

HIGHLIGHTS



from the

SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN

— 2022 — 2024 —



Highlights from the Salem Police 2022-2024 Strategic Plan

The document highlights significant outcomes from the Salem Police Department's first strategic plan. Details are listed under each of the strategic priority areas: Safety, Legitimacy, and Excellence. The following symbols are used throughout the report:

-  Denotes accomplishments achieved.
-  Describes challenges encountered.

SAFETY

STRATEGY: Enhance Community Livability

Collaborate on the issue of homelessness

To better address homelessness, the department connected with local organizations to establish **partnership agreements with homeless service providers and stakeholders**. Formal agreements helped establish a dialogue for working together with a common goal.

The department also initiated monthly meetings, bringing together homeless service providers and Homeless Services Team officers to ensure **shared understanding and enhance collaboration and coordination**. The sessions, led by a lieutenant, focus on coordinated efforts aimed at achieving positive outcomes with minimal law enforcement action. As an example of the level of coordination now occurring, in 2024, 12 service provider meetings were convened with an average of 50 service organizations and advocates represented.



Several partners also established [online resource lists](#) which officers use to direct [homeless neighbors for assistance](#), including the established 211 and 988 service lines.

Additionally, a module on the topic of homelessness services and partner roles was developed and now routinely presented to recruit officers and as part of departmental annual in-service training.

Raise the bar for crisis response training

Crisis intervention and de-escalation training is critical to **officer skill-building** when it comes to crisis response. The department was an early adopter of the nationally recognized Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics ([ICAT](#)) training program. ICAT teaches officers to diffuse dangerous and dynamic situations involving unarmed individuals. The department hosted an ICAT train-the-trainer course, wherein several Salem officers, and others from up and down the west coast, became certified ICAT trainers.



These de-escalation techniques (verbal and non-verbal communication tools, and active listening skills) are now **weaved into other training disciplines**. For example, the department's

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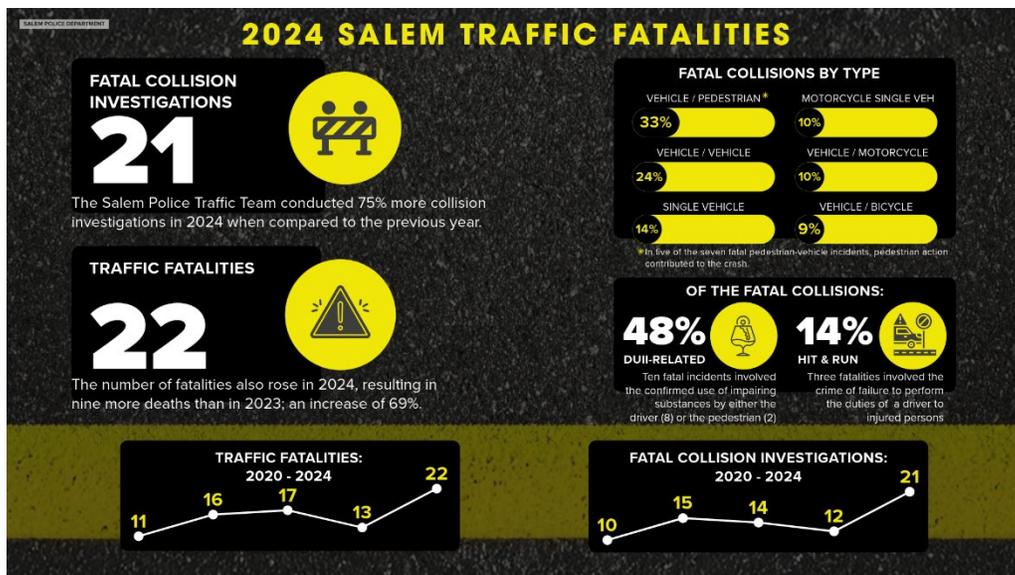
virtual training simulator program incorporates transitions to scenario-based training that mimics real-life situations officers may encounter in the field.

The implementation of **process documentation** ensures all training is properly documented and assessed for effectiveness. Lesson plans detail the skills addressed, key training points, and itemized instruction time.

