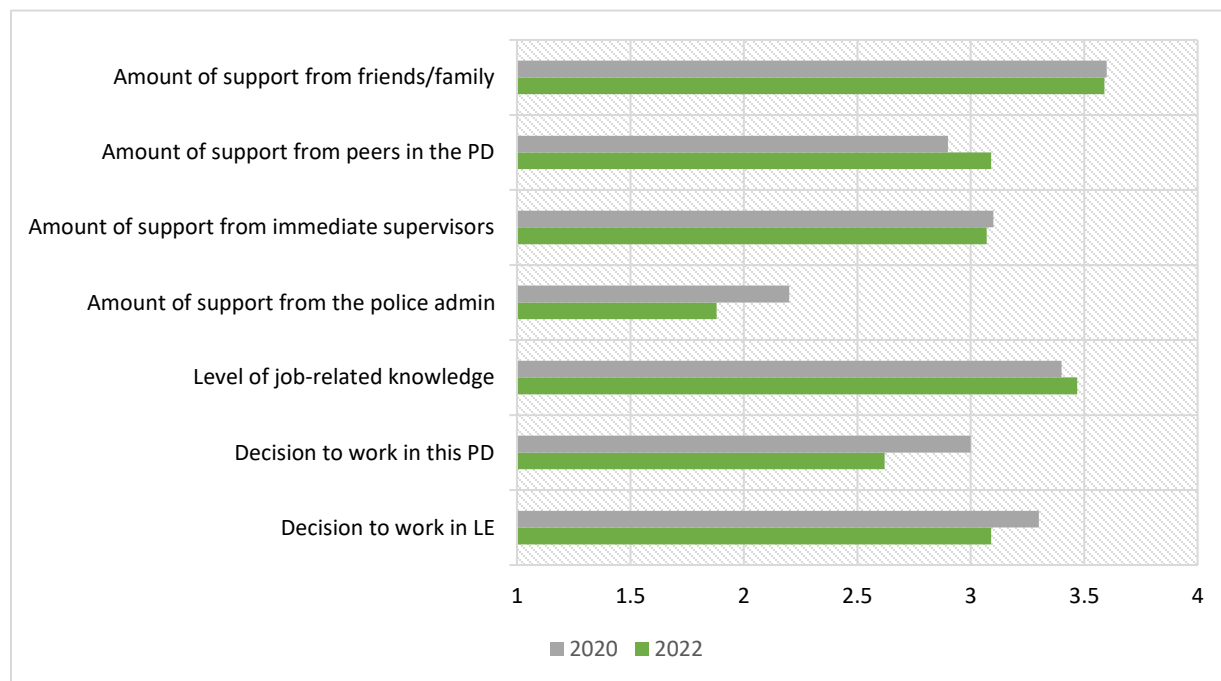
The current organizational assessment used a series of questions to examine officers' job satisfaction within the HPD. Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the following seven factors from 1 (extremely unsatisfied) to 4 (extremely satisfied): 1) my decision to work in law enforcement, 2) my decision to work in this police department, 3) my level of job-related knowledge, 4) amount of support from the police administration, 5) amount of support from my immediate supervisors, 6) amount of support from my peers in the police department, and 7) amount of support from my friends/family. A summative scale with strong reliability ($\alpha = 0.76$) yielded a mean of 20.8 on a scale of 7 to 28, suggesting that respondents are generally satisfied with their jobs (midpoint = 17.5). Figure 7.1 below shows the average survey response rating for each item. On average, respondents were least satisfied with the amount of support

from the police administration and most satisfied with the amount of support from their family and friends. These findings align with results from the 2020 Organizational Climate Study.

Dissatisfaction with administrative support was also cited as a concern of focus group participants. Most respondents reported few interactions with administration or no direct contact at all. Participants who reported direct interactions with administration had reported these interactions as professional. Still, officers and supervisors felt communication could be improved, particularly in regard to the policy development process that affects day-to-day HPD operations in patrol. Additional detail on perceptions of communication from leadership can be found in Section IV: Transparency, Communication, and Fairness.

