



Chicago Police Department
Bureau of Detectives

Strengthening Homicide Investigations in the Chicago Police Department

A Review of CPD's Response to
Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)
Observations and Recommendations

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Antoinette M. Ursitti
Chief
Bureau of Detectives

Letter from Chief

Every investigation is unique. No set of guidelines can account for every scenario that detectives will encounter. Effective strategies, however, can support investigators and strengthen investigative functions to ensure justice is served and communities feel safe.

In 2018, the Department sought the assistance of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the homicide investigation process in the Bureau of Detectives through a grant administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The project demonstrated the Department's commitment to reducing violence and solving homicide cases through sustainable measures tailored to the challenges facing Chicago.

Under the leadership of former Chiefs of Detectives Melissa Staples and Brendan Deenihan, a team of subject matter experts visited the Department, conducted numerous interviews with personnel, and reviewed Department directives, reports, and data to comprehensively understand the state of homicide investigations. This process illustrated that dedicated and experienced law enforcement professionals in the Department were receptive to input that would help members more effectively solve crimes and support victims, families, and communities.

In October 2019, PERF issued a report with 89 recommendations for the Department to enhance its homicide investigative process. Since that time, the Department has maintained an unyielding commitment to implementing these best practices. This report highlights instrumental changes the Department has made to align with recommendations in key areas of staffing, organizational structure, oversight, training, policies and procedures, and equipment and technology.

As the Department worked to implement these changes over the past five years, several unique challenges emerged, including the COVID pandemic, civil unrest, and changes in leadership. The determination and resilience displayed by the Department members during this time cannot be overstated. The unwavering dedication of the Bureau of Detective personnel—working tirelessly to investigate and close cases, support victims, and consistently implement improvement in homicide investigations—stands as a true testament to the perseverance and skill of our finest investigators.

As Chief of Detectives, it is a privilege to acknowledge and celebrate the remarkable achievements of the men and women in the Bureau. The success outlined in this report is not only a testament to their dedication, but also reflects the invaluable contributions of our many partners and the Department members who have since retired. Without the support of the BJA and the technical assistance of PERF, the Department and Bureau of Detectives could not have advanced as rapidly and successfully in implementing these reforms to homicide investigations. To all who were involved with this endeavor, the City and Department are indebted for these significant measures of public safety.



Executive Summary

In 2018, faced with a rise in homicides and a decline in clearance rates, the Chicago Police Department enlisted a team of subject matter experts to provide technical assistance, drawing on their expertise in the best practices for effective homicide investigations. With the support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) launched a comprehensive assessment of the Department's homicide investigation process.

The following year, PERF's evaluation produced 89 recommendations tailored to the Department to strengthen homicide investigations. Upon receiving the report, the Department initiated a project plan and committed to fully implementing identified measures. Six months into implementation, the Department achieved its first key reform in re-opening two Area Detective Divisions to keep investigators in closer proximity to communities and promote a timelier response to crime scenes.

Over the course of the past five years, the Department systematically laid the foundation of reforms outlined in PERF's report and continues to build upon the initial recommendations. This report highlights key advancements within the Department and the Bureau of Detectives aimed at addressing the observations and recommendations from PERF, with a focus on strengthening homicide investigations.

1. AGENCY ORGANIZATION:

At the time of the assessment, three Area Detective Divisions were responsible for investigating crimes in 22 Districts. Within each Area Detective Division were two sections responsible for assignments categorized as either violent crimes (homicides, aggravated assaults, including nonfatal shootings, and sex crimes) or property crimes (robberies, burglaries, and thefts). Violent crimes also included special victim investigations (domestic and juvenile crimes).

Key changes: Re-opened two Area Detectives Divisions, increasing the number of Detective Division Areas to five to improve response times.

Created Homicide Sections in each of the five Detective Division Areas, separate from Violent Crimes and Property Crimes, to promote consistent homicide assignments and investigations.

Added sworn and non-sworn assignments to support homicide detectives, including Area Technology Centers, Homicide Investigative Support Teams, Family Liaison Offices, Investigative Analysts, Digital Intelligence Analysts, and Latent Print Examiners.

2. STAFFING AND CASELOAD MANAGEMENT:

When PERF's assessment began in 2018, the Bureau of Detectives was budgeted for 1,066 detectives, with a total of 928 detectives in all areas and assignments during the first PERF site visit in December. Bureau staffing led to caseload irregularities such as midnight detectives transferring overnight homicide investigations to detectives assigned on other shifts. This practice contributed to detectives having uncertain and often excessive caseloads.

Key changes: Implemented the Homicide Team Pilot Program in all five Detective Division Areas, featuring a new schedule with on-call rotation to foster case ownership and manageable caseloads.

Increased the number of budgeted detectives to 1,292.

Initiated a workforce allocation study to evaluate the distribution of personnel Department wide and determine optimal staffing levels.

3. WRITTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The Department maintained several Department wide and Bureau-level policies and procedures related to conducting investigations at the time of PERF site visit. However, these directives were not necessarily specific to homicide or death investigations. Establishing uniform, substantive guidance for homicide and death investigations would significantly enhance the quality of these investigations.

Key changes: Established the Policy and Procedure Group within the Bureau of Detectives to coordinate with the Department's Research and Development Section on policies and create and revise Bureau-level directives and manuals.

Created and published the Investigative Manual Reference Guide as a tool to help detectives complete investigations, including homicides and deaths, in an efficient, professional, and complete manner.

Created and published the Operations Manual Reference Guide to codify the organizational structure and functions of each section of the Bureau of Detectives, including Homicide and Cold Case teams.

4. NONFATAL SHOOTING INVESTIGATIONS:

When PERF launched its evaluation of homicide investigations, there were more than four times as many nonfatal shooting incidents as fatal shootings in Chicago, based on a five-year average. Both types of incidents share similarities in regards to victims, offenders, and witnesses. Enhancing the investigative response to nonfatal shooting incidents provides an opportunity to prevent future homicides.

Key changes: Sought and was awarded the Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) grant to assess the Department's ongoing efforts to combat firearms-related criminal activity.

Implemented CGIC workflow recommendations, including the integration of new processes and platform systems, to develop comprehensive crime gun intelligence.

Partnered with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) to launch the Chicago Crime Gun Intelligence Center, a multi-agency partnership that co-locates federal agents, officers, detectives, analysts, and prosecutors with the shared mission of taking shooters off the streets.

5. COLD CASE INVESTIGATIONS:

Homicide investigations are never suspended but may be classified as "cold" when all available leads have been exhausted without resolution. In such cases, the investigation will be reassigned to a detective on the "Cold Case Team," who will take responsibility for reviewing and analyzing both open and inactive homicide cases to identify new investigative opportunities. PERF determined that quality assurance mechanisms and a meaningful case review process was critical to the success of these homicide investigations.

Key Changes: Created a Bureau of Detectives directive on Cold Case Investigations to establish investigative procedures and outline team supervisor duties.

Hired investigative analysts responsible for conducting comprehensive assessments of homicide cold case investigations.

Implemented regular cadence for analysts to submit cold cases to DNA Processing Unit for development of leads, in partnership with the Illinois State Police Forensics Lab and Cook County State's Attorney Office.

6. DETECTIVE AND SUPERVISOR SELECTION:

At the time of the review of the Department's practices, a 10-year stretch had passed without a examination for promotion to Detective. A projected timeline for detective promotions and enhanced criteria for candidates were recommended as next steps for strengthening the Bureau. Also, PERF advised establishing qualifications for supervisors and specific teams within the Bureau.

Key Changes: Updated the class title for police officers assigned as detective, which includes characteristics of the class, essential duties, and minimum qualifications.

Revised the process for homicide team selection, including a supervisory evaluation of applicants' felony case files.

Implemented an annual promotional calendar with designated Detective examination dates and pre-service training dates for Detectives.

7. INVESTIGATIONS TRAINING:

The Investigative Development Group (IDG) designs, delivers, and coordinates pre-service and in-service training for members of the Bureau of Detectives. Ensuring this team is supported is critical to ensuring sufficient and advanced training for the specialized role of investigators.

Key Changes: Provided the IDG with training on effective teaching methods, adult-learning techniques, curriculum development, and other tools and skills to enhance instructor training knowledge and delivery as part of the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board-certified Instructor's Academy course.

Expanded Department training facilities, including designated space for digital forensics training and additional classrooms at the newly opened Bauer Plummer Public Safety Training Center (PSTC).

Revised and delivered the 40-hour Lead Homicide Investigator course in coordination with subject matter experts and criminal justice partners to provide homicide detectives with the skills and competency to conduct complete and thorough homicide investigations with prosecutorial merit.

8. SUPERVISION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND OVERSIGHT:

To strengthen the investigative process, Detectives should receive guidance on case planning and regular reviews of their investigative work. Recognizing the range of performance helps keep underperforming detectives accountable and validates exceptional investigators.

Key Changes: Implemented annual supervisor training Department wide to ensure supervisors are equipped to effectively provide leadership, guidance, mentoring, training, and support to members under their command.

Created the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool to assist supervisors in electronically tracking the completion of time-sensitive tasks that are central to every homicide investigation.

Introduced the Deputy Director of Prosecutorial Strategies position to provide detectives professional assistance and guidance to effectively solve cases and added regular case reviews with State's Attorney Office.

9. CASE DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT:

Case file organization is a key measure for conducting robust investigations. Providing detectives with a formal plan of investigative steps, directions on proper case documentation, and an electronic records management system were recommended actions for strengthening investigations in the Bureau.

Key Changes: Established and codified clear directions on case documentation and file organization for homicide investigations.

Implemented a new electronic case management system (R-CASE).

Announced a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new Records Management System (RMS).

10. EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY:

Efficient and effective homicide investigations require essential tools, equipment, technology, and workspaces. Addressing these needs in the Bureau would improve the performance of homicide detectives.

Key Changes: Established funding to sustain a fleet of vehicles for Detectives and added encrypted radios with dedicated channels for Detective communications.

Procured vehicles and laptops specifically for homicide detectives.

Equipped each Area Detective Division with an Area Technology Center dedicated to the collection and analysis of digital evidence.

11. EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:

Detectives routinely experience delays in the processing of DNA evidence. Even as advancements have been made in the Department's development of digital evidence and criminal intelligence, the collection and analysis of physical evidence has presented obstacles in investigations. Ensuring proper equipment, policy, and training and identifying motivated personnel for promotion to roles that collect and process evidence are important steps for overcoming these barriers.

Key Changes: Trained and promoted Latent Print Examiners and administered a promotional examination for evidence technicians.

Increased budgeted spots and filled vacancies for key positions in Forensics Services, including evidence technicians, latent print examiners, and criminalists.

Established the DNA Processing Unit and a policy and training team in the Forensics Services Section.

12. INTERNAL COORDINATION:

Communication and coordination within an Area Detective Division and across other units are critical for successful homicide investigations. A concerted effort to promote cross-department collaboration and information-sharing would serve to strengthen investigations.

Key Changes: Established an electronic distribution protocol to allow for the immediate dissemination of information among Strategic Decision Support Centers and Bureau of Detective personnel embedded in the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC).

Implemented new crime tip software based on communication about needs between Bureau of Detectives and Bureau of Counterterrorism.

Assigned Bureau of Counterterrorism personnel with specialized knowledge of firearms and gang activity to the Bureau of Detectives.

13. EXTERNAL COORDINATION:

Strong partnerships are the foundation of strong investigations. The Cook County State's Attorney Office, Cook County Medical Examiner, and crime victim advocates are vital stakeholders when a homicide investigation occurs. Strengthening partner engagements would promote more effective investigations.

Key Changes: Implemented the Family Liaison Office within each Area Detective Division Homicide Unit to engage with family members surviving the homicide of a loved one and to connect families to services and programs.

Established Area-level case reviews between the Cook County State's Attorney Felony Review Division and homicide supervisors and detectives.

Designated liaisons to the Medical Examiner's Office to enhance information-sharing and revised Bureau-level directives to include a dedicated section on their responsibilities.

CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE CENTER OF CHICAGO



BACKGROUND ON PERF REPORT

Commissioned at the request of the Chicago Police Department and supported by grant funding from the U.S. Justice Department Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) conducted an evaluation of homicide investigation processes in the Department and issued a comprehensive report of best practices and policies of homicide investigations from police departments across the nation to better guide the Department's Bureau of Detectives. This report refocused the Department's long-term efforts to solve crimes faster and improve the Department's clearance rate.

The findings followed on-site interviews conducted by PERF with over 50 Department personnel of all ranks from across the department; interviews with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, the Chief Medical Examiner, and the Chief Administrator of the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA); and a review of the Department's directives, homicide logs, sample intelligence reports, organizational charts, sample crime reports, and clearance data.

The observations and recommendations of the report focused on four main themes, including organizational infrastructure, bureau resources, investigation strategies and case management, and coordination internally with other bureaus as well as externally with county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and Chicago's communities. Key findings included:

Update and Codify Best Practices: The Department should develop a Homicide Investigation Manual to document guidance to detectives on their duties and responsibilities.