A comprehensive traffic safety approach

The department continued its educational efforts using a variety of means including partners, such as Salem-Keizer Public Schools and the [Safe Routes to Schools](#) program, emphasizing school zone safety and enforcement. Data-informed awareness campaigns **increased community education and outreach** via social media and other communication methods.

Tragically, 22 people were killed in collisions in 2024, a record year for **traffic fatalities**.



 Collision data that year showed 42% of fatal collisions involved pedestrians and bicyclists, and 48% involved the use of drugs or alcohol by either the driver or the pedestrian.

Collision data showed 42% of fatal collisions involved pedestrians and bicyclists. Moreover, ten (48%) involved the confirmed use of impairing substances by either the driver or the pedestrian.

 The Traffic Team experienced reduced staffing levels over the course of the three-year plan, with the seven-member team down to one sergeant and three officers at its low point. The team returned to full capacity toward the end of the strategic plan period.

Collaboration and communication were essential to continuing the work. Firstly, cooperative agreements were established with regional partners for targeted enforcement in high-traffic areas. The multi-agency projects are “force multipliers,” benefitting Salem and surrounding communities. Additionally, a central communication point was created to share high-risk locations and community areas of concern with the broader department, providing patrol officers key information for proactive enforcement and establishing a shared sense of ownership and focus (see page 7).

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The focus on **reducing fatal and injury collisions** will continue into the 2025-2027 strategic plan.

Leveraging STOP Data

Statistical Transparency of Policing, or STOP data analysis, has become agency standard practice. The department submitted all required [STOP data](#) to the State throughout the plan period and assessed each annual statewide report. Traffic enforcement efforts were data-driven and focused on the locations and violations that contributed to serious collisions.

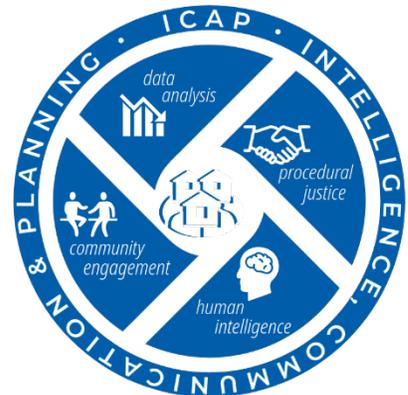
In the summer of 2022, Salem Police partnered with the [Oregon Association Chiefs of Police](#) to offer vouchers for equipment violations instead of tickets. The vouchers, redeemable at local auto parts stores in the community, serve to improve traffic safety and trust-building efforts.



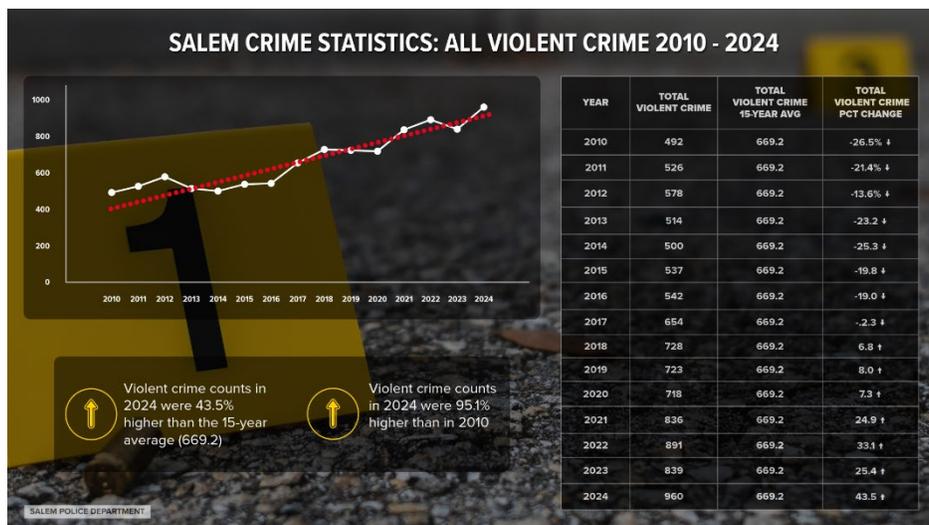
STRATEGY: Increase Community Safety

Smarter policing for community safety

Monthly Intelligence, Communication, and Planning (ICAP) meetings, led by a deputy chief, are key to the development and execution of community safety strategies. Collaboration on area-based and person-based risk reduction occurs with Salem police staff from across all divisions, along with regional law enforcement and school district partners. Calls-for-service and crime data are reviewed and used to inform decisions and measure effectiveness. To solidify our commitment to cooperation, **formal agreements were drafted with partner organizations.**