While focus group respondents recognized that the Chief held an open-door policy with officers to vent their concerns, some felt the airing of departmental grievances may negatively impact their careers and result in retaliatory actions in the future. Importantly, it was recognized that HPD Chiefs had recently relayed emails to line staff commending them on their work, which was appreciated by the recipients. Similarly, officers appreciated administrative personnel recognizing the quality of their job performance in ceremonies conferring honors and awards. Additional detail on recognition and praise from leadership can be found in Section IV: Transparency, Communication, and Fairness.

Figure 7.1. Job Satisfaction Items
Average Survey Response Ratings (n=136)



Motivation & Apprehension

To assess work motivation, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree with the following four items: 1) It is difficult to be motivated at work, 2) I do not enjoy my career in law enforcement, 3) I want to quit this career and find another, 4) and I stop (traffic or pedestrian) as few people as possible while on duty. These items were reverse coded and combined to create a summative scale where higher values indicate a higher level of work motivation. The average on the work motivation scale was 9.4 on a scale from 4 – 16 ($\alpha = 0.81$), suggesting that respondents report somewhat low levels of motivation to perform their job (midpoint = 10). This average is a notable drop from the summative scale average of 11.6 among respondents to the 2020 survey. In contrast to officers in other divisions, officers working in patrol report significantly lower levels of motivation.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with two statements related to apprehension toward use of force: 1) I am apprehensive about using force even though it may be necessary, and 2) I am fearful of losing my job in times I have to use force. Response options were 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Higher values indicate higher levels of apprehension about use of force. The average response for the first item was 2.7 (2.4 in 2020) and 2.8 (2.5 in 2020) for the second item. There were no differences in reported apprehension across sex, race/ethnicity, or division.

Among the focus group participants, officers reported feeling more hesitation in using force to gain compliance. Some respondents suggested this result was in-part a byproduct of the Connecticut Police Accountability Bill. Their accounts suggest the bill could be helpful for holding police accountable and promoting integrity in officer behaviors. However, officer statements also suggest that police have felt more disrespected by the public since 2020, and do not feel supported by City officials. These feelings have resulted in more apprehension toward the use of force, with focus groups noting that some officers may delay coercive tactics until deemed absolutely necessary, when they may have been used in more immediate contact prior to recent developments such as the accountability bill. Several focus group respondents noted that in some instances, these hesitations may put officers at an increased risk of injury or death.

VIII. EQUIPMENT, RESOURCES, AND TRAINING

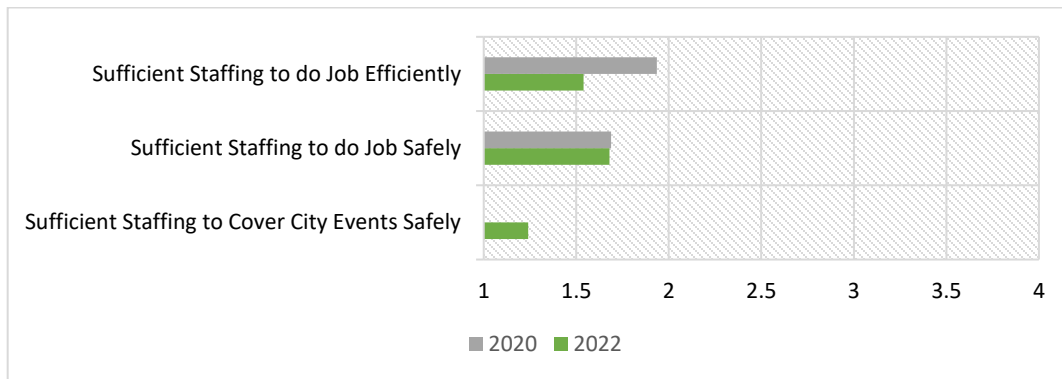
Introduction

Police officers must be provided with equipment, resources, and training necessary to meet optimal performance and organizational expectations. With opportunities for training and provision of appropriate resources, police administration can show officers that their safety and career interests are valued and supported. Organizational limitations may be partially attributable to a department's lack of equipment, training, and resources provided. This section examines the personnel resources, equipment, operational resources, and training opportunities made available to HPD employees. It is important to note that the current study does not evaluate the Department's equipment, resources, and training, but instead focuses on officers' *perceptions* of the sufficiency and availability of HPD equipment, resources, and training. Because staffing inadequacies underlie many of the issues noted in this section, we recommend a prioritized focus on hiring and personnel retention as a necessary step towards addressing these concerns.