Create a Homicide Unit and Expand Detective Areas: Homicide detectives should receive specific training and have consistent operations in a unit dedicated solely to homicide investigations. The Department also should return to the five Detective Areas that were in place prior to 2013 to promote geographic proximity.

Establish Investigative Caseload Management: The Department should develop detailed guidelines governing case assignments and establish a mechanism to track the number and types of cases assigned to each detective.

Ensure Detectives Have Essential Tools: The Department should invest in technological tools and resources to expand the field capabilities of homicide detectives.

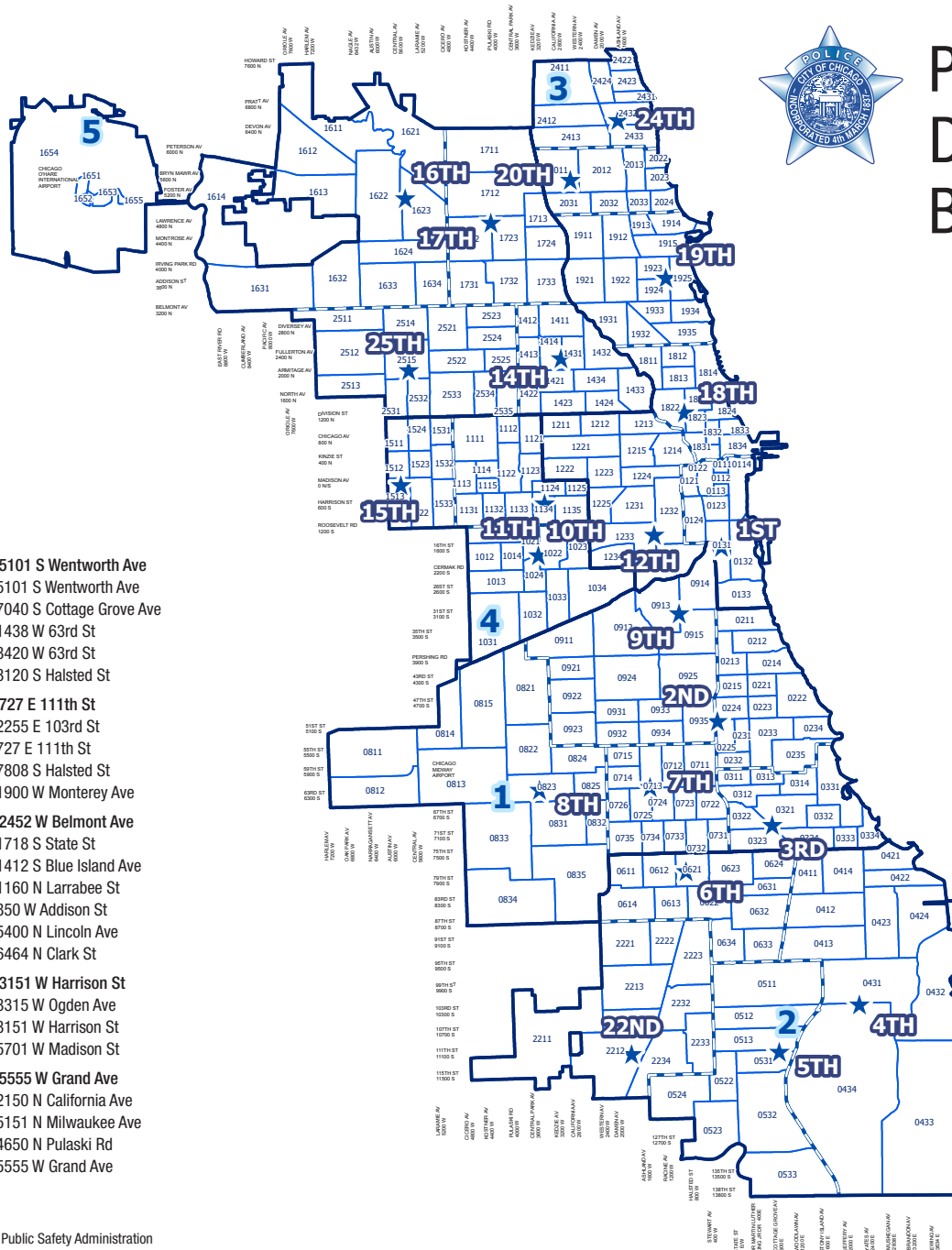
Increase Staffing: CPD should increase staffing levels to decrease the average caseload size.

Several recommendations outlined in PERF's report were already in progress or had been implemented by the Department by the time the report was issued. However, the Department continued a steady pace to systematically address the input and continued investing in personnel, training, technology, and partnerships to fully address the breadth of recommendations. This current report is a comprehensive review of the Department's efforts in the five years following the issuance of PERF's recommendations.

PERF RECOMMENDATIONS & DEPARTMENT RESPONSE



Police Area, District and Beat Boundaries



Area 1 5101 S Wentworth Ave
002 5101 S Wentworth Ave
003 7040 S Cottage Grove Ave
007 1438 W 63rd St
008 3420 W 63rd St
009 3120 S Halsted St

Area 2 727 E 111th St
004 2255 E 103rd St
005 727 E 111th St
006 7808 S Halsted St
022 1900 W Monterey Ave

Area 3 2452 W Belmont Ave
001 1718 S State St
012 1412 S Blue Island Ave
018 1160 N Larrabee St
019 850 W Addison St
020 5400 N Lincoln Ave
024 6464 N Clark St

Area 4 3151 W Harrison St
010 3315 W Ogden Ave
011 3151 W Harrison St
015 5701 W Madison St

Area 5 5555 W Grand Ave
014 2150 N California Ave
016 5151 N Milwaukee Ave
017 4650 N Pulaski Rd
025 5555 W Grand Ave

AGENCY ORGANIZATION, STAFFING, AND CASE MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1:

The CPD should revise its organizational structure to create a specific “Homicide Unit” within the Bureau of Detectives.

In early 2020, the Department carried out a re-organization that created two additional Area Detective Divisions for a total of five Detective Division Areas responsible for investigating crimes in 22 Districts. A dedicated Homicide Unit was created in each of the Area Detective Divisions, separate from Violent Crime and Property Crime sections, at the time of the re-organization.

The Homicide Unit in each Area is composed of detectives specifically trained in investigative practices regarding incidents of homicide, death, and other crimes that may result in a fatality. Homicide detectives are organized into teams, each led by a Homicide Sergeant, who reports to a designated Homicide Lieutenant. The homicide lieutenant reports to the Area Detective Division Commander.

Since 2020, the BOD has increased specialized support for the Homicide Unit in each Area Detective Division, including:

- *Area Technology Centers to provide digital forensic analysis.*
- *Homicide Investigative Support Teams to provide investigative field support for homicide investigations.*
- *Investigative Analysts to conduct evidence-based assessments and reviews of available information to support cold case homicide investigations.*
- *Family Liaison Officers to provide practical support for the families of homicide victims, including coordinating community services and providing resource information.*

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2:

To improve response times to homicide scenes, the CPD should consider revising its internal organizational structure to return to the five geographic areas that were in place prior to 2013.

In April 2020, the Department re-opened two previously closed Area Detective Divisions on the west and northwest side of the city. Prior to the re-opening of these two Areas, now known as Area 4 on the West Side and Area 5 on the Northwest Side, the Bureau of Detectives operated out of three locations formerly known as Area South, Area Central, and Area North.

When there were only three Areas, members of the community had to travel far distances to cooperate with detectives. The expansion to five Areas means that community members no longer need to travel as far to make identifications via photo arrays, give statements, or share information. Additionally, expanding to five Areas has facilitated the timely response of detectives to crime scenes, which is critical for identifying evidence and witnesses.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3:

The Bureau of Detectives should be organized and staffed in a way that promotes accountability and collaboration. Each Detective Area should include squads of specifically trained detectives who handle only homicides (and possibly serious, life-threatening assaults).

The restructuring of Bureau of Detective operations in 2020 to five Areas from three Areas supported the reorganization of sections within each Area to better promote accountability, collaboration, and specialized training. The Homicide Unit is now established in each Area as a distinct section of detectives organized into teams and specifically trained in investigative practices regarding homicide, death, and other crimes likely to result in a fatality. Each Homicide Unit is composed of teams, with each team led by a sergeant who reports to a designated lieutenant. The homicide lieutenant reports to the Area Detective Division Commander.

Homicide Units collaborate regularly with sworn and civilian personnel in their Area Detective Division who perform distinct and critical functions for homicide investigations. These support personnel are assigned to the Area Technology Centers, Homicide Investigative Support Teams, Investigative Analysis, and Family Liaison Office, although collaboration also extends across Bureaus to other specialized personnel, such as Patrol and Counterterrorism.

The Investigative Development Group, part of the Bureau of Detectives' training team, is responsible for coordinating and scheduling Lead Homicide Investigator (LHI) training for all homicide detectives. This training ensures their initial certification and regular recertification. Under Illinois state law, LHI training is mandatory for detectives handling homicides or cases involving a likely death. LHI certifications remain valid for four years and help reinforce essential investigative skills, ensuring proper procedures are followed and critical information is gathered and documented for thorough investigations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4:

The City and the Police Department should increase the number of homicide sergeants and detectives to meet the Bureau of Detectives' authorized strength.

Since 2020, 653 detectives have been promoted into the Bureau of Detectives. In 2023, the Department announced a year-long promotional schedule to include Sergeant and Detective classes and ensure regular promotions of Sergeants and Detectives. In 2024, the City of Chicago increased the budgeted number of Detectives to 1,292.

In 2023, the Bureau of Detectives established a formal selection process for homicide detectives and increased the number of homicide detectives from 164 at the end of 2023 to 182 at the start of 2024. The formal selection process additionally created a pool of homicide detectives eligible for assignment to help keep homicide teams in each Area at full strength following retirements and promotions.

By the end of 2024, the average homicide detective was assigned as the primary detective for three investigations, a 25% decrease compared to the previous five-year average of four cases per detective.

Additionally, the Department launched a workforce allocation study to comprehensively evaluate staffing levels across all bureaus and ranks, including sworn and civilian positions. This study is expected to conclude at the end of 2025 and further inform the assignment of personnel in the Bureau of Detectives.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5:

The shift schedule and case rotation should be designed in a way that promotes an even and fair distribution of cases. There should be room for flexibility as situations change. The schedule should be set in advance (e.g., at the beginning of each year) and managed by supervisors.

Starting in 2022, the Department started negotiations with the collective bargaining unit for Detectives, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), to implement a Homicide Team Pilot Program. The objective of the Homicide Team Pilot Program is to improve the homicide clearance rate in the City of Chicago by fostering ownership of cases and increasing accountability with the support of an on-call work schedule, extended 10-hour tours of duty, and dedicated vehicles and equipment.

The Homicide Team Pilot Program was launched in January 2024. Under this new structure, homicide teams are scheduled to be “on-call” for a one-week period, during which the assigned team responds to every homicide within their designated area. Following their on-call week, detectives have uninterrupted time to conduct thorough, well-coordinated investigations. Meanwhile, the next homicide team assumes on-call duties.

Each team’s on-call week is designated in advance and managed by the Homicide Lieutenant with the approval of the Area Detective Division Commander.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6:

Leaders from the Bureau of Detectives and each Detective Area should revise the current practice of midnight detectives transferring homicide cases to dayshift homicide detectives.

As a result of the Homicide Team Pilot Program and the “on-call” system, homicide detectives are responsible for an investigation from the initial scene until it is cleared. This fosters greater ownership of cases and accountability. Previously, if a homicide occurred during the midnight shift, an on-duty detective would handle the initial scene and transfer the case to a detective on the following shift.

From the inception of the case, homicide detectives are able to coordinate with resources within their respective Area to receive the support they need in digital forensics, field work, evidence assessment, and community engagement to make the investigation successful.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 7:

Commanders from each Detective Area and the Bureau of Detectives should develop a tracking mechanism to accurately track the number and type of cases assigned to each homicide detective.

The Homicide Unit schedule, under the Homicide Team Pilot Program, provides a system that helps Bureau of Detective leadership identify the number of homicides each team is assigned during its week. During a team’s assigned week, detectives rotate into the role of lead homicide investigator to ensure a balanced allocation of assignments.

Recently, the Department transitioned away from the CHRIS case management system to a new application named R-CASE. The R-CASE application has the capability to provide an overview of each detective’s caseload, serving as an additional accountability tool for supervisors to ensure a balanced workload for homicide investigators.

The City’s Office of Public Safety Administration set a due date in December 2024 for proposals from potential vendors interested in developing a new, single Records Management System (RMS) for the Chicago Police Department. During the preparation phase, the Bureau of Detectives provided a list of requirements for the investigative section of the system.