A [15-year crime summary](#) published in early 2023 by the Salem Police Department showed **violent crime rising** for over a decade. Aggravated assaults, including shootings, were a significant contributor.



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To understand the problem, the department commissioned a 2023 [gun violence problem analysis](#), which emphasized the need to focus our limited resources on violent crime prevention and intervention. The [Community Violence Reduction Initiative](#) (CVRI) followed, bringing together regional elected leaders and the community to develop two concurrent efforts: 1) engaging residents in the development of a **community-based prevention and intervention strategy**; and (2) focused **coordination of criminal justice partners** on violence reduction.

CVRI efforts will continue into the next strategic plan, emphasizing the apprehension and prosecution of violent offenders while engaging community-based partners for effective prevention efforts.

Principled policing for community safety

Teen outreach, neighborhood problem-solving and **restorative justice**, and expanding **communications** were the activities in this initiative.

Teen outreach and neighborhood problem-solving efforts. Several partnership agreements were established with local non-profit organizations who provide direct services to teenagers and their families. Partner organizations, including the Boys & Girls Club of Marion and Polk Counties, Salem Dream Center, and the YMCA, facilitated our youth-centered Guardians program to connect teens and officers for mentoring opportunities through health and exercise.

 The Guardians program was led by the Community Action Unit (CAU), a proactive community policing team focused on downtown safety and neighborhood livability. Due to limited staffing resources, CAU was disbanded in 2024 to ensure adequate emergency response capacity.

 Efforts to **re-engage and stay engaged** through programs such as Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch did not make forward progress as a result of the ongoing budget constraints. The department has one officer dedicated to community engagement and crime prevention education efforts.

Although new opportunities were not achieved, current programs were maintained, such as Coffee with a Cop, Community Police Academy, Halloween Dress Rehearsal, National Night Out, Shop with a Cop, and annual toy drive. Neighborhood engagement opportunities were maintained in community violence-affected neighborhoods and through officer attendance at neighborhood association meetings.



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STRATEGY: Enhance Employee Safety & Wellness

Focus on the foundational elements

The goal focused on keeping officers and staff physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy while intervening supportively at the earliest sign of distress.

Internal capacity and **training standards were evaluated** against industry best-practice. The evaluation determined a need for consistent coordination of officer training, so, through internal reorganization, **a full-time training officer was added** to the training unit. The new position enhanced annual in-service training and other interdisciplinary training throughout the year, ensuring compliance with state standards and **surpassing the strategic plan goal** of 60 training hours per year, per officer.

To complement training, an employee safety equipment committee was formed to assess new safety equipment and technologies. The committee is led by a sergeant and includes the quartermaster and officers representing the department's three divisions.

For improved employee health and wellbeing, the department invested in **a holistic approach to employee wellness**. The Peer Support Team received expanded training to help fellow staff members (sworn and professional staff) in managing workplace stressors and personal circumstances affecting work-life balance. Also, the department augmented its professional clinician services, further supporting employee wellbeing and resiliency.

LEGITIMACY

STRATEGY: Structure the Organization around Trust

Internal structure and mechanisms

The department evaluated ways to **go beyond traditional customer service** and integrate **trust-building** into all community interactions—whether casual contacts or stressful circumstances. This trust-building work started with [procedural justice](#) as a foundation.

The infusion of trust-building

Infusing trust-building into the organization's culture focused on integrating the core tenets of procedural justice: giving residents a voice, treating everyone with dignity and respect, making fair decisions, and acting in trustworthy ways. A specially trained team was established to provide initial procedural justice training to all employees, followed by an evolving series of training classes over the course of the plan period.

