

CHECKLIST: ARE YOUR POLICE METRICS REFLECTING CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES?

Performance experts suggest areas to consider in updating your police metrics:

- Are your measures focused solely on inputs and outputs or do they also reflect the larger outcomes you are trying to achieve?
- If you have a strategic plan, have the measures been tied to strategic goals? As the plan is updated, is the list of measures revisited as well?
- Is performance reviewed on a regular basis, such as quarterly, monthly or even weekly? If so, is the data 'received and filed' or are action steps outlined and subject to follow-up?
- Have you established a data dictionary so that there are written standards for how to collect key data points consistently over time? For example, are your instructions clear regarding budgeted vs. filled positions, sworn vs. non-sworn, supervisory vs. non-supervisory, paid-time-off, overtime, and grant-funded staffing?
- Has a citizen oversight board helped to provide input into metrics and to decide how results should be presented?
- If you have training programs in place for key community-sensitive topics, have they been conducted recently, and are you tracking officer completion of that training?
- If dashboard cameras, body cameras, non-lethal weapons, or other specialized equipment or systems are available within the department, have you put in place metrics to track their proper use? (Remember, the time to establish those metrics and take them seriously is before you have an incident in which the policy wasn't followed.)
- How does the composition of your police force/police leadership reflect the community served?
- Does the community have access to your data? Can they view it by type of incident or geographic area?
- Do you reach out to the community with data to dispel misconceptions, keep them up-to-date on current initiatives, and make them an effective partner in fostering safer neighborhoods?
- Is the community satisfied with police performance? Do residents believe that police use force in a fair and effective way?
- Are you separately assessing residents' sense of safety in their neighborhoods vs. the business or downtown areas, and also considering the differences between daytime and nighttime ratings?
- Have you identified other jurisdictions against which to benchmark your police services? As you work with neighboring jurisdictions, have you clarified procedures for measuring mutual aid or inter-jurisdictional task forces and aligning your metric definitions?