An evaluation team from the City that includes representation from the Bureau of Detectives will review submissions and choose the best option for the Department. Once a contract is finalized, the implementation process is expected to take up to three years and migrate all the Department’s current records applications into a singular RMS, which is expected to help the Bureau better track case assignments.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 8:

The CPD should develop written policies and detailed guidelines governing case assignment. Command staff should rely on input from leaders from each Detective Area when developing these policies. The policies should ensure that homicide cases are assigned in an equitable manner, with each homicide detective serving as the lead on no more than four to six new homicide cases per year. This recommendation is based on best practices and on evidence that increases in detectives' caseloads can be related to declines in clearance rates.

At the end of 2024, the average case load per homicide detective was three (3) investigations. Prior to the start of the Homicide Team Pilot Program in 2024, the 5-year homicide case load average was four (4) investigations per detective, showing a 25% reduction in the case load per detective at the end of the first year of the pilot program.

The Bureau of Detectives maintains a suite of policies relevant to homicide investigations and is in the process of finalizing a new directive on the Homicide Team Pilot Program. Additionally, two reference guides govern Bureau of Detectives Operations and Investigations and include sections on the Homicide Unit. These reference guides will be updated upon the finalization of the new pilot program directive.

The Bureau of Detectives maintains a Policy and Procedure Group in the Office of the Chief to develop written policies and guidelines for Bureau members. Biweekly, Bureau of Detective command staff from the Office of the Chief and each Area Detective Division meet to discuss current and relevant issues. A supervisor from the Policy and Procedure Group is in these meetings and regularly shares policy updates and collects input from leadership.



HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RECOMMENDATION NO. 9:

The CPD should update all written SOPs that govern homicide investigations to ensure they provide clear and comprehensive guidance on the duties and responsibilities of detectives assigned to investigate homicides (i.e., Homicide/Gang/Sex crimes detectives, or “HGS”).

In 2022, the Policy and Procedure Group of the Bureau of Detectives created the Investigative Manual Reference Guide, which provides guidance to homicide detectives on topics including but not limited to the initial scene response, evidence, canvassing, victim information, witness interviews, follow-up procedures, and proper document management.

The following year, the Operations Manual Reference Guide was created to establish uniform Homicide Unit responsibilities, including requirements for homicide supervisors, report approval, homicide assignments, file review, training responsibilities, and community engagement.

The Bureau of Detectives’ suite of policies relevant to homicide investigations is in the process of being reviewed and updated to include a new directive on the Homicide Team Pilot Program. Upon conclusion, both manuals will be reviewed and, as appropriate, updated.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 10:

The Homicide Investigations Manual should be organized so that information is presented clearly and in a way that is easy to follow.

The 2022 Investigative Manual Reference Guide and the 2023 Operations Manual Reference Guide both feature detailed tables of contents that help organize and clearly present information to detectives. The Investigative Manual includes a dedicated section on homicides, covering topics such as drug-induced homicides, cold cases, investigative analysts, family liaison officers and death investigations. It also includes separate sections on related areas, such as nonfatal shooting and Area Technology Centers. Similarly, the 2023 Operations Manual includes distinct sections for the Homicide Unit and Cold Case operations, ensuring easy navigation and access to relevant information.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 11:

All current homicide detectives should be given a copy of the Homicide Investigation Manual, and new personnel should be given a copy of the manual upon their arrival to the unit.

The Bureau of Detectives has a dedicated page on the Department's intranet, accessible to all Department members, including Detectives. The homepage of the Bureau's site features clearly labeled links to the Investigative Manual Reference Guide and the Operations Manual Reference Guide. Additionally, there is a separate link for the Bureau of Detectives Special Orders, which houses a comprehensive set of directives related to homicide investigations.

During pre-service training, newly promoted investigators are provided copies of these manuals. When the new Bureau of Detective directive on the Homicide Team Pilot Program is finalized in 2025, the suite of policies relevant to homicide investigations and both Investigations and Operations reference manuals will be reviewed and, as appropriate, updated. When the pilot directive is finalized and any other resources are updated, each Detective will be enrolled through the Department's Learning Management System to review these policies and guides and to attest to their completion.

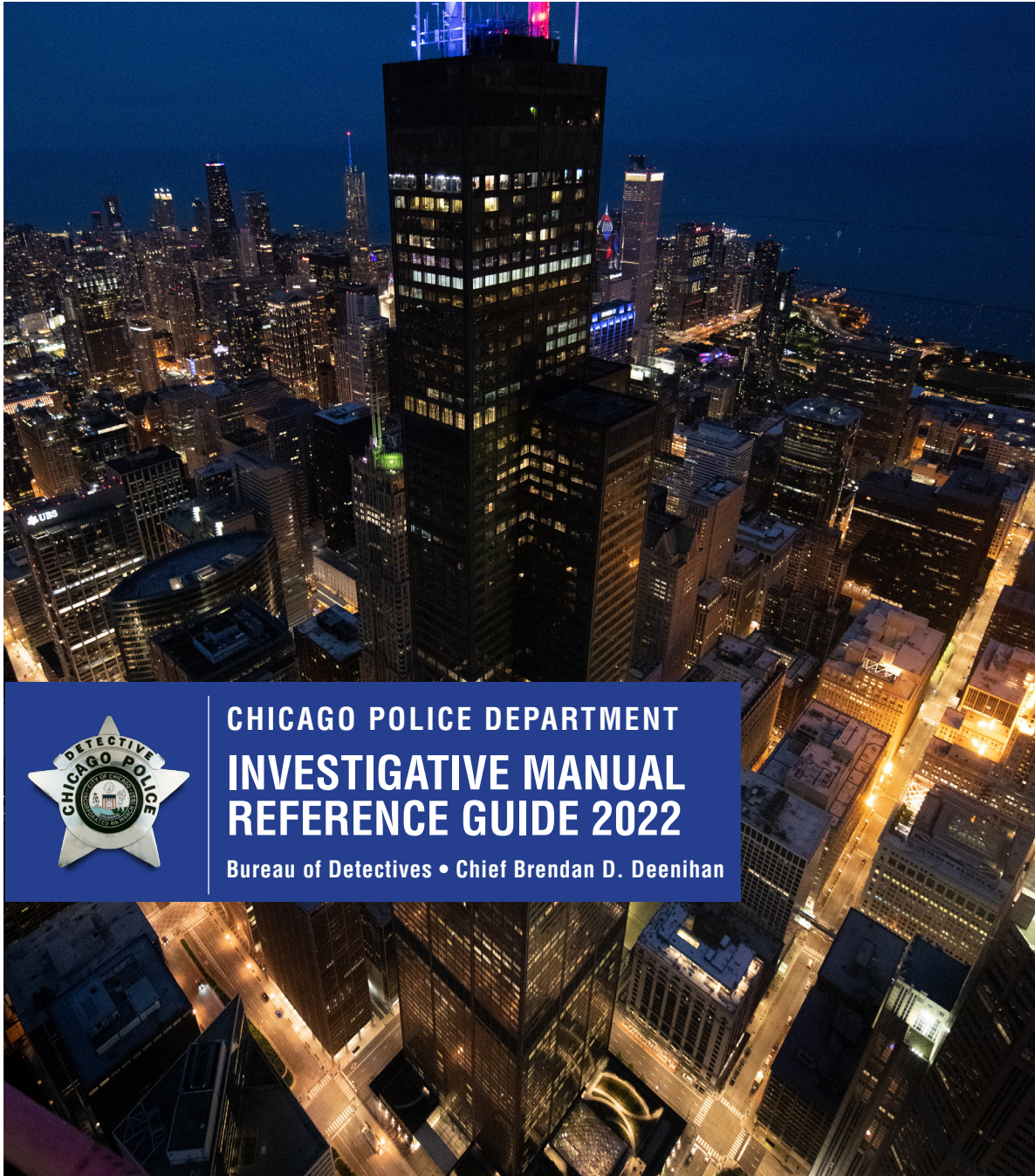
RECOMMENDATION NO. 12:

All written general orders, policies, SOPs, and other guidance governing homicide investigations should reflect current best practices. When developing policies, the CPD should look to research-based practice guides and consult with police agencies that have demonstrated successful investigative practices.

In 2020, the Bureau of Detectives established the Policies and Procedures Group to develop and revise Bureau-level standard operating procedures and guides. Since that time, new and revised policies adhere to the format utilized by the Department's Research and Development Section, which includes a section on CALEA standards. CALEA is an international law enforcement credentialing body that establishes best standards and practices in public safety and awards agencies accreditation.

CALEA Chapter 42 addresses Criminal Investigations and includes standards for administration and operations. As Bureau-level directives are updated, these standards are reviewed and, when appropriate, identified in the policy when a standard is addressed. This practice demonstrates the ongoing commitment of the Bureau of Detectives to adhere to best practices and support the Department's efforts to maintain accreditation since the Department was first awarded the Gold Standard of Excellence in Advanced Law Enforcement Practice in 2018.

Members of the Policy and Procedures Group regularly attend workshops and conferences, engage with other law enforcement professionals, and conduct reviews of research and peer law enforcement agency policies. Additionally, the 2019 PERF Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process continues to be a resource for materials containing national best practices in homicide investigations.





RECOMMENDATION NO. 13:

The Bureau of Detectives should assemble a team to assist the development of homicide investigation policies. The policy team's role is to provide input on policy changes, to share ideas for strengthening the investigation process, and to discuss strategies and next steps for policy implementation.

The Bureau of Detectives created the Policy and Procedures Group in 2020. This team is responsible for researching, reviewing, revising, and creating effective policy and procedures for the Bureau of Detectives, including those focused on homicide investigations. This team participates in cross-functional working groups across the Department and regularly attends biweekly Bureau of Detective command staff meetings to share policy updates and collect input. The Policy and Procedures Group is within the Office of the Chief, and the Commanding Officer of the section meets regularly with the Chief and Deputy Chief to discuss project plans and timelines for the development, implementation, and evaluation of Bureau-level directives.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 14:

In addition to revising the SOPs governing homicide investigations, the CPD should review the current written policies and procedures for each agency unit that supports homicide investigations (e.g., Forensic Services, other investigative units, the Crime Prevention Information Center), and draft or update the policies as needed.

Since 2020, the Policies and Procedure Group has worked with several support units critical to homicide investigations in order to establish policies, standard operating procedures, and guidelines.

Other newly created Bureau-level policies focused on homicide support units include directives on investigative analysts, the Family Liaison Office, and Homicide Investigation Support Team. All policies and procedures are reviewed by the Policy and Procedure Group and approved by the Chief of Detectives.

The Forensic Services Division established a separate unit-level policy and training group due to the technical nature of its procedures. This group coordinates with the Bureau of Detective's Policy and Procedures group and Investigative Development Group and is guiding the Department's efforts to achieve accreditation for its forensic science laboratory in several key disciplines, including latent print development, latent print comparison, and firearms analysis.

The Department is seeking accreditation under the ISO/IEC 17025 and ANAB AR 3125 standards, with accreditation to be granted by ANAB (the ANSI National Accreditation Board), the primary accreditation and certification body for forensic laboratories in the United States. The Department has secured funding in the 2025 budget and is partnering with an external vendor to assist with the accreditation process and help the Department implement the necessary systems, policies, personnel, and training to achieve this goal.

NONFATAL SHOOTING INVESTIGATIONS

RECOMMENDATION NO. 15:

Detectives must thoroughly investigate nonfatal shootings as a way to prevent the next homicide or shooting. Because of the close links between homicide investigations and nonfatal shootings, the CPD should increase the priority given to nonfatal shooting investigations as part of a comprehensive strategy to prevent homicides and retaliatory shootings.

In late 2022, the Department was awarded a Bureau of Justice Assistance grant to implement a Gun Crime Intelligence Center, or CGIC. A CGIC is an interagency collaboration focused on the immediate collection, management, and analysis of gun crime evidence in an effort to identify shooters, disrupt criminal activity, and prevent future violence through the successful prosecution of prolific violent offenders.

The grant provided a subject matter expert visit coordinated by the National Policing Institute, under the National Resource and Technical Assistance Center for Improving Law Enforcement Investigations (NRTAC), where a team reviewed the Department's process to solve nonfatal shootings. Additionally, the grant produced a report with a series of recommendations based on the subject matter experts' observations.

In 2024, as a result of the grant and the report, the Department launched the Chicago CGIC in partnership with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) with the full support of 13 federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, including the CPD, ATF, Cook County Sheriffs Police (CCS), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), United States Secret Service (USSS), Chicago HIDTA, United States Attorney's Office (USAO), Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO), and Illinois Attorney General's Office.

The Chicago CGIC serves as the city's central hub for Crime Gun Intelligence (CGI) collection, analysis, and investigation of non-fatal shootings. Each weekday morning, this team meets in person to review cases in a multi-disciplinary format that incorporates the perspective of analysts, investigators, and prosecutors at the local, state and federal levels. While this is a centralized model, there are assigned Detectives in the Chicago CGIC who act as a dedicated liaison to each Area Detective Division and ensure regular information-sharing and de-confliction of cases.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 16:

The CPD Bureau of Detectives should ensure that all units involved in homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations have the staffing needed to respond to the scene quickly and perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.