Personnel Resources

Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements: 1) There are enough officers on my shift or in my division for me to do my job efficiently and 2) There are enough officers on my shift to maintain officer safety. On a scale from 1 – 4 with 1 indicating strongly disagree that there are enough officers to perform the job efficiently to 4 indicating strongly agree that there are enough officers to perform the job efficiently, the mean score for the full sample was 1.5, suggesting respondents do not feel there are enough officers to do their job efficiently (Figure 8.1). Approximately 67% (N = 90) of the sample strongly disagreed and 15% (N = 20) somewhat disagreed that there were enough officers on their shift or in their division to do their job efficiently. Only 15% (N = 20) somewhat agreed there was enough and 3% (N = 4) strongly agreed there was enough staff to do their job efficiently. These findings demonstrate an increase in staffing concerns from 2020. In 2020, 54% of respondents strongly disagreed that there were enough officers to do their job efficiently.

Figure 8.1. Efficiency and Safety of Staffing Levels: Average Survey Response Ratings (n=136)



Lastly, respondents were asked how sufficient the minimum staffing level is on their shift or in their division. 87% (N = 116) of the sample indicated the minimum staffing level was not at all sufficient, 11% (N = 14) indicated it was sufficient, and 2% (N = 3) indicated it was more than sufficient. This also demonstrates a change from 2020 where 71% of respondents indicated that minimum staffing was not at all sufficient.

While the order-in process has recently been overhauled to include all personnel on a list for mandatory overtime rather than only junior officers, challenges related to low staffing levels have caused a recent excess of order-ins. Focus group participants reported that all patrol shifts are at minimum staffing levels and officers often found themselves overextended in their work. As noted in the previous section (Section VII: Officer Wellness), patrol officers reported working a minimum of 56 hours per week. Through the new order-in process, officers were able to anticipate and work more desired overtime shifts to prevent ordered overtime on other days of the week, but the excess of mandatory overtime shifts persists despite the introduction of these changes.

Focus group participants cited the lowering of shift minimums and expansion of patrol areas as one of their chief concerns related to low staffing levels. With fewer staff available, some recognized that specialty units have been unable to take on new officers. Offering more positions among specialized divisions should be prioritized when staffing levels have increased to avoid staff perceptions of stunted mobility and advancement in the organization.

With decreased staffing levels, HPD ten-hour cars bridging the gap between shifts have also been removed from the force, which staff recognized as an issue creating more work for them upon arrival for their shifts. Respondents also noted that reduction of staff has also impacted their abilities to respond to calls and complete paperwork in a timely manner. By attempting to meet the previous standard of call volume with fewer staff, officers may find themselves stretched thin, with little time afforded to complete reports by the end of their shifts.

Equipment & Operational Resources

In officer surveys, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 – 4 with 1 indicating strongly disagree to 4 indicating strongly agree: 1) I have the resources and equipment that I need to do my job efficiently and 2) I have the resources and equipment that I need to do my job safely.

In terms of having the resources and equipment to do their job efficiently, the mean score for the full sample was 2.0, suggesting that overall respondents somewhat disagreed with this statement (Figure 8.2). Approximately 64% (N = 87) of the sample either strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed that they have the resources and equipment to do their job efficiently. In terms of having the resources and equipment needed to perform their job safely, 57% (N = 77) of the sample either strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed. The mean response on this question was 2.2 on a scale from 1 – 4.

