



MPD LOOKING AT FIRST NET INCREASE IN OFFICERS SINCE 2011

The Operation: Safe Community crime plan calls for hiring and retaining more commissioned law enforcement personnel, coupled with increased emphasis on data-driven, proactive policing and a zero-based assessment of the optimal number of commissioned officers needed.

Both the Memphis Police Department (MPD) and the Shelby County Sheriff's Department are making progress increasing the number of commissioned officers. In this edition, we take a closer look at MPD's officer staffing levels.

Since 2011, MPD has dropped from approximately 2500 commissioned officers to below 2000 officers, a net loss of about 20 percent of the force. That loss cannot be made up overnight. It must be a multi-year effort. Under Mayor Jim Strickland, the City of Memphis has established a goal of increasing the MPD complement to 2300 officers by 2020. The City's efforts include:

- Adding approximately 200 new officers per year:
- Hiring approximately 100 Police Service Technicians (PSTs) per year, freeing up commissioned officers for other duties and serving as an important pipeline for new police recruits:
- Reducing commissioned officer turnover through higher retention levels: and
- Building a culture within MPD focused on collaboration, innovation, accountability, and service.

In August of this year, MPD graduated 85 new officers from its training academy out of a class of 108 (and for which there were 2,180 applicants). This was the largest class in years. A current class of approximately 100 enrollees (out of 1,985 applicants) is scheduled to graduate in January. It will be followed by additional classes in 2018, and the City will be stepping up its lateral hiring efforts as well.

As of the end of October, there were 66 PSTs on the MPD force, with efforts underway to ramp up that number.

While slightly over 100 MPD commissioned officers have retired or resigned so far this year, as of November 17, 611 out of 694 officers eligible for four-year retention bonuses (88 percent) had signed up - a very encouraging sign looking ahead. (These bonuses are possible due to the generous commitment of the private sector to fund them through an agreement between the Crime Commission and the City of Memphis.)

As of November 28, the commissioned officer count at MPD was 1,965. With the steps already taken and those in the pipeline, MPD is on the verge of its first net increase in commissioned officers since 2011. Our thanks to Mayor Strickland for making this part of the Operation: Safe Community plan a priority and to the Memphis City Council for its support.

FOLLOW UP TO BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DELINQUENCY SYMPOSIUM

Almost 40 percent of all youth in the community charged with delinquent (criminal) acts are repeat offenders. A key goal of the Operation: Safe Community crime plan is enhancement of intervention efforts to reduce that percentage significantly.

As part of the plan, Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell has taken the lead in organizing a Crime Commission working group to develop an assessment center, with the goal of reducing juvenile crime through the provision of appropriate services to justice-involved youth and their families.

On October 17, the Public Safety Institute at the University of Memphis and the Urban Child Institute co-sponsored a symposium at which the working group's concept of an assessment center

to reduce the level of delinquency was shared with the broader community. Over 200 community stakeholders attended. A number of questions were submitted in writing which time did not allow panelists to answer. Those questions and responses are now available on the Public Safety Institute website at www.memphis.edu/psi (click on "About the Symposium") and the Crime Commission website at www.memphiscrime.org (click on "Questions and Answers from Symposium on Breaking the Cycle of Delinquency"). In addition, the questions and responses should be available soon as well on the Shelby County website - www.shelbycountyttn.gov.

The center is still in its development stage, and the responses to questions should be viewed with the understanding that the center model is still a work in progress. (Please note that several terms are used interchangeably in referring to the proposed assessment center, including juvenile assessment center (JAC), youth assessment center (YAC), and youth assessment and resource center (YARC). A name for the center has not yet been determined.



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