With the implementation of the Homicide Team Pilot Program in January 2024, the Bureau of Detectives increased the number of homicide detectives and reduced the average case load per investigator. Additionally, the pilot provided on-call homicide detectives with take-home vehicles to respond directly to crime scenes and ensured every homicide investigator was issued a laptop. The Department ended 2024 with a 5% increase in homicide clearance rates compared to 2023.

The issuance of the CGIC award similarly catalyzed change in how the Department investigates nonfatal shootings, starting with forensics. The Department revamped the protocols in its firearms lab for documenting, triaging, and processing firearms-related evidence using the recommendations of subject matter experts. In doing so, the firearms lab eliminated a backlog of evidence and decreased the turnaround time for entry of shell casings into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) system to within 48 hours.

Intelligence returned from NIBIN establishes whether there is a correlation between firearms and shooting scenes. As a result of the CGIC partnership, the firearms lab no longer manually generates a report to communicate these findings with officers and detectives. Instead, members in Patrol, Counterterrorism, and Detective bureaus can directly and immediately access this information using the ATF's NIBIN Enforcement Support System (NESS), further adding to efficiencies.

As we move into 2025, the Bureau of Detectives will continue to assess the early successes of the Homicide Team Pilot Program to explore how similar strategies can improve the handling of nonfatal shooting incidents. One key development has been the establishment of homicide teams focused exclusively on investigating murders and deaths, separate from other types of incidents. Similarly, the Bureau is in the initial stages of restructuring oversight within each Area's Violent Crimes office to ensure the nonfatal shootings are assigned to the dedicated detectives, distinct from those investigating criminal sexual assaults and non-shootings related assaults and batteries.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 17:

The CPD Bureau of Detectives should ensure that all units involved in homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations have the training needed to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.

The Department ensures that Detectives who investigate homicides, non-fatal shootings, and other incidents that may result in a fatality, receive Lead Homicide Investigator Training (LHI). Successful completion of LHI training results in a certification that is valid in the State of Illinois for four years. The Investigative Development Group is the Bureau of Detective's training team and tracks and coordinates regular LHI trainings for personnel in Homicide and Violent Crime units.

The Bureau of Detectives also provided two unique trainings to help all detectives, including those assigned to Homicide or Violent Crime units, perform their jobs more effectively.

In 2021, detectives and supervisors assigned to the Bureau of Detectives were scheduled to attend Fair and Impartial Policing for Investigators, a training program specifically designed for investigators and investigative supervisors. The course was developed to help participants understand how implicit biases can negatively impact investigations and that fair and impartial policing produces just, accurate, and effective investigations. The course was delivered by Fair and Impartial Policing LLC and reinforced the in-service training that all Department members regularly receive on impartial policing.

In 2024, the Bureau of Detectives also assigned detectives and supervisors to attend Creating Safer Communities Hate Crimes Training. The course focused on the history of hate crimes, federal law and case analysis, the importance of data and sound investigative strategies, and the impact of hate crimes on communities – including perspectives directly from victims and survivors.

Specialized teams, including the Area Technology Centers, Forensic Services Division, and Family Liaison Office receive training based on the unique functions their roles fulfill. This instruction includes certifications and informational trainings. The Investigative Development Group ensures completed training classes, including authorized training provided by outside instructors or non-Department entities, are entered into members' training records.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 18:

The CPD Bureau of Detectives should ensure that all units involved in homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations have the equipment needed to successfully complete their missions.

All detectives, including those responsible for homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations, have Department-issued cell phones. This allows investigators to communicate more easily with each other, law enforcement and criminal justice partners, as well as victims and witnesses.

From October 2022 to March 2023, the Department updated all desktops in the Department, including in the Bureau of Detectives. Additionally, all homicide detectives were issued laptops to have access to Department databases and other tools to assist them with investigations in the field. As the Bureau of Detectives works on establishing separate oversight for nonfatal shooting investigations, the same effort will be made.

The number of vehicles available within the Bureau of Detectives has been a challenge since 2020. Due to COVID-19, the manufacturing of police cars was delayed. As a short-term solution, the Bureau of Detectives began leasing unmarked vehicles. The Bureau of Detectives leadership meets regularly with the Office of Public Safety Administration to discuss the allocation of vehicles and establish plans to procure a corporate funded fleet that ensures detectives have the equipment needed to effectively conduct investigations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 19:

The Bureau of Detectives should improve coordination between homicide detectives and the aggravated battery detectives who investigate nonfatal shootings. Leaders must emphasize the importance of coordination to all personnel. There is often a great deal of overlap between the cases investigated by these two groups of detectives, and detectives must be aware of any relationships between their cases, suspects, victims, and witnesses.

The Bureau of Detectives remains dedicated to effective communication, coordination, and collaboration. At the leadership level, the Office of the Chief holds biweekly command-level meetings with all unit commanding officers to facilitate information-sharing on trends, initiatives, policies, and best practices. Additionally, the Operations Manual Reference Guide provides supervisors with administrative guidelines for roll calls, case updates and information-sharing practices.

The Office of the Chief of Patrol ensures each Patrol Area holds Weekly Shooting Review meetings to facilitate intelligence-driven discussions among Bureau of Patrol and Detective personnel, gang and narcotics teams in the Bureau of Counter-terrorism, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), FBI, ATF, US Attorney's Office, among other partners. This regular review of murders and nonfatal shootings highlights similarities in cases, suspects, victims, and witnesses.

With the launch of the Chicago Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC), several programmatic developments further strengthened coordination between murder and nonfatal shooting investigations, including the Department moving to the ATF's eTrace and NIBIN Enforcement Support System (NESS) platforms. The Department moved to the ATF's NIBIN Enforcement Support System (NESS) and eTrace platforms.

eTrace is a web-based tool that traces firearms from the original manufacturer or importer to the last known retail purchaser. This helps homicide and nonfatal shooting investigators detect potential suspects or patterns of violent gun crimes. NESS is similarly a web-based tool and automatically receives and organizes all NIBIN leads nationwide, providing for ease in tracking homicide and nonfatal shooting cases, streamlined display of critical information from NIBIN, eTrace, and the Department's preliminary reports.

As a result, detectives, supervisors, and leadership can identify NIBIN connections in shooting incidents anywhere in the city. The Department also assigned dedicated Detectives in the Chicago CGIC to ensure homicides and nonfatal shooting incidents with actionable intelligence are pursued within and across Areas.

COLD CASE INVESTIGATIONS

RECOMMENDATION NO. 20:

The CPD should establish a centralized Cold Case Unit, with a new mission that emphasizes clearing cases and providing a reliable quality assurance check on homicide investigations.

In 2020, Cold Case Teams were restructured and reorganized to ensure every Area has a dedicated Cold Case Team. Due to the number of cases, it was determined that de-centralized teams would be more effective than a centralized team in ensuring a thorough review of unsolved murders within each Area. Additionally, Area-level Cold Case Teams allow the original investigating Detective/Responding Officers to assist with any questions that may arise and aid in the investigation more readily.

Area Detective Division Cold Case Teams report to their respective Area Homicide Lieutenant and have a dedicated Sergeant. Cold Case Teams maintain coordination and communication with other key Area personnel such as Investigative Analysts and the Family Liaison Office to assess for solvability factors and facilitate case updates to the appropriate family member and loved ones.

To ensure a systematic review of investigative files at the Area level, the Investigative Analyst Assessment Report was created in 2021. The report serves as a tool to not only capture the review of pertinent facts of the investigation such as motive, persons of interest, witnesses, and evidence, but to document the basis for re-opening the case and the recommended actions to be taken by cold case investigators.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 21:

The Bureau of Detectives should develop uniform written policies and protocols for the Cold Case Unit, including those in the Homicide Investigation Manual. When developing the policies, the BOD should rely on input from leaders from each Detective Area and current cold case detectives. The SOPs should emphasize that the primary missions of the Cold Case Team are to clear cases and provide an additional layer of review for homicide cases.

The policies and procedures for cold case homicide teams were revised in 2021 with the objective of equipping supervisors and detectives with guidelines to conduct investigations effectively and consistently. The Cold Case Investigations directive defines key terms and establishes investigative procedures. Cold Case Team supervisor duties also are outlined.

The 2022 Investigative Manual Reference Guide provides more detailed guidance on evidence to be reviewed and follow-up activities in cold case investigations. The 2023 Operations Manual Reference Guide similarly elaborates on the daily responsibilities of the cold case supervisor and investigative guidelines for supervisors.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 22:

The Cold Case Unit should be assigned to the Bureau of Detectives and should be led by a lieutenant. The Cold Case Unit should primarily be staffed with top homicide investigators who have demonstrated outstanding performance and who express a desire to investigate cold cases.

Each Area Detective Division Cold Case Team is led by the Homicide Lieutenant and a dedicated Sergeant. In addition to experienced homicide detectives who have expressed interest in the assignment and possess a strong background in homicide investigations, each Cold Case Team is supported with one or more civilian investigative analysts.

Among a list of skills that include critical thinking and complex problem-solving, investigative analysts possess knowledge of investigative analysis methods, techniques, practices, and procedures; evidence collection and analysis methods, practices, and procedures; and record keeping and report preparation methods, practices, and procedures.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 23:

The Bureau of Detectives should develop a formal process for determining which cold cases the Cold Case Unit will review, based on research and best practices for conducting cold case investigations.

The Cold Case Investigations directive and Bureau of Detective manual reference guides all identify factors that determine which cold cases the team will review. Cold case supervisors are responsible for ensuring open cases are reviewed for viability of leads and refer to homicide data sheets and archives to identify patterns or individual homicides for review.

Other selection factors include cases with identified offenders or outstanding arrest warrants or the emergence of new information, such as physical or digital evidence; new information from witnesses; statements of perpetrators; and the availability of new methods to test existing evidence.

Additionally, the cold case teams work with the Family Liaison Office and will review a case at the request of the family. Cold Case detectives are experienced investigators previously assigned to homicide teams so they continue to speak with homicide detectives in the Area regarding unsolved cases in order to gain insight into cold cases. Another basis for selection is elapsed time since the original investigation was opened.

While taking research and best practice into consideration, the Bureau of Detectives also regularly meets with the Gun Violence Survivors Leadership Network (GVSLN). GVSLN includes parents, siblings, and other family members who have lost a loved one to violence in Chicago and have either started grassroots, non-profit organizations to help other gun violence survivors or are leading such efforts in the community to advocate for and support gun violence survivors. The group actively provides the Bureau of Detectives with input that has been used to revise policies related to homicide investigations, including Cold Case Investigations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 24:

The CPD should explore grant funding opportunities to support the investigation of cold cases. Research has shown that this is a common source of funding for cold case units, and that the level of funding dedicated to a cold case squad can have a significant impact on the number of cases that the squad clears.

The Department encourages and supports a wide range of grant-funded projects that are compatible with its overall goals and objectives. The Bureau of Detectives works closely and regularly with the City of Chicago Office of Public Safety Administration Grants Management team, which is responsible for notifying Department bureaus of grant monies that are or may become available. Due to this collaboration, several grants have been awarded to the Bureau of Detectives, two of which in particular have had a significant impact on the manner in which cold cases are investigated.

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program is the leading federal source of criminal justice funding to state and local jurisdictions and provides many local governments with critical funding necessary to support a range of program areas. As a result of this award, the Bureau of Detectives was able to fund the Investigative Analyst position for cold case assessments of evidenced-based solvability factors. This funding currently provides for nine (9) investigative analysts assigned across all five (5) Detective Division Areas.

Also, in 2020, the Department was awarded the Department of Justice “SAKI: Investigation and Prosecution of Cold Case Sexual Assaults” grant. The project is managed by the Bureau of Detectives DNA Processing Unit, which has been a driving force in formalizing a systematic and comprehensive process to review, evaluate, and solve previously unresolved cold cases in both the Homicide and Violent Crime units in every Area.

The SAKI grant allows for forensic laboratory testing of DNA evidence not only in sexual assault investigations but homicides with a sexual component as well as death investigations with suspicious circumstances and, in some instances, when there are unidentified human remains. Bimonthly each Area is responsible for submitting two (2) cases to the DNA Processing Unit for review. Areas are prepared to present on these cases as selected.

Case reviews are held every other month and are attended by the Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Detectives, each Area’s Homicide and Violent Crimes Lieutenants, each Area’s cold case and criminal sexual assault detective supervisors, and investigative analysts. Additionally, Illinois State Police Forensic Lab and Cook County State’s Attorney Office routinely participate in these case reviews.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 25:

The Bureau of Detectives should track metrics including the number of cold cases reviewed, the types of cases reviewed, and any weaknesses or other issues in the initial investigation uncovered during the review. The Bureau of Detectives should also track its clearance and conviction rates. This will help the CPD identify and address any gaps in performance moving forward.