Figure 8.2. Efficiency and Safety of Equipment/Resources:
Average Survey Response Ratings (n=136)

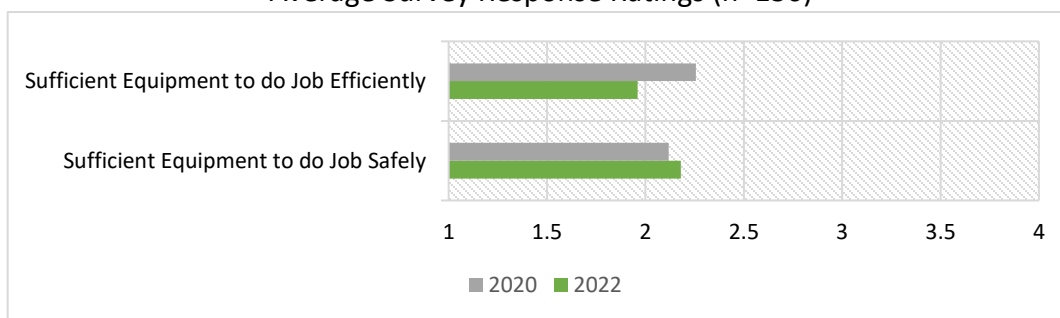


Table 8.1. Descriptive Statistics for Officer Ratings of Equipment-Related Priority Needs				
	2020 Mean Priority Rating (Scale 1-3)	2022 Mean Priority Rating (Scale 1-3)	2022 Top 5 Ranked:	
			Patrol	Specialized Division
Cruisers	2.84	2.72	1	1
Bulletproof Vests	2.88	2.59	4*	3
Firearms	2.75	2.43		5
Less-than-lethal weapons	2.59	2.27		
Uniforms	2.36	2.29	4*	
Flashlights	2.13	2.05		
Radios	2.75	2.47	5	
Medical Kits	2.30	1.99		
Narcan	1.90	1.62		
Laptops	2.61	2.46	3	4
CAD/RMS	2.61	2.65	2	2

*tied/equal

HPD vehicles were a primary source of concern for officers assigned to patrol and specialized divisions. Focus group respondents held that many of the Department's cars have fallen into disrepair and experienced issues with maintenance, worn upholstery, and/or non-working lights and sirens. With these issues, officers understood that there were not enough cars for all officers at present and felt concerned that the number of cars/officers were assigned to larger patrol areas due to staffing shortages. Interviewees also reported frustration when noting that HPD administration is afforded new vehicles that are not relegated to patrol purposes, when officers are made to work with older cars experiencing mechanical issues.

Focus group respondents also shared feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration in working with the updated CAD/RMS system. Notably, officers working patrol and in specialized divisions ranked CAD/RMS as their second-highest equipment-related priority. Officers often found CAD/RMS to be time-consuming, lacking in user-friendly elements, and acknowledged that more hands-on training would be helpful for learning to work efficiently on the updated system. Some participants noted connectivity issues with the system when in their vehicles, which occasionally resulted in the loss of unsaved progress on their written reports. Issues related to the CAD/RMS system were described as improving over time, with major frustrations from the initial rollout being resolved, and other challenges popping up as the system has been in use. Others acknowledged that their department-issued laptops did not work well (laptops represented the third and fourth ranked equipment-related concerns for patrol and specialized units, respectively) and had low esteem in the report writing room computers. Participants indicated some report writing rooms with CAD/RMS were too proximal to staff gathering areas, which has contributed to distraction and difficulty in completing reports in a timely manner. Respondents suggested the addition of substations with computers may be helpful for developing productive work habits around report writing.

Training

Training priorities varied between patrol officers and those in specialized divisions. Both groups ranked high priority for training related to: active shooters, FTO, defensive tactics, and firearms. Independently, patrol officers prioritized trainings for leadership and school violence, while specialized units ranked legal updates highest amongst the selections offered. Although it was not included in the options offered, officers participating in the focus groups suggested more training with CAD/RMS would be helpful for improving officers' proficiency with the updated system. Neither group ranked priority for trainings related to less-than-lethal force, EDP response, sexual assault response, and domestic violence responses.

Focus group respondents mentioned that HPD Academy administration had been helpful with notifying officers when various training sessions were made available. Some interviewees reported frustration with the lack of training available for new sergeants, lieutenants, and other supervisory positions. Others suggested that staffing shortages have made it difficult to incentivize training for HPD officers when they often felt overworked, and approved training

requests would create overtime for their peers in their absence. Some officers felt their training requests were less likely to be approved because of low staffing, unless the training was required and pertained to their immediate position. However, HPD data challenges this latter point, indicating 36/38 training requests were approved in 2020 and 178/198 requests were approved in 2021. Because officers still *perceive* a lack of access to training, it may be helpful to offer transparency in decision-making when requests are denied. This would be useful for building officers' confidence in the training system and offer insight to the process for future requests.

