



COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
3026 South California Avenue  
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January 14, 2022

The Honorable Dennis Deer  
Cook County Commissioner  
County of Cook  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

The Honorable Stanley Moore  
Cook County Commissioner  
County of Cook  
118 N. Clark Street  
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Via email to : Stanley.Moore2@cookcountyil.gov  
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Dear Commissioners,

Per your request, please see our response to the questions that have been presented to our office in advance of the January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Virtual Joint Health and Hospitals/Criminal Justice Meeting. We look forward to participating in this important conversation and we appreciate our continued collaboration.

**What your respective office, department, and/or bureau did previously to address Violence and crime in Cook County?**

The Sheriff's Office's top priority is to serve and protect the residents of Cook County. We will continue to do so by consistently working hard to help reduce violence in our communities and finding solutions to its root causes. Last year, our officers recovered more than 750 guns throughout the county. As part of our Chicago initiative, we've been working full-time in Chicago's 15th Police District since 2018. Our year-over-year comparisons show that violence is down in the 15th District while it has gone up citywide. In December, we've seen our efforts pay off with a decrease in shootings and homicides in the 15<sup>th</sup> District. Homicides were down 30% and shootings were down 15% from the same period in 2020, even though homicides and shootings were increasing citywide. We've also provided patrols, Street Crimes Suppression Unit, and the Community Safety Team in the city's 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> districts, and expanded to downtown earlier last year. We've assisted Illinois State Police on Chicago area expressways with a focus on expressways that have had shootings and/or other major incidents which resulted in more than

600 arrests and assisted 280 motorists. We also provided police coverage in Cook County suburbs that have struggled with manpower. Our Community Safety Team was specifically created for a more proactive approach to policing to address violence and the issues that drive violence. Last year, the team worked in 10 suburban communities to help decrease the surge of violence they were facing. Police K-9 units were called out nearly 4,000 times to assist agencies in Cook County and beyond.

Mental health, substance use and employment programming at the jail have also been instrumental in providing treatment for individuals in custody to help them break the cycle of incarceration. For example, the Mental Health Transition Center was designed to help participants identify and address underlying thoughts and behaviors that have led to their interaction with the criminal justice system. Through the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in conjunction with various beneficial activities, we are able to help these individuals by replacing their destructive patterns of behavior with positive thoughts and habits that will allow them to lead fulfilling, productive lives when they return to their communities. More than 2,100 people have gone through the program since it began in 2014. The Jail's voluntary SAVE program identifies young men from Chicago communities with high rates of violence and help them obtain new emotional and mental health skills to avoid reincarceration. More than 1,300 individuals have taken part of the program so far. Our analysis shows that the longer someone is in the program, they are less likely to be re-booked into the jail.

The Office has also worked to help individuals as they leave custody and are in the community. The Community Resource Center was created in 2020 specifically for individuals who need an array of services and support when they leave our custody, or for citizens in the community who are not involved in the Criminal Justice system but need similar resources. Staff members help them with everything from job opportunities to substance abuse treatment, mental health, and medical care to housing resources. By the end of last year, staff provided guidance and services to more than 3,000 individuals.

**What does your respective office, department and/or bureau currently do to address violence and crime, specifically the recent surges in gun-related violence and carjackings, in Cook County?**

The Sheriff's Office continues its efforts in supporting Cook County, its suburbs, and the City of Chicago to help reduce violence and crime. Already this year, we have recovered 16 guns in Cook County. Sheriff's Police in conjunction with the Chicago Police Department work to identify high-crime areas and use the data to actively suppress criminal activities. Based on this information, we have deployed CCSPD patrol and Street Crimes Suppression Units in these specific areas to reduce the violence. Through our Chicago Initiative, we have been an active, visible presence in Chicago districts. Specifically in Chicago's 15<sup>th</sup> district where we have a permanent presence, community members have positively noted our officers' presence and the decrease in criminal activity. With the increase of crime in downtown, we are also establishing a permanent presence in River North by opening an office space. We have also worked very hard to build relationships within the communities we serve. We want the community to know that we are there for them and they can call on us whenever needed. We have put a tremendous focus on Community Engagement to help build those relationships.

To help curb carjackings and the crimes stemming from them, the Sheriff's Office recently created a carjacking dashboard where law enforcement agencies can share information about their incidents

with each other and use the data to drive police response. As we dived into the data and issues, we saw how automakers can contribute to the solution. Most model year vehicles 2015 and newer can be tracked but accessing that information in real-time from manufacturers has varied. I recently reached out to 11 automakers asking to work with them to create easier ways for law enforcement and car owners to get tracking information quicker when their vehicle has been stolen or carjacked. Tracking that vehicle in real-time would recover the vehicle sooner, possibly catch the offender, and prevent it from being used in other crimes.

The Sheriff's Office belongs to the carjacking taskforce that includes Chicago Police and Illinois State Police as well as suburban and federal agencies. Last year, the Sheriff's Office participated in 14 taskforce missions which resulted in 95 arrests and 136 recovered vehicles. During our first mission of this year, the taskforce recovered 9 vehicles and made 5 arrests. Police patrol officers and Street Crimes Suppression Unit members continue to conduct saturation patrols in Chicago's 1<sup>st</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> districts as needed. Since April of last year, the Street Crime Suppression Unit operating in the 15th District and adjacent areas, has executed approximately 48 juvenile arrest warrants for individuals who are wanted for outstanding warrants involving carjackings and other violent felonies. Street Crime Suppression Unit officers have also been active participants in the carjacking taskforce and, to date, has contributed with the recovery of 58 carjacked vehicles, recovered 76 stolen vehicles, and one vehicle that was used in a homicide.

**How has your respective office, department, and/or bureau previously collaborated with other County offices, departments, and/or bureaus? And does it continue its collaboration?**

The Sheriff's Office has always worked closely with the State's Attorney's Office, the Chief Judge's Office, the Justice Advisory Council, and other local, state, and federal agencies to help address the issues our communities face daily. The Office frequently collaborates with other law enforcement agencies, as I've mentioned before, through our Chicago Initiative with the Chicago Police Department, expressway shootings, FOID enforcement team and suburban police departments. In particular, the Office has been a key supporter of legislations involving guns and domestic violence. Most recently, I've supported the Domestic Violence Task Force Act, also known as Colton's Task Force, in honor of 18-month-old Colton Miller who was tragically shot and killed by his own father. It was signed into law last August. Another bill signed into law that same month that the Office supported was the Firearm Restraining Order Amendment that not only strengthens the existing Firearms Restraining Order Act, but it will give more protection to people from gun violence and prevent gun tragedies before they occur. Most recently the Office collaborated with Illinois State Senator Jacqueline Collins to propose legislation to ban "ghost guns" which are homemade firearms that are untraceable and are increasingly being found and used in areas of crime throughout Cook County – all to curb the violence that unfortunately exists in our community.

**What resources does your respective office, department, and/or bureau need to assist in combating the surge in violent crime and support your continued efforts?**

We could use more officers to work in the communities that we service. We do a lot of work with the resources we have available to us but many times we get called to other areas for assistance which only leads us to pull the much-needed officers away from one area and put them in another. We have been fortunate enough to have the support of the President's Office and the Board of Commissioners to sustain our current resources, but with the crime and violence we have occurring we could always

use more. We should call on the Federal government and State of Illinois to help with funding some of the resources.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason Hernandez  
Executive Director of Intergovernmental Relations  
Cook County Sheriff's Office