In December 2024, the City's Office of Public Safety Administration received all proposals from potential vendors interested in developing a new, single Records Management System (RMS) for the Chicago Police Department. During the preparation phase for the Request for Proposal (RFP), the Bureau of Detectives provided a list of its unique record-keeping needs for investigations, including cold cases.

An evaluation team from the City that includes representation from the Bureau of Detectives will review submissions starting in 2025 and choose the best option for the Department. Once a contract is finalized, the implementation process is expected to take up to three years and to help the Bureau better track case assignments.

In the interim, each Area Cold Case Team is responsible for submitting a quarterly report to the Office of the Chief of the Bureau of Detectives that documents the cases cleared for the quarter. Additionally, to support the case review process, the Investigative Analyst Assessment Report was created to ensure a thorough and complete review occurs when a cold case is selected. At the conclusion of the report, recommended actions for cold case investigators are identified.



DETECTIVE AND SUPERVISOR SELECTION PROCESS

RECOMMENDATION NO. 26:

The CPD should establish a rigorous, formal process for selecting homicide detectives. The process should be based on a set of established qualification criteria that are stated in written policy and are consistently applied to all candidates. The CPD should ensure that selection criteria are objective, and external, subjective influences are minimized when selecting homicide detectives.

In February 2023, the Department revised the class title for police officers assigned as detective. This revision ensured a current, relevant reflection of best practices in identifying talented investigators and includes essential duties, knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the position.

In December 2023, in advance of the launch of the Homicide Team Pilot Program, the Department conducted an application process for Detectives interested in being considered for the Area Homicide Team. This application process is known as a Notice of Job Opportunity (NOJO) and establishes a description of the position and a list of job responsibilities. Additionally, minimum and desired qualifications are specified.

Minimum qualifications for the Homicide Team include but are not limited to a member's duty status, disciplinary and attendance records, and current assignment to the Area for which they are applying. Desired qualifications address investigative and analytical experience; strong written and verbal communication skills; ability to work independently and in a team; and prior training and experience with homicide investigations, including Lead Homicide Investigator certification.

Interested members submitted a resume, cover letter, and three investigations that resulted in charges and demonstrated investigative abilities (i.e., victim/witness interviews; canvassing; and evidence submissions). These cases were then reviewed and scored by designated supervisors using a five-point scale in three categories: Initial Assignment/Scene Documentation; Documentation Course of Investigation; and Culmination of Case. The scoring scales provided examples to substantiate the selected score, such as whether reports were completed; knowledge of investigative tools; and completeness and organization of case file. The sum score from each of the three categories provided an overall score that determined who was identified for the eligibility pool for assignment to a homicide team.

The Notice of Job Opportunity (NOJO) process for homicide teams will continue to be required for a detective to be selected for assignment.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 27:

The CPD should establish and enforce a formal probationary period (e.g., 90-120 days) for newly selected homicide detectives before they are assigned full time. This would allow candidates and supervisors to determine whether the assignment is a good fit for the new detective.

The Homicide Team Pilot Program was launched after an extensive negotiation process with the collective bargaining unit representing Detectives. Mutual agreement is necessary to terminate or modify the provisions of the pilot program. The provisions of the pilot program do not establish a probationary period for selected homicide detectives before they are assigned.

While there is no formal probationary period for newly assigned homicide detectives, job performance is continually assessed through ongoing coaching, feedback, and an annual performance evaluation. These processes provide supervisors with valuable opportunities to address areas for improvement and help detectives achieve higher levels of performance.

In 2021, the CPD started a practice of annual supervisor training that ensures a regular refresher on topics included but not limited to techniques for effectively guiding and directing officers and promoting effective and ethical police practices; evaluating officer performance both informally and formally as part of CPD's annual performance evaluation process; mentoring officers; and fostering career development. Homicide Sergeants and Lieutenants as well as command staff are required to attend this annual supervisor training.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 28:

The CPD should implement a formal process for selecting homicide supervisors (sergeants, lieutenants, and commanders). The process should be stated in written policy and consistently applied for all candidates.

The Bureau of Detectives supports its command staff in selecting and building their teams across all its sections, including the Homicide Unit. Two resources, the 2022 Investigative Manual Reference Guide and 2023 Operations Manual Reference Guide, clearly outline guidelines and responsibilities for homicide supervisors. Using this guidance, homicide supervisors may be selected by the Area Detective Division Commander with chain-of-command approval of the Chief and Deputy Chief of Detectives.

The Policy and Procedure Group of the Bureau of Detectives is in the process of finalizing a new directive on the Homicide Team Pilot Program which will reinforce the selection of homicide team supervisors based on skillset, knowledge, training, and experience within the Bureau of Detectives.



INVESTIGATIONS TRAINING

RECOMMENDATION NO. 29:

The CPD should invest resources and funding in the Investigative Development Group so it can provide adequate training to CPD detectives. The investment should include the following improvements.

- *Dedicated training spaces to ensure:*
 - *Classes being offered more frequently;*
 - *Smaller class sizes.*
- *Dedicated funding to support:*
 - *Additional instructors;*
 - *Instructor development to ensure they are training on established best practices;*
 - *Adequate equipment for instructors (e.g., cell phones, projectors, laptops).*

The Investigative Development Group (IDG) is under the Office of the Chief of Detectives and responsible for the development, delivery, and coordination of specialized training for detectives and supervisors within the bureau.

The IDG is embedded at the Timothy J. O'Connor Training Facility to promote accessibility to and collaboration with the resources of the Training Division, which is responsible for all Department training. All IDG members have successfully completed the 40-hour Instructor's Academy, which covers curriculum and lesson plan development; effective teaching and adult learning techniques; and testing and evaluation techniques, among other topics.

In February 2023, the City of Chicago cut the ribbon on the brand-new Bauer Plummer Public Safety Training Center (PSTC). Spanning 30.4 acres on the city's West Side, this state-of-the-art facility provides an additional space for cutting-edge training, resources, and programming for Chicago Police Department members as well as Chicago Fire Department firefighters.

Also, in 2024, the Bureau of Detectives embedded training personnel from its Area Technology Centers at a newly designated space for digital forensics training and processing next to the Area 3 Detective Division. This location provides two auxiliary spaces for classroom training. The Bureau's delivery of digital forensics training to outside partners creates a funding source for the Bureau's training needs.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 30:

The Investigative Development Group should ensure that the pre-service detective training addresses all relevant topics to conduct effective investigations.

The Investigative Development Group (IDG) coordinates and assists with the delivery of six weeks of Pre-Service Detective training, which is provided when members are selected for promotion to detective. The overall curriculum addresses many facets relevant to effective investigations, with the greatest investment of time placed in interviews and interrogations; forensic services; cellphone investigations and investigative technology; and youth investigations and criminal sexual assault investigations.

Since 2020, the Investigative Development Group has emphasized adult-learning principles and added in scenario-based components of instruction such as mock crimes scenes and photo lineups. Technical aspects of records management, such as the R-Case case management application, are covered in pre-service training, as documentation is critical to successful investigations. Report writing for investigators and drafting search warrants also provide detectives practical skills that build upon instruction in legal foundations of investigations.

Investigative partners, subject matter experts and guest speakers are invited to participate in the development and instruction of relevant courses. The ATF and FBI deliver presentations regarding the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program and the Crime Gun Intelligence Center. At the state level, the Illinois Attorney General's Office presents with medical partners and community advocacy groups to drive a comprehensive and trauma-informed response to sex crimes. The Cook County Medical Examiner's Office provides an in-depth understanding of autopsy procedures and the types of information that can be learned from an autopsy.

The Cook County State's Attorney Office (CCSAO) delivers training in several sections, including youth investigations; courtroom preparation, trials, and testimony; and a special presentation by a trial supervisor of the CCSAO Felony Review Unit focusing on current legal issues and issues affecting the conduct of investigations with the aim of obtaining approval of felony charges.

At the end of 2024, pre-service training expanded the module on death notification to emphasize grief literacy and a personal testimony. In 2025, Bureau of Detectives training will introduce new modules recently developed in coordination with a researcher at the University of Illinois – Chicago and community-based organizations that address strategies for trust and cooperation; self-care, wellness and balance; and mitigating retaliatory violence. Several of these courses will bring in community members to share their personal experience in interacting with police during investigations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 31:

All newly assigned homicide detectives should be required to receive formal training on topics related to homicide investigations.

Pre-service Detective training includes instruction on homicide investigations, drug-induced homicides, death investigations, cases involving unidentified remains, and a homicide investigation case study. At the end of 2024, the module on death notifications was expanded to emphasize grief literacy and personal testimony. At the completion of pre-service detective training, all detectives are certified as Lead Homicide Investigators (LHIs).

Even though new detectives will not be assigned to homicide teams, their field training will include a rotation in the Violent Crime Section, which is responsible for investigating aggravated batteries. Detectives who investigate aggravated batteries are required to receive regular LHI refresher training along with homicide investigators.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 32:

All homicide detectives, including experienced detectives, should receive regular, ongoing training relevant to conducting homicide investigations.

Since 2012 in the State of Illinois, only law enforcement officers who successfully complete the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) certified 40-hour Lead Homicide Investigator (LHI) training program may be assigned as lead investigators in homicide investigations.

LHIs certified by the ILETBSB are required to obtain 32 hours of approved LHI in-service training in a four-year period from the date of their certification. The Department's LHI training program has increased to 40 hours with refresher training required every three years.

The Investigative Development Group (IDG) ensures the topics presented in LHI are current and relevant to LHIs. Courses routinely are delivered by outside subject matter experts, with recent topics including homicide investigation best practices such as interview/interrogation strategies; photo show-up techniques; improving interactions with the public; gaining cooperation; time management and organizational skills; witness protection and relocations; courtroom-preparation; and advanced death investigations.

Additional specialized instruction in the Department's LHI course address cell phone investigations, trauma-informed interviewing techniques, and investigative genetic genealogy, among other areas of focus.

In 2025, Bureau of Detectives training will introduce new modules recently developed in coordination with a researcher at the University of Illinois – Chicago that address strategies for trust and cooperation; wellness and balance; and mitigating retaliatory violence. Several of these courses will bring in community members to share their personal experience in interacting with police during investigations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 33:

To help detectives prepare homicide cases for prosecution, the CPD should collaborate with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office to provide training to detectives on the requirements for search warrant and arrest warrant applications, case documentation, proper report-writing, and legal updates.

The Cook County State's Attorney Office (CCSAO) instructs in several sections of pre-service Detective training, including youth investigations; courtroom preparation, trials, and testimony; and a special presentation by a trial supervisor of the CCSAO Felony Review Unit focusing on current legal topics and issues affecting the conduct of investigations with the aim of obtaining felony charging approval.

At the end of 2024, leadership in the Department and Cook County State's Attorney Office (CCSAO) began regular meetings to strengthen the partnership, with a focus on training. As a result of these discussions, a pilot roll call training with the CCSAO launched in December with a focus on weapons investigations. Additionally, the Department's Training and Support Group established an inaugural meeting with the CCSAO's new director of training to review recruit curriculum and coordinate CCSAO participation in law modules and integrated exercises.

In 2025, the Bureau of Detective's Investigative Development Group (IDG) along with the Deputy Director of Prosecutorial Strategies will meet with the new CCSAO director of training to review the pre-service and Lead Homicide Investigator courses for enhancements. The collaboration also will focus on the development of new modules of instruction with a focus on scenario-based joint training exercises.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 34:

To improve the homicide investigation process, the CPD should ensure that additional training is available to homicide detectives that covers specialized areas (e.g., conducting infant death investigations, the use of a particular type of technology, etc.).

One of the features of the Homicide Team Pilot Program is advanced, specialized training for homicide detectives. The Bureau of Detectives has not only revised and revamped the 40-hour Lead Homicide Investigator (LHI) course but has coordinated periodic, stand-alone training to supplement the week-long course.

In 2024, a new supervisor with previous experience as a homicide detective and training sergeant was assigned to lead the Investigative Development Group (IDG). Under this Sergeant's direction, the LHI course was re-designed to focus on practical case studies delivered by seasoned homicide investigators. Best practices, including interview and interrogation skills; crime scene investigation and processing; intra- and inter-bureau collaboration; and video evidence retrieval and utilization were emphasized.

Specialized topics in Lead Homicide Investigator (LHI) training continued to include cell phone investigations while expanding on the role of social media in investigations. Instruction also addressed search warrants, investigative genetic genealogy, polygraph examinations, and Critical Reach photo bulletin system along with other resources for homicide investigators, such as the Department's Family Liaison Office. Separate from LHI training, the Bureau of Detectives also coordinated an FBI presentation specifically for homicide detectives and supervisors regarding the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP), a powerful investigatory tool. The FBI's ViCAP maintains the largest investigative repository of major violent crime cases in the country and analyzes crime details like offender information, physical evidence, and suspect behavior to link similar crime patterns from reported cases of homicides, sexual assaults, missing persons, and other violent crimes involving unidentified human remains.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 35:

The Bureau of Detectives should strengthen its on-the-job (OJT) training to ensure that new homicide detectives receive appropriate and comprehensive field training and mentoring.