Table 8.2. Descriptive Statistics for Officer Ratings of Training Priority Needs			
	Mean Priority Rating (Scale 1-3)	Top 5 Ranked:	
		Patrol	Specialized Division
Defensive tactics	2.51	4*	5
Firearms	2.56	4*	4
Less-than-lethal force	2.43		
EDP response	2.35		
Sexual assault response	2.11		
Domestic violence response	2.32		
Legal updates	2.64		1
Leadership	2.53	2	
Field training officer (FTO)	2.56	3	2
School violence	2.22	5	
Active shooter	2.60	1	3

*tied/equal

Respondents expressed excitement at the prospects offered by the job rotation system but noted that it had been dormant as a result of staffing inadequacies and the operational demands of patrol. The job rotation system had initially been implemented to expose officers to career development opportunities and social networks in the HPD. At present, the job rotation program still has two active participants. Expansion of this program is recommended when personnel resources allow.

IX. DISCUSSION

The HPD solicited an organizational climate assessment in 2019. This assessment yielded a publicly available report in 2020 (Hartford Police Department Organizational Climate Study: Final Report) that outlined eight key priority areas of improvement inclusive of 74 specific recommendations to generate organizational change. Priority areas of improvement were to: 1) address intra-organizational friction; 2) strengthen transparency and communication; 3) improve performance management and career development; 4) manage personnel behavior and conflicts; 5) engage in culture management; 6) reduce task overload, resource limitation, and officer stress; 7) champion officers in patrol; and 8) expand deliberate recruitment and retention activity. The HPD received the feedback and began working on ways to implement recommendations to address key areas of concern.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which presented the HPD with new challenges to navigate, the Department has continued efforts on organizational improvement and has worked diligently to implement recommendations. In 2022, the HPD requested a follow-up study to better understand whether the changes they made over the last two years addressed recommendations appropriately and whether they were starting to have an impact on the organization's climate broadly. The HPD should be commended for their continued willingness to assess their internal operations. This willingness demonstrates that the HPD administration and leadership is open to making changes based on the 2020 Organizational Climate Study.

The findings from the follow-up study are presented in two parts. The first is Part I: Recommendations Progress Report, and the current study represents Part II: Survey and Focus Group Results. As discussed in the findings of the Recommendations Progress Report, the HPD has made measurable strides in addressing recommendations. Specifically, they have either implemented or sustained 64.9% of the recommendations (N = 48) and they have started to make progress on an additional 20 recommendations (29.7%). The goal of the current study was to determine if and how these changes have impacted the working experience among HPD sworn personnel. This report presents the updated and comparative findings across each subsection. Below, we offer a summary of these findings.

Summary

Staffing and Retention

The staffing of sworn personnel in the HPD has declined since the 2020 Organizational Climate Study from 404 to 375 in 2022. This decline demonstrates a trend of increasing turnover rates from 6.4% in 2016 to 11.5% in 2021. The turnover rate is primarily driven by an increase in resignations, rather than expected retirements. The burden of reduced staffing is acutely impacting patrol who are working extra shifts either through order-ins or volunteered backfill.

The HPD must continue to monitor resignations and predicted retirements to ensure the current staffing burden does not increase further. This process must be bolstered by concerted recruitment and retention efforts.

The demographics of the Department have remained fairly consistent over the last two years with slight increases in the proportion of females (from 14.1% to 14.7%) and racial/ethnic minorities (from 32.9% to 34.5%). Although the department does not yet mirror the demographics of the City of Hartford, the HPD falls above the national average for departments servicing similarly sized populations and should be commended for their efforts to promote diversity. Although focus group data indicates that the HPD must continue to focus on diversifying those in leadership positions, quantitative comparisons between ranks and the department overall did not indicate any statistically significant over- or under-representations of women officers or officers of color.