By 2023, procedural justice classes expanded to include community members alongside officers, allowing them to develop a shared understanding of one another's perspectives. Two community



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classes were held in 2023, and three in 2024. These classes, supported by a federal grant, will continue to evolve in the next strategic plan.

Trust-building and accountability

The department also made significant progress in trust and transparency through the launch of its first body-worn camera program in February 2023. In the first year, all officers were issued a device. By 2024, the entire patrol fleet was equipped with in-car video systems. The cameras are invaluable for fostering trusting community relationships through increased transparency and mutual accountability. Additionally, the technology enhances criminal investigations, departmental training, and professional development efforts.



Trust-building and accountability efforts were further strengthened by enhancing the capacity of the Professional Standards Unit (Internal Affairs). Adding a second sergeant to the unit, and updating systems and processes, centralized and optimized accountability mechanisms.

Policy Review Project

The department also completed the **review, update, and standardization of its policies and directives**. Over the course of two years, nearly 200 policies and procedures were reviewed, updated, and organized to ensure they reflect current best practices in law enforcement, **meet accreditation standards**, and comply with state and federal laws and regulations. For the first time, the entire [policy manual was made available online](#), underscoring the department's commitment to transparency.

Independent reports and assessments

Other trust and transparency efforts included **making guided adjustments** based on recommendations from the [2020 Community Engagement Assessment report](#) and the [2021 independent staffing analysis](#).

Among the more than 70 recommendations across the 11 guidance areas of the community engagement evaluation, 75% were reflected in the strategic plan. The top areas with significant outcomes included the enhancement and expansion of efforts to work with individuals experiencing homelessness, advocates, and social service agencies (*see page 1*); the implementation of training to effectively assess and diffuse complex and evolving incidents involving individuals in crisis (*see page 1*); and the comprehensive review of department policies and procedures (*see page 6*).

The [staffing study](#) indicated the need for dozens of additional police positions, and contained several recommendations that were implemented or evaluated during the plan's timeframe, including:

- **Reducing the number of police districts** from 11 to six to balance the workload for our limited field operations staffing and lay the foundation for a robust community policing model.

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- **Piloting a 12-hour patrol shift structure.** Patrol shifts were changed from 10 to 12 hours for all of 2023 to test efficiency gains, ultimately determining that the change was detrimental to work-life balance due to the call volume our agency handled.
- **Gradually eliminating the rank of corporal,** transferring essential supervision to the higher sergeant level, resulted in the creation of additional sergeant positions. Of the 17 corporal positions at the start of the strategic plan period, only five remain.
- **Augmenting support to patrol operations** through nonsworn assignments by creating full-time community service officer positions and expanding online reporting services.

STRATEGY: Increase Transparency, Information-sharing, and Communication

Communicate well with those we serve

Shifting toward a culture of transparency and open communication was essential for maintaining legitimacy with our community. A variety of communication initiatives, both external and internal, were instrumental in accomplishing those goals.

A [transparency portal](#) was established in 2022 to share data, policies, reports, and other information that directly impact public confidence. Residents can easily find crime statistics, budget information, annual reports on topics such as officer use of force, professional standards complaints, and more.

The department **set a standard** for sharing knowledge and information with the public by ensuring that media communications are consistent and ongoing. A dedicated media page and email box were created to emphasize the relevance and timeliness of information-sharing with Salem and Portland-based media outlets. Improved media relations helped increase focus on purposeful communication with residents.

Data for the three years shows that, on average, the department published nearly 90 press releases and handled over 600 media inquiries each year. The info-sharing efforts were bolstered by using multiple social media platforms with positive impacts. For instance, during the same period, the number of Facebook followers increased by 40%.



Efforts to expand alternate language communications continue to pose challenges for the department due to staffing limitations. Sharing public communications in alternate languages, such as Spanish, is limited. Publishing Spanish-language content remained focused on bilingual media releases and social media posts concerning significant community incidents. Strong relationships were formed with Spanish-language media outlets and community partners with bilingual messaging platforms to amplify important community information.