At the completion of pre-service detective training, detectives are assigned through their Area Commander to separate rotations through the Property Crime, Violent Crime, and Special Victim sections. Even though new detectives will not be assigned to homicide teams, the strength of their field training in each of these areas serves as the foundation of their investigative and analytical experience, strong written and verbal communication skills, and ability to work independently and in a team.

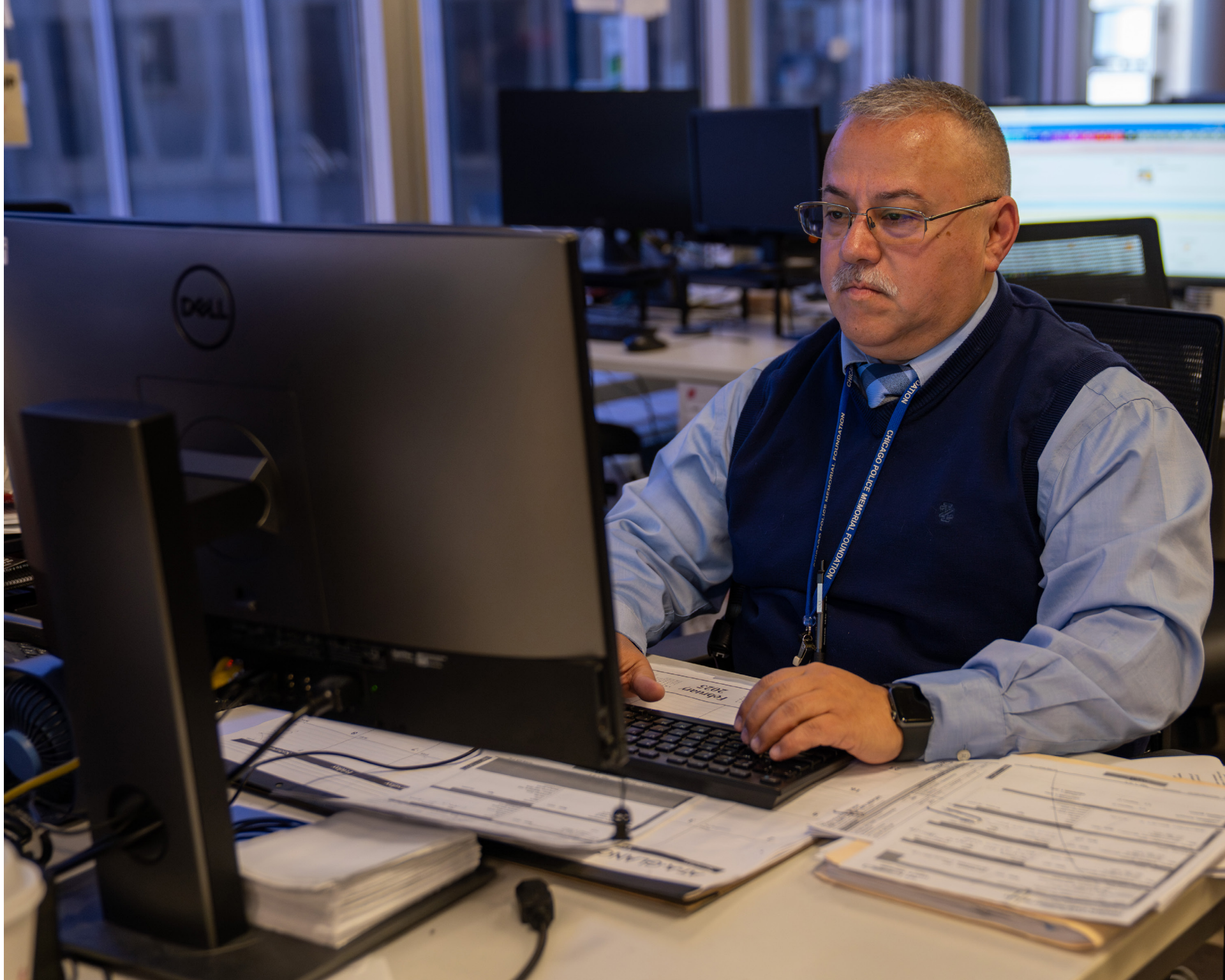
The investigative responsibility of the Area Property Crimes Unit includes robbery, burglary, criminal trespass, criminal damage, and deceptive practice incidents, among other offenses. Property crime investigations provide detectives with invaluable experience in establishing modus operandi, or a particular way or method used by an offender that the offender may repeat when those methods or techniques previously were successful for them. This strengthens the investigator's ability to identify and generate crime patterns and community alerts and clear not only individual crimes but multiple offenses linked to one or more criminals.

The Violent Crimes Unit is responsible for investigating batteries and assaults, select death cases under the jurisdiction of the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office, suicides and attempt suicides, criminal sexual assaults and select sex offenses, and firearms investigations. This assignment strengthens the detective's communication and coordination in violent incidents that may overlap with homicide investigations. In regards to death investigations, regardless of whether the manner of death is accidental, natural, suicide, or undetermined, the investigator becomes adept in ascertaining circumstances through scene assessment and the preservation and analysis of evidence.

Incidents involving domestic violence, missing persons, offenses involving children, and juvenile processing are assigned to detectives in the Special Victims Unit. These investigations often are time sensitive and require detectives to maintain especially strong community and cross-bureau collaborations to successfully resolve these incidents. With the potential for missing persons investigations to become part of a criminal or death investigation in the future, and the relationship between domestic

violence and homicides, investigators in Special Victims assignments must constantly bear in mind that statements and evidence they collect in their individual case may later inform a complete and thorough investigation beyond their casework.

The detective's rotation through each of these sections provides those who are interested in assignment to a homicide team with the qualifications and casework necessary to apply. Once a detective is selected for a homicide team through the Notice of Job Opportunity process, they are assigned to one dedicated Sergeant who mentors and leads a cohesive team under the direction of the Homicide Lieutenant.



SUPERVISION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND OVERSIGHT

RECOMMENDATION NO. 36:

The CPD should ensure that there is strong and consistent leadership within the Bureau of Detectives, and, specifically, among supervisors of homicide investigations. Leadership stability is critical for ensuring that any communication gaps are addressed, and that information is shared within the unit. Too much transition among commanders results in a misunderstanding of expectations and a lack of institutional knowledge.

In January 2020, the Department promoted the Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Detectives, who previously served as an Area Commander and Homicide Lieutenant, to Chief of Detectives. The Chief provided tremendous institutional knowledge about the Department and Bureau throughout his 3-year tenure until his retirement in February 2023. In March 2023, a new Chief of Detectives with extensive experience in the Department's reform efforts was assigned along with a new Deputy Chief who possessed an exceptional background in investigations as a Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Commander.

Since 2023, the Area Detective Division command staff similarly has remained intact with experienced leadership, with one promotion of a Homicide Lieutenant to Commander following an Area Commander's retirement. Also, each Area's Homicide Unit has benefited from the consistent leadership of the same Homicide Lieutenant; again, the only change was the assignment of a new Homicide Lieutenant in the Area where the previous Lieutenant had been promoted to Commander. These Commanders and Lieutenants understood the history of the Police Executive Research Forum's report on the Department's homicide investigation processes and must be credited for the successful implementation of many of the recommendations in this report.

The command team of the Chief, Deputy Chief, and Commanders has maintained a bi-weekly meeting cadence to review and discuss progress in investigations, initiatives, and strategies. This regular meeting allocates time for every Commander to provide input to strengthen overall Bureau operations or address areas of concerns. It is not only the stability of command assignments but complementary skills and abilities across the team that has served to reinforce best practices and clear communication throughout the Bureau.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 37:

The supervisory responsibilities of sergeants should be made clear in homicide investigation policies and should be reinforced by top unit leaders. This includes clarifying that sergeants should serve as supervisors first and foremost, and that they will be held accountable for their performance as supervisors, not as detectives.

The Department recognizes the importance of all supervisors receiving both initial and refresher supervisory, management, leadership, and accountability training tailored to their supervisory rank. Since 2021, the Department has developed and delivered annual supervisor training to ensure supervisors are equipped to effectively provide leadership, guidance, mentoring, training, and support to members under their command. This annual training builds upon the foundation of pre-service training that all supervisors are required to successfully complete before promotion. Homicide supervisors are required to attend these trainings.

The core skills and expectations required of all Department supervisors are further refined in the Bureau of Detectives through standard operating procedures and guides that clarify the unique responsibilities involved in overseeing investigations. While the Bureau's homicide-related directives outlines supervisory duties, the 2022 Investigative Manual Reference Guide and the 2023 Operations Manual Reference Guide provide a more detailed and streamlined approach, emphasizing the function of the Homicide Unit and the specific expectations for supervisors.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 38:

Homicide unit leaders should establish a clear chain of command within unit. Homicide sergeants should be assigned to directly supervise specific teams or squads of detectives, and these assignments should be made clear to the sergeants and the detectives.

The restructuring of Bureau of Detective operations in 2020 to five Areas from three Areas supported the reorganization of sections within each Area to better promote accountability, collaboration, and specialized training. The Homicide Unit is now established in each Area as a distinct section of detectives organized into teams and specifically trained in investigative practices regarding homicides, death, and other investigations likely to result in a fatality.

The Homicide Team Pilot Program implemented in 2024 reinforces that the Homicide Unit is composed of teams, with each team led by a Homicide Sergeant who directly supervises their team. Homicide Sergeants report to a Homicide Lieutenant, who in turn reports to the Area Detective Division Commander.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 39:

At the outset of each new homicide case, homicide detectives, working with their supervisors, should develop a detailed investigative plan.

At the onset of each investigation, the lead homicide investigator works with their supervisor and team to develop an investigative plan. The new Homicide Team Pilot Program provides detectives weeks to execute their investigative plan while they are not on call.

The 2022 Investigative Manual Reference Guide provides a detailed overview regarding investigative steps in a homicide investigation. This manual is available to all members and is posted on the Bureau of Detectives intranet site.

The manual addresses the investigator's initial on-scene response, steps to be taken regarding evidence and canvassing, collection of victim information and witness interviews, and follow-up activities. Also, the manual addresses steps when there is an arrest of the offender. Using this guide, homicide detectives and supervisors are aligned at the outset on the necessary course of action.

The investigative plan also is informed by an understanding of the facts and evidence that will need to be presented to the Cook County State's Attorney Office (CCSAO) Felony Review Unit. The CCSAO Felony Review Handbook provides law enforcement with guidance in the form of key questions they should expect to be asked when seeking charges. Although the handbook does not specifically address homicide investigations, it provides insight on the presentation of a case and the facts to be memorialized in written reports.

Additionally, in the fall of 2021, the Bureau elevated the skillset of one of its Detectives to design a tool – the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool – specifically to meet the needs of the homicide detectives, sergeants, and lieutenant within the Area Two Homicide Office and ensure the investigative plan is executed. This tool ensures the completion of time-sensitive tasks central to every homicide investigation. In coordination with the Office of Public Safety Administration, this tool will launch Bureau-wide in early 2025.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 40:

The Homicide Investigation Manual should include a standard case checklist form. The checklist should include basic investigative tasks that are applicable to most homicide investigations, and detectives should be required to note on the form whether they completed each task, the date it was completed, and the reason for not completing any unfinished tasks.

A newly created tool, the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool, takes homicide investigative guidelines and electronically tracks the completion of time-sensitive tasks that are central to every homicide investigation. Although this tool was initially piloted in Area 2, the tracker is set to launch across all Homicide Units starting in the first quarter of 2025.

When detectives log in, they are immediately presented with an intuitive overview of all their active cases. Each case is listed with its most pressing due date prominently displayed in a dedicated column. This ensures that the most time-sensitive tasks are always prioritized, eliminating the need for manual sorting or filtering. By streamlining this information, the system ensures that detectives can focus their energy.

For supervisors, the system provides an equally powerful tool by allowing them to view the due dates of all the members of their team. This feature ensures that supervisory oversight is streamlined and efficient, enabling them to identify bottlenecks or overdue tasks across the entire team. With a comprehensive view of all active cases and tasks, supervisors can offer targeted support where it is needed most, helping to maintain overall productivity and accountability.

Additional features such as email alerts further enhance the system's utility. When a due date is approaching, the system automatically sends an alert to the assigned detective. If the task remains unaddressed, a second alert escalates the issue to the supervisor, ensuring that no deadline is missed without warning. This layered notification process reinforces accountability while minimizing the need for constant manual checks.