The HPD is aware that recruitment and retention are critical areas for them to address in order to alleviate staffing shortages. One strategy that the HPD has implemented is a Mentorship Program for recent academy graduates. This program demonstrates potential and should be bolstered and assessed over time to ensure new personnel are offered additional resources to help them succeed and stay employed at the HPD. Findings indicate continued efforts to increase transparency around paths toward promotion and special assignments are needed to ensure officers understand how to reach their career goals at the HPD, rather than seeking employment elsewhere. Another critical concern related to staffing and retention is salary. Although the HPD alone could not modify salaries, the mid-contract increase for officers and the recent salary increases for other ranks outlined in the new CBA demonstrate successful collaborative efforts between the City, the HPD, and the HPU to improve working conditions and increase retention.

Transparency, Communication, and Fairness

Consistent with findings from the 2020 Organizational Climate Study, qualitative and quantitative data indicate a strong divide between the rank-and-file and the HPD administration. Specifically, survey respondents do not perceive the police administration to regularly demonstrate the qualities and practices associated with a strong level of transformational leadership. This finding is even stronger among patrol officers who rate administration significantly lower than specialized divisions, which, in tandem with other findings, offers insight into the ways in which challenges specific to patrol may continue to fuel this divide. Increased communication from and interaction with command staff remains a consistent area in need of improvement. Focus groups noted that recognition and praise efforts have increased over the last two years, but communication from leadership continues to be perceived as lacking. Data revealed that officers, particularly those working in patrol, feel unappreciated by the administration. Immediate supervisors are viewed more favorably among respondents, which aligns with 2020 Climate Study findings. More specifically, respondents rate their supervisors moderately high in terms of internal procedural justice.

Findings, particularly quantitative results, demonstrate that the HPD should continue to increase transparency related to assignment and promotional processes to ensure these processes are fair and perceived as such. Focus group results did not highlight as many fairness-related concerns as the 2020 findings, which suggest important improvements. However, the HPD should continue to prioritize transparency to foster a fair working environment. It appears as though concerns regarding fairness in promotions are not related to the testing procedures, but rather the selection from the list of eligible candidates. Similarly, concerns related to assignments are focused on subjectivity in some of the prerequisites, highlighting areas that the HPD can focus on as they continue their efforts to increase transparency and fairness.

Workplace Environment

Overall, findings indicate some improvement to the workplace environment, particularly around peer relationships. Although quantitative ratings of peers' internal procedural justice remained moderately high in 2020 and 2022, qualitative data no longer suggested that workplace conflict between peers was a prominent concern. Some respondents suggested that internal peer conflicts are rare because they share the workplace stressors associated with being overworked and this pulls them together as a way to cope. Relatedly, social media and workplace gossip concerns were not readily brought up in the 2022 findings which may suggest some improvement in these areas.

The HPD has modified the allocation of locker room space to increase space for female officers. In addition, a lactation space has been created to address a critical infrastructure gap noted in the 2020 Organizational Climate Study. These efforts are helpful and signal a willingness to make necessary changes to better accommodate women officers. We recognize that physical space is limited at the HPD, but recommend continued assessment of infrastructural issues by soliciting input from officers.

Discipline, Misconduct, and Harassment

Consistent with 2020 Organizational Climate Study findings, over 20% of respondents felt that regulations defining officer misconduct were applied extremely unfairly. Although this was also a common finding in 2020 interviews, 2022 focus groups did not highlight major concerns related to discipline and misconduct. With that said, one important exception that participants highlighted was the review process for body-worn camera footage. Focus groups noted that footage is reviewed in the process of investigating citizen complaints and there have been instances where minor infractions (e.g., foul language, mask wearing) unrelated to a complaint have been found during the course of review, and resulted in punishment. This process was perceived to be unfair. The HPD should consider revisiting this process to ensure fairness and transparency in disciplinary processes.

Although examples of workplace harassment were not brought up by focus group respondents, any instance of harassment (as demonstrated by the survey findings), is too many

and must be addressed on an ongoing basis. Ensuring that reducing instances of harassment is a priority is critical for creating a safe and inclusive working environment for all personnel.

Officer Wellness

The top five stressors among 2022 respondents were insufficient health insurance benefits, insufficient salary, negative portrayal of law enforcement in the media, negative public criticism of law enforcement officers' actions, and long hours. Two of these stressors, salary and long hours, were highlighted by nearly every focus group participant. As noted above, the salary changes created by the new CBA were not yet in effect during the data collection phase of this study. Therefore, the HPD should assess perceptions of salary and benefits after sufficient time under the new CBA has passed. The HPD does have control over long working hours, to some extent, but is continuously facing the challenge of insufficient staffing.

Due to staffing shortages and demands, the HPD has had to increase their reliance on order-ins. Although this process has changed to incentivize officers to volunteer to fill vacant shifts to increase control over their schedules, the result is still nearly the same. Sworn personnel, especially patrol officers, feel overwhelmed with the number of hours they need to work to ensure adequate coverage across the city. The amount of time spent working was described as contributing to burnout and negatively impacting officer mental health. The domino effect of staffing shortages reported earlier reverberates into officer wellness and highlights the importance of addressing this issue.

Consistent with 2020 findings, respondents appear to be generally satisfied with their jobs but are dissatisfied with administrative support. Notable shifts between 2020 and 2022 findings related to job motivation were detected. Specifically, motivation has decreased from 11.6 in 2020 to 9.4 in 2022. In particular, patrol reports significantly lower levels of motivation compared to those working in other divisions. This aligns with the concerns that were raised in other sections of this report regarding the increased demand that patrol continues to take on.

Equipment, Resources, and Training

In comparison to 2020 findings, a larger proportion of respondents strongly disagreed that they had enough officers to do their job safely or efficiently. Additionally, almost 90% of respondents indicated minimum staffing was not at all sufficient. These concerns were present in 2020 findings but appear to have worsened. Concerns related to sufficient staffing are not surprising given the findings throughout other sections of this report and reiterate the importance of increasing recruitment and retention efforts.

Findings were generally consistent with 2020 findings regarding equipment. A large proportion of respondents still report insufficient equipment to perform their job safely and efficiently. Cruisers appear to still be the main equipment-related priority according to respondents. Although the HPD reports that they have purchased several new and used cruisers to supplement their fleet (see Recommendations Progress Report), efforts to update the fleet

must remain a priority. It is equally important that new vehicles be allocated appropriately to patrol as they spend the most hours using these vehicles. Despite granting a large percentage of training requests, respondents did not perceive training as readily available. Highlighting these percentages may increase awareness and encourage officers, who previously perceived the likelihood of training approval as unlikely, to submit requests for desired training opportunities. Additionally, it may be worthwhile to develop tools and user-friendly manuals for officers to reference when facing issues with the CAD/RMS system, as some challenges associated with the new system were noted by respondents.

Conclusion

The HPD has been deliberate and intentional in their approach toward addressing organizational shortcomings. Despite few major shifts being detected in officer perceptions, the ways in which the HPD has worked to address recommendations should be recognized and lauded. In fact, minimal shifts in workplace perceptions among a sea of changes is useful for understanding the challenges the HPD faces and for developing a targeted path forward. The findings presented in both parts of this follow-up study demonstrate that implementing and evaluating organizational change is critical and useful, but many of these changes cannot be “felt” when major challenges related to staffing remain paramount.

In terms of a hierarchy of needs, it is clear from the findings that increasing staffing to reduce the burden of being overworked, particularly in patrol, is essential. This does not mean that the HPD should stop their efforts to address recommendations, but rather, it highlights that even well-intentioned efforts may not yield meaningful or measurable changes on desired metrics until primary staffing needs are met. Organizational change is a slow and long-term process that requires ongoing efforts, assessments, and modifications. We recommend that the HPD continue to work toward addressing recommendations in light of these findings in a manner that fosters input and agency from the rank-and-file. Simultaneously, we recommend that the HPD focus on efforts to prioritize recruitment and retention. Some of these efforts will likely need to involve collaboration with the City of Hartford to ensure adequate funding to replenish personnel that the HPD has lost over the last few years. The findings in this report can assist the HPD as they continue to implement and assess recommendations going forward. The HPD’s ongoing pursuit of evaluations that utilize employee perceptions to gauge their organization’s climate positions them well for long-term improvement.

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