Communicate well with one another

The department embraced online and mobile technology to **make internal communication a priority, sharing data and information.** By utilizing Microsoft Office platforms, such as SharePoint, PowerBI, and PowerApps, employees stay informed and engaged on topics ranging from crime and traffic collision trends to operational changes. These productivity tools have enhanced internal communications and collaboration, making **data and information easily available.**

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STRATEGY: Community Engagement and Inclusion

Efforts to **keep the conversation happening** with the community included strengthening connections with civic leaders and groups. The department expanded trust-building and transparency conversations as well by listening **to the community in new ways and seeking more community input**. Some examples include:

- **Broadening the scope of the policy review project** (see page 6) to incorporate input from the Advisory Council to the Chief concerning community-impact policies.
- **Engaging the Community Police Review Board** in a more meaningful way by sharing annual reports and fostering dialogue on the topics of accountability and police procedures.
- **Adding a community member to all officer hiring panels** to ensure objectivity, reduce bias, and incorporate varied perspectives.



EXCELLENCE

STRATEGY: Increased Efficiency and Effectiveness

The department had limited capacity for crime analysis. Building analytical muscle for effective decision-making was necessary to drive innovative policing strategies that support the department's objectives and operations.

For lack of funding, the crime analysis unit was not expanded to three analysts in support of an envisioned community policing model as initially planned. However, this challenge presented an opportunity to reassess how limited personnel resources were being used. Consequently, the two crime analysts were refocused primarily on crime reduction in high-demand areas through ICAP strategy meetings (see page 3) and the identification and arrest of violent offenders through the Community Violence Reduction Initiative.

Efficient and effective case investigations

Salem Police officers and detectives excel at holding violent offenders accountable and bringing justice to victims and their families. Over the three years, the Salem Police Violent Crimes Unit achieved an average case clearance rate of 84% and solved 100% of homicide cases in 2023 and 2024 (eight and nine cases, respectively), well above national averages.

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STRATEGY: Enhance Recruiting and Hiring Efforts

Despite a high attrition rate and low career interest following the pandemic and social justice movement, the department achieved record-breaking hiring levels over the past three years. By developing best practice strategies and establishing a comprehensive plan for both immediate and future recruitment efforts, the Personnel & Training Unit hired 20 or more officers per year, welcoming both entry-level recruits and tenured officers from other agencies. These efforts shifted the department from an untenable 13% vacancy rate to 5%, reducing vacancies from 26 to 10.



Other efforts contributed to productive recruitment and hiring, such as **collaborating and leveraging City of Salem resources**. In partnership with the Human Resources Department, processes were streamlined, staff participated in local and regional recruiting events, and varying marketing strategies were initiated. A recent joint project expedited the career pathway to policing for nonsworn community service officers.

STRATEGY: Employee Retention and Professional Development

Efforts to **mentor and develop future leaders** provided staff with more career exploration and advancement guidance. For nonsworn staff members, professional development sessions were created to give them exposure to other management-level positions within the department.

The Supervisory Leadership Development Program was created for officers interested in advancing through the ranks. This course includes a mentorship component, intensive classroom and field instruction, and tabletop exercises designed to cultivate critical thinking and supervisory skills. Participants are offered acting-in-capacity supervisory positions when available. In 2023, the first year of the program, 19 officers participated in two separate sessions. Nine officers participated the following year. Of the 28 participants, nearly 30% (eight) have been promoted to the rank of sergeant.

The **path to promotion** was also refined to align interviews and testing with desired leadership traits and community-centered perspectives. Hiring panels for sworn promotional processes now include a community member, ensuring that managerial positions are hired with objectivity and a community perspective (*see page 8*).

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Training curricula upheld high standards by aligning with evidence-based, nationally recognized practices. All training was documented correctly and assessed for quality, effectiveness, and procedural justice principles (see *page 5*), ensuring the highest training standards were maintained.



Although in-house training during the strategic plan's timeframe ensured full compliance with state standards and exceeded the annual instructional goal for each officer (see *page 5*), specialized out-of-state training opportunities were sidelined due to insufficient funding.

Overall, these initiatives improved employee retention and created a more skilled and engaged workforce; however, the missed opportunities will be revisited in the next strategic plan.