The system's integration with the Department's repository for records adds another layer of efficiency. By polling Department records, the dashboard automatically pulls in the appropriate cases by Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) code, eliminating the need for detectives or supervisors to manually input case details. This automation ensures that all active cases are up-to-date and accurately reflected in the system, saving valuable time, and reducing the risk of errors.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 41:

Homicide supervisors should conduct mandatory, regular case reviews for the purpose of identifying potential new leads, addressing any gaps in the detective's investigative process, and updating the investigative plan.

In 2021, the position of Deputy Director of Prosecutorial Strategies was created to enhance collaboration between outside prosecutorial offices and the Bureau of Detectives, with the goal of improving case resolution and increasing the Bureau's case clearance rates. The role involves overseeing a "pre-review" process for major cases, ensuring that relevant case law and statutes are considered early in an investigation. The Deputy Director also serves as a key resource for investigators, offering guidance on the production, documentation, and presentation of evidence to strengthen the case's value in court. Additionally, the Deputy Director monitors cases classified as Continued Investigation ("CI") by the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) and, when appropriate, revisits these cases with the Felony Review Unit (FRU).

Area Homicide Lieutenants regularly coordinate case review meetings with the Cook County State's Attorney's Felony Review Unit and lead detectives to thoroughly assess available evidence in active homicide investigations. These meetings offer detectives an opportunity to present updates on witness statements, forensic results, and physical and digital evidence to Assistant State's Attorneys, helping determine whether sufficient evidence exists to charge a suspect and proceed to trial. If the investigation is to continue, supervisors and detectives receive clear direction on the necessary next steps to advance the case for prosecution.

The Chief and Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Detectives maintain a separate, regular meeting schedule with the head of the Felony Review Unit. These meetings provide a platform to evaluate investigative trends, discuss potential policy and procedural changes, and escalate individual cases for further attention as needed.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 42:

The Bureau of Detectives should evaluate its performance measurement tool and, if necessary, implement a revised method of conducting performance evaluations. Supervisors should be trained on how to properly evaluate detectives and use the tool to document the evaluation.

The Department maintains an overall performance evaluation system for evaluating sworn members, and it is applicable to members in the Bureau of Detectives, including detectives. Personnel assigned to evaluate detectives will consider five performance dimensions in their evaluation:

- *Accountability / Dependability*
- *Problem Solving / Decision Making*
- *Adaptability / Responsiveness*
- *Communication*
- *Job Knowledge/Professional Development*

A member's overall performance evaluation category will be determined from the evaluations received in each of the five performance dimensions and categorized in one of four categories: exceeds expectations; meets expectations; requires improvement; and unacceptable. Supervisors designated to provide members with their overall performance evaluation will prepare a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) if any member receives a rating for any performance dimension in the "Requires Improvement" or "Unacceptable" category.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 43:

Investigation Manual should outline a formal process for evaluating homicide sergeants. The evaluations should measure whether each sergeant is properly supervising detectives, conducting regular case reviews, and providing appropriate guidance and direction to members of the squad.

The Department maintains an overall performance evaluation system for evaluating sworn supervisors and it is applicable to members in the Bureau of Detectives, including homicide supervisors. Personnel assigned to evaluate supervisors will consider five performance dimensions in their evaluation:

- *Enforcement of Work Standards and Staff Development: Holds members responsible for job performance, compliance with Department policy, and addressing problems appropriately.*
- *Analysis and Problem Solving: Is able to gather and analyze information from various sources related to a specific problem and is able to develop a plan to solve that problem based upon an objective analysis.*

- *Personal Leadership: Motivates members and acts as a role model in demonstrating a positive attitude in service to the public.*
- *Delegation of responsibilities: Prioritizes and assigns tasks according to member's strengths and abilities*
- *Dependability, Attendance, and Promptness*

A member's overall performance evaluation category will be determined from the evaluations received in each of the five performance dimensions and categorized in one of four categories: exceeds expectations; meets expectations; requires improvement; and unacceptable. Supervisors designated to provide members with their overall performance evaluation will prepare a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) if any member receives a rating for any performance dimension in the "Requires Improvement" or "Unacceptable" category.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 44:

The Homicide Investigation Manual should include a formal process to provide additional training and assistance to underperforming detectives. If a detective's evaluation indicates a performance issue (e.g., poor case documentation, poor interview/interrogation skills, lack of follow-up with forensics), the Area Commander should consider implementing the following provisions.

- *The detective's sergeant should work with the lieutenant to identify the problem and create a written plan to address it. Absent significant disciplinary issues (untruthfulness, insubordination, etc.), the focus of the plan should be on offering guidance and direction, rather than discipline.*
- *The sergeant should discuss the issue and the proposed plan with the detective. The sergeant should keep written documentation of his/her actions and discussions with the detective.*
- *If the problems continue, or if the detective refuses to get additional training or follow the proposed plan, the detective should be reassigned.*
- *This process should be applied consistently for every detective.*

The Department maintains an overall directive on performance evaluations of sworn members which is applicable to detectives and supervisors in the Bureau of Detectives. Supervisors designated to provide members with their overall performance evaluation will prepare a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) if any member receives a rating for any performance dimension in the "Requires Improvement" or "Unacceptable" category.

In circumstances where performance improvement requires training unique to the functions of a Detective, training will be requested through the Investigative Development Group (IDG) and delivered during the next appropriate course where the topic is addressed (e.g., a module within the Pre-Service Detective or Lead Homicide Investigator training).

CASE DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATION NO. 45:

The Homicide Investigation Manual should include directions on proper case documentation, file organization, and required reporting.

The Bureau of Detectives' 2022 Investigations Manual Reference Guide, 2023 Operations Manual Reference Guide, and Special Orders exhibit clear directions on proper case documentation and management file organization. Specifically, to ensure proper documentation and case management, homicide investigative files are compiled in a standard three-inch, three ring notebook and have a table of contents addressing 21 sections separated by tabbed sheets. A Department form is placed at the front of all physical case files to detail the organization and subject matter of each section.

Case documentation includes but is not limited to distinct sections for Department reports (e.g., General Offense Case Reports, supplementary reports, evidence reports); reports issued by outside partners (e.g., Cook County Medical Examiner's Officer, Illinois State Police Forensics Lab); media files such as compact discs and DVDs and other communications information (e.g. special bulletins, community alerts); and related investigations.

This format supports a chronological history including, but not limited to, assignment of the case, interviews, and recovery of evidence. The Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool further electronically audits the completion of time-sensitive tasks that are central to every homicide investigation to ensure required reporting is completed in a timely manner.

With the selection and rollout of new Departmentwide records management system, the Department will explore opportunities to digitize homicide files.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 46:

The Bureau of Detectives should take steps to improve the organization of case files.

When the Bureau of Detectives expanded from three areas to five areas in 2020, an audit of Area-level homicide cases was conducted and reinforced the standardization of case files at that time. Since then, measures were codified in Bureau of Detective reference manuals and directives to ensure ongoing standardization of homicide investigation documentation (see RECOMMENDATION NO. 45). This standardized format provides uniformity across the Areas and ease of access to valuable information as needed in homicide investigations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 47:

The CPD should explore ways to ensure that its electronic case management system (CHRIS) can be fully utilized by homicide detectives to strengthen case documentation and investigations. Personnel should be fully trained on all electronic records and case management systems and databases.

The Department transitioned away from the CHRIS case management system to a new application named R-CASE. The R-CASE application was developed with menus creating a simpler, more straight-forward interface to allow common investigative tasks to be completed quickly and efficiently.

The R-CASE Case Management Application provides personnel the information they need without having to navigate through multiple pages or conduct multiple queries. Highlights of key information include case counts and statuses, type and numbers of reports awaiting supervisory approval, information on associated arrests, inventories, and crime scene reports. There are multiple sorting options and a means to query information by the Records Division (RD) number.

Detectives receive training on the R-CASE application with materials prepared by the Department's Field Technology and Innovation Section. Training includes videos on how to access the inbox and create supplementary reports. For new detectives, pre-service training incorporates R-CASE instruction and practical exercises utilizing mock cases.

On the Department's intranet site, The Wire, there is a reference resource tab with a dedicated section for Help and User Guides. In this section, the R-CASE reference guide is available for all members as an aid and refresher on how to use the system. This guide provides step-by-step guidance on processing R-CASE patrol supplementary reports for personnel assigned in the Case Management Office. Additionally, there is a workflow and guidance on the system for detectives.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 48:

When considering upgrades to the existing electronic case management system (CHRIS) or implementing a new system, the CPD should consult with investigators and supervisors in the Bureau of Detectives to ensure that the system meets their needs and requirements.

The City's Office of Public Safety Administration received proposals at the end of 2024 from vendors interested in developing a new, single Records Management System (RMS) for the Department. During the preparation phase, the City consulted with the Bureau of Detectives and received a list of needs and requirements for the investigative section of the system.

An evaluation team from the City includes representation from the Bureau of Detectives to help review submissions and choose the best option for the Department. Once a contract is finalized, the implementation process is expected to take up to three years and migrate all the Department's current records applications into a singular RMS. This change will be instrumental in helping the Bureau better track case assignments.



EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

RECOMMENDATION NO. 49:

The CPD should invest in upgrades to the vehicle fleet assigned to the homicide detectives.

The number of vehicles available in the Department has been a challenge since 2020 due to COVID-19 and the delay in manufacturing police cars. As a short-term solution, the Bureau of Detectives leased unmarked vehicles. At the end of 2023, in advance of the launch of the Homicide Team Pilot Program, the Bureau of Detectives procured vehicles specifically for assignment to on-call homicide detectives to ensure their direct and immediate response to crime scenes.

Since 2023, the Bureau of Detectives leadership has met regularly with the Office of Public Safety Administration to discuss the allocation of vehicles and establish plans to procure a corporate funded fleet that ensures detectives have the equipment needed to effectively conduct investigations. Starting in the first quarter of 2025, these meetings will be replaced with monthly sessions held by the Office of Public Safety Administration with all Chicago Police Department Bureau Chiefs to discuss the allocation of vehicles as cars are newly procured by the City.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 50:

The CPD should invest in technological tools that could greatly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of homicide investigations.

- *Tools for essential office work, such as up-to-date desktop computers and individually assigned laptop computers.*
- *Tools to expand the field capabilities of homicide detectives, such as tablets.*

From October 2022 to March 2023, the Department updated all desktop computers in the Department, including in the Bureau of Detectives. Also, all homicide detectives were issued laptops to have access to Department databases and other tools to assist them with investigations in the field. However, one of the largest investments to expand the field capabilities of homicide detectives was the implementation of Area Technology Centers in all five (5) Area Detective Divisions.

In 2019, the Department piloted a first of its kind Area Technology Center (ATC) model. An Area Technology Center acts as the “nerve center” that brings together trained personnel and technology resources to recover, process, and analyze digital evidence in homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations. The first ATC was embedded in the Area Two Detective Division and has since expanded to every Area and the Central Investigations Division.

ATC personnel are identified and selected through a formal Notice of Job Opportunity (NOJO) process. A job description, list of essential duties, and minimum and desired qualifications were established as part of the NOJO process. Assigned ATC personnel are trained on industry best practices and provided with state-of-the-art digital forensic software and tools.

The ATCs currently have over 100 members and operate daily with a dedicated Sergeant per ATC. Since 2022, after ATCs expanded Citywide, the centers handled thousands of digital evidence requests, recovered video from more than 6,000 locations, and processed more than 800 cell phones for detectives. Each year, the demand has continued to grow.

In 2024, the Bureau of Detectives embedded training personnel from its Area Technology Centers at a newly designated space for digital forensics training and processing next to the Area Three Detective Division. In 2025, the Digital Forensics Training and Processing Center is slated to launch to ensure continuing education on the use of technology in investigations as well as for processing more complex digital forensics cases.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 51:

The CPD should invest in equipment upgrades for detectives.

- *A sufficient number of radios so detectives can communicate with CPD officers, detectives, and dispatch.*
- *Investigative tools such as gunshot residue (GSR) kits and buccal swab kits for field testing.*

All radios in the Detective Division Areas have been replaced and additional radios added. The new radios are encrypted, which means only authorized users can transmit; rogue users cannot interrupt communications. These new radios also have specialized channels that only Detectives can use for internal communication. Each Area Detective Division has their own channel.

When an Area Detective Division or other unit needs buccal swabs and gunshot residue (GSR) kits, they make the request directly through the 24-hour Crime Lab Desk, either by email or by calling a Forensic Services Division (FSD) supervisor. Once the request is made, the requested kits are picked up at the 24-hour Crime Lab Desk, which is located at a central location in the city where the forensic lab operates. A supervisor from the Forensic Services Division logs and tracks the issuance of kits by the associated kit number.

Due to the time it takes for kits to arrive after ordering, the Forensics Services Division maintains a practice of ordering buccal and GSR kits when the inventory is at or near 500 kits. This protocol ensures kits are available whenever a detective contacts the 24-hour Crime Lab Desk.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 52:

CPD should explore general technology updates for the department.

- *Alternatives to the current CHRIS system, which is described as temperamental and not user-friendly (see Recommendations 47-48.)*
- *Alternatives to the Oracle database on the server, which does not auto-populate, resulting in detectives wasting time retyping the same information into multiple databases instead of focusing on vital investigative tasks)*
- *Options that allow disparate computer systems to share information, to improve efficiency*

The Department transitioned away from the CHRIS case management system to a new application named R-CASE. The R-CASE application was developed with menus creating a simpler, more straight-forward interface to allow common investigative tasks to be completed quickly and efficiently.

The R-CASE Case Management Application provides personnel the information they need without having to navigate through multiple pages or conduct multiple queries. Highlights of key information include case counts and statuses, type and numbers of reports awaiting supervisory approval, information on associated arrests, inventories, and crime scene reports. There are multiple sorting options and a means to query information by the Records Division (RD) number.

In December 2024, the Office of Public Safety Administration received all proposals from vendors interested in developing a new, single Records Management System (RMS) for the Chicago Police Department. During the preparation phase for the RFP (Request for Proposal), the Bureau of Detectives provided a list of its unique records need for investigations.

An evaluation team from the City that includes representation from the Bureau of Detectives will review submissions starting in 2025 and choose the best option for the Department. Once a contract is finalized, the implementation process is expected to take up to three years and to help the Bureau better track case assignments.



EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATION NO. 53:

The Bureau of Detectives should work with the ISP and Cook County State's Attorney's Office to prioritize DNA testing for homicide investigations. This includes establishing a decision matrix to help detectives and prosecutors understand the evidence submission protocol for expedited DNA analysis.

The Bureau of Detectives, Illinois State Police (ISP) Forensic Science Lab, and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) work collaboratively to ensure evidence processing priorities for homicide investigations.

The ISP lab maintains a Command Directives Manual that establishes the protocol for expedited analysis of evidence, including the criteria that must be met for consideration of "rush" or "priority" processing.

A "rush" request for laboratory analysis may be submitted in instances where same day, immediate laboratory analysis and expedited results are needed (e.g., in custody suspect). Rush requests made during business hours typically require the analyst to work outside of their normal shift to complete the analysis and/or answer pertinent questions. A rush request made outside of normal business hours requires an analyst to be called into work to complete the analysis.

"Priority" requests for analysis are completed during normal business hours. After-hours work (overtime) may also be utilized; however, there is not an expectation of the analyst working outside of normal business hours.

Collaboration and coordination in processing evidence also has been strengthened as part of the working relationship the Department, ISP Forensic Science Lab, and CCSAO maintain in implementing the goals of a grant award, the Department of Justice "SAKI: Investigation and Prosecution of Cold Case Sexual Assaults" grant. The project is managed by the Bureau of Detectives DNA Processing Unit, which formalized a system for the regular and comprehensive review and evaluation of cold cases in both the Homicide and Violent Crime units in every Area along with ISP and CCSAO personnel.

This grant allows for forensic laboratory testing of DNA evidence not only in sexual assault investigations but homicides with a sexual component as well as death investigations with suspicious circumstances and, in some instances, when there are unidentified human remains. Bimonthly, each Area is responsible for submitting two (2) cases to the DNA Processing Unit for review. Areas are prepared to present on these cases as selected.

Case reviews are held every other month. Attendance is required and includes the Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Detectives, each Area's Homicide and Violent Crimes Lieutenants, each Area's cold case and criminal sexual assault detective supervisors, and investigative analysts. Additionally, Illinois State Police Forensic Lab and Cook County State's Attorney Office routinely participate in these case reviews.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 54:

The Bureau of Detectives should evaluate the staffing levels of the Forensic Services Division and, if necessary, increase the authorized strength of the unit. The staffing levels should ensure an adequate number of personnel are available to respond to homicides and thoroughly process and test evidence in a timely fashion.

The Department has initiated a comprehensive workforce allocation study to assess staffing levels across all bureaus and ranks, including both sworn and civilian positions. This study, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2025, will provide valuable insights to guide the strategic deployment of personnel, particularly within the Bureau of Detectives and the Forensic Services Division (FSD).

In parallel, the Department has made a significant investment in expanding FSD personnel. The number of budgeted Evidence Technician positions has risen to 142, with 115 positions currently filled. In October 2024, the Department conducted a promotional exam for Evidence Technicians to replenish the list of eligible candidates, which had been exhausted following the previous exam. Nearly 1,200 candidates participated, and the new list of eligible candidates is expected in early 2025, followed by a new training class.

As part of a multi-year initiative to enhance fingerprint processing and comparison, the Department promoted 19 officers to latent print examiners in 2024. Prior to this effort, only two officers were qualified for this role. These newly promoted officers have undergone intensive 5-month training and are now working under the mentorship of a team of forensic consultants and trainers to ensure continued development.

Additionally, the Department has increased the number of civilian criminalists in the FSD. These professionals, who specialize in areas such as ballistics and fingerprint analysis, will be incorporated into the Bureau of Detectives with the appropriate civilian supervisory structure. Once fully implemented, this initiative will bring valuable analytical expertise, lab experience, and scientific proficiency to the division.

A key position the Department plans to establish in 2025 is that of a civilian Laboratory Director. In collaboration with City partners, the Department is working to create a title code and begin the hiring process for this crucial role. The Laboratory Director will possess a strong scientific background and extensive experience managing crime laboratories and play a vital role in the Department's goal of achieving laboratory accreditation by 2027.

Laboratory accreditation is essential for ensuring a lab's adherence to nationally and internationally recognized standards, promoting higher quality control, accountability, and excellence. Accreditation also reduces the likelihood of evidence analysis being challenged in court due to concerns about the integrity of the work. Most importantly, it reinforces community trust. Victims can be assured that their evidence is handled in a laboratory that meets the highest standards of professionalism and accuracy.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 55:

The Bureau of Detectives should evaluate the technology and equipment available to the Forensic Services Division to ensure that personnel have the resources needed to respond to homicides and thoroughly process and test evidence in a timely fashion.

Since 2020, the Department's Forensics Lab has systematically evaluated and procured new equipment to include cameras for the field, microscopes for the laboratory to enable comparisons, computers for advanced graphics, refrigerators for evidence, printers for photographs, printers for use in evidence packaging, and 3D laser scanners to increase crime scene productivity.

In 2025, as the Department continues its efforts to achieve laboratory accreditation, leadership in the Bureau of Detectives and Forensic Service Division will work with subject matter experts in forensic consulting to conduct a comprehensive review of all equipment in the laboratory to determine what additional equipment is needed to achieve accreditation.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 56:

The CPD should evaluate the physical space that houses the Forensic Services Division to determine whether additional space is needed and to ensure that the facility meets the needs of forensic personnel.

The Department's Forensic Services Division (FSD) operates in a facility that was retrofitted to establish basic laboratory operations in 2013. As the Department moves towards achieving accreditation for its forensic lab with guidance from a forensic consulting partner, planning routinely identifies the physical space needs of the Department. The Department is exploring the opportunity of a purpose-built building; expanding disciplines will require a new facility.

With the addition of sworn and civilian personnel to the FSD in recent years, the Bureau of Detectives has been intentional in identifying and accommodating needs unique to their functions. For example, in advance of a team of 19 latent print examiners completing their training and launching operations, the Bureau worked extensively with the City's Office of Public Safety Administration and a forensic consultant group to determine what would be needed for an effective work environment. An Automated Fingerprint Identification Station (AFIS) line was established in the facility and appropriate workstations were installed across two separate rooms.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 57:

The CPD should consider creating a new classification of ETs who have the interest, training, and experience to work homicide scenes.

In 2024, the Department successfully negotiated with the collective bargaining unit to establish a new grade classification, D-2A, for Evidence Technicians (ET). As part of this agreement, the base salary for all members in this role was increased. Evidence Technicians are responsible for responding to all crime scenes within the City of Chicago upon completing their training. Any changes or termination of the agreement require mutual consent between the parties involved.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 58:

The Bureau of Detectives and the Forensic Services Division must ensure that all crime scene investigators who work homicide scenes are properly trained and authorized to use all the necessary tools and equipment in order to efficiently and accurately process a homicide scene (e.g., luminol, BlueStar, plaster casting).

Pre-Service Evidence Technician training is designed to equip newly promoted evidence technicians with essential skills in forensic science that are critical for effective crime scene investigation. The curriculum covers a range of processing techniques, including the use of blood reagents, buccal swabs, crime scene sketching, DNA collection, and advanced fingerprinting. Participants are also instructed on forensic photography and videography, where students learn to accurately document evidence using digital cameras and video equipment.

The course also emphasizes crime scene investigation skills, particularly in on-site evidence processing and recognition, highlighting the importance of meticulous scene processing for generating investigative leads. Additionally, it includes a segment on evidence packaging and documentation, teaching proper evidence handling, and crime scene report writing. This comprehensive approach ensures participants gain practical skills and a deep understanding of the role of forensic sciences in the processing of crime scenes.

The classroom phase of training is six weeks followed by the field phase of the training, which consists of one-on-one field mentoring over a course of 30 working days for a total of 300 hours of training in the field.

The FSD also hosts annual in-service training which is instructed by internal and external experts to refresh the ET's crime scene processing skills or to introduce new techniques or equipment that can be utilized by the ETs. The in-service training classes vary in length based on the topic. Past in-service classes have included, but are not limited to: search warrants, crime scene sketching, blood reagents, chemical processing of evidence, firearms identification, and specialized equipment training.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 59:

Forensic Services personnel should receive mandated ongoing training on relevant and evolving topics regarding evidence collection and analysis.

- *The training should include yearly refresher courses on new and emerging topics related to crime scene investigation.*
- *The training should be documented within the employee's personnel file.*

In 2024, the Forensic Services Division (FSD) established a dedicated team responsible for developing pre-service training for new evidence technicians and in-service training for current FSD staff. Also, this team coordinates technical training with vendors. This team has created more than 18 different training courses, many of which are certified by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB), while some remain under review. Each member of the FSD training team has completed the CPD Instructors Academy, is ILETSB-certified as an instructor, and is a member of the International Association for Identification (IAI).

Evidence Technicians regularly participate in external training opportunities to refresh and enhance their skills. In 2024, emerging and relevant topics of instruction included:

- *Firearms Processing*
- *Latent Print Development*
- *Bloodstain Pattern Analysis*
- *Leica Laser Scanning*
- *National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)*
- *International Association for Identification (IAI) Conference*

As the FSD moves into 2025, additional topics have been identified for delivery, including moot court sessions, footwear/tire track casting, and Alternate Light Source (ALS).

When Department members receive training, including Evidence Technicians, completion is documented in the Learning Management System, which provides historical training records for members of the Department.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 60

The CPD should ensure that mental health and wellness resources (beyond EAP) are available to crime scene personnel.

The Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has grown under the Professional Counseling Division over the past several years and now has 17 clinicians in addition to three physical sites for officers to access services on the north, near west, and south sides. The EAP also includes robust chaplain and peer support programs.

Since 2023, the Forensics Services Division (FSD) has regularly scheduled roll call sessions with the EAP. Every other month, a licensed EAP clinician maintains a debriefing session with Evidence Technicians assigned to crime scene processing. In doing this, the EAP clinician gives Evidence Technicians the opportunity to talk about challenging assignments and share any feelings of grief and loss that can be the direct result of continuous exposure to human anguish. This also establishes a connection with a clinician, who an Evidence Technician can reach out to privately to schedule an individual counseling session.

In addition to the bi-monthly sessions, when Evidence Technicians are assigned to particularly trying crime scenes, such as tender age deaths and police suicides, at the request of a Forensics Services supervisor, an EAP clinician is asked to reach out to the assigned Evidence Technician shortly after the incident to check on the member. This situation is only in the event the Evidence Technician is not recommended for the Traumatic Incident Stress Management Program.

The Department hired a Director of Wellness in 2022 to help increase non-clinical programs and resources beyond the EAP. One of the investments since then has been a mobile phone wellness app available for free to all active and retired members and their families. This application immediately can put members in touch with these EAP resources as well as several non-Department crisis resources.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 61

Patrol officers and detectives should receive additional training in firearms.

As part of the Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) implementation process, the Department's Forensic Services Division, in collaboration with the National Policing Institute, hosted a series of Firearms Identification and Tracing training sessions. The instructor was a former ATF agent and nationally recognized expert in firearms identification, firearms trafficking, and crime gun intelligence.

The half-day training covered an introduction and overview of firearms, techniques for identifying firearms, utilizing crime gun intelligence, and understanding privately manufactured firearms and conversion devices. Each session consisted of demonstrations and exercises to reinforce members' learning and retention.

The Firearms Identification and Tracing session was attended by detectives, patrol officers, and personnel assigned to the Firearms Investigation Team. At the conclusion of the four sessions, several hundred Department members had been trained across Bureaus.

Bureau of Detectives command staff also participate in the annual training needs assessment and regularly submit reports to the Office of the Chief with any training recommendations for the Department's Training Oversight Committee, which meets monthly.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 62

Because of an increased