



Deliberative Dialogues on Safety & Justice

Local statistics and efforts to strengthen partnerships, address injustices, and prevent violence

Violent crime in Travis County has declined. There were 348 violent crimes reported for every 100,000 people in Travis County in 2015.

The rate of violent crime, which includes murder, robbery, aggravated assault and rape, has decreased by 22% since 2007.

Property crime, which includes burglary, theft and auto theft, has declined even more. From 2007 to 2015, the rate of property crime per 100,000 residents in Travis County declined by 39%.



Option 1:

Enforce the Law Together

Expand policing while strengthening local partnerships.

A Report on Community Policing in Austin completed last July by Matrix Consulting, found that, while APD has many great programs that engage the community, they operate in isolation and there is not a formal community policing program and process supported with policies, management and leadership.

Moving forward, APD's goal to advance community policing strategies include:

Restore Rundberg is a community revitalization and crime reduction effort by Austin Police Department and residents of the Rundberg neighborhood in north central Austin. APD received a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to begin the initiative in 2012. Even though the grant has expired, police, residents and businesses continue to work together to improve the quality of life, health, safety, education and well-being of individuals living and working in the Rundberg neighborhood. A study of data by Dr. David Springer, with the University of Texas at Austin, found that, when comparing data from April 2012 to August of 2013 with that of one year later, April 2014 to August 2015, violent crime declined by 4.5% and property crime was reduced by 14%.

Additionally, APD has hired a dedicated Lieutenant to oversee the District Representatives and provide consistency with all DR units. APD has transitioned from Commander Forums to Community Meetings, allowing the department to go into the community and focus on isolated issues in specific areas.



Option 2:

Apply the Law Fairly

Remove injustices, reform inequities, and improve accountability.

People arrested by the 16 law enforcement agencies in Travis County are generally booked into the Travis County jail. Blacks account for about 21% of people booked into jail, but only 8% of Travis County's adult population, which indicates a high level of disproportionate representation. Source: CAN Dashboard

The Science of Policing Equity, Measuring Fairness in the Austin Police Department found that, "For use-of-force incidents, black and Hispanic communities remain more likely to experience use of force than white communities after adjusting for community-level differences in crime and poverty."

APD efforts to address disparities include both initial cadet training and continuing education. Prior to graduation, APD Cadets receive approximately 135 hours of community oriented policing classes.

Probationary Police Officers are required to complete a Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise (NPE) within one year of release from the Field Training Program. The NPE is designed to provide officers with a sense of the community where they work and encourages them to develop community contacts.

APD Continuing Education is currently developing a curriculum with St. Petersburg College entitled "Police Community Partnerships." This curriculum will include topics on police-community partnerships, communication, and outreach initiatives and engagement. The goal is for every APD officer to complete the course.

By the end of October 2017, every APD officer will have successfully completed the Fairness in Policing course. A plan is being developed to teach a Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving Course on a yearly basis.



Option 3:

De-escalate and Prevent Violence

Address the causes of violence and take direct action to disrupt conflict.

The Crisis Intervention Teams of APD and the Travis County Sheriff's Office worked with Integral Care to develop the Mobile Crisis Outreach Team. Officers and Deputies refer to MCOT when they encounter an individual who may be having a mental health crisis. MCOT works to address the immediate crisis and then to link the individual with other resources to ensure their safety and continued well-being. MCOT is available 24/7 and responds to calls from the home, school, street or clinic.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) a one-day training that teaches people how to help someone in crisis or showing signs of mental illness or substance use disorder. MHFA can save a life, just like CPR can save someone who can't breathe or is having a heart attack. Integral Care began offering Mental Health First Aid to the community in 2009.

APD Continuing Education provides officers with a two-day Tactical Communications class, covering steps of attempting to secure compliance to lawful commands and conditions when words fail or actions must replace words. Additionally, principles and tactics taught assist officers in communicating with and calming people who may be under severe emotional stress or other influences, redirecting hostile behavior, diffusing potentially dangerous situations, and performing professionally under all conditions.

Advanced Officer Training offers an online course with covers communication skills and techniques when speaking with veterans in crisis and is exploring opportunities for bringing additional de-escalation classes to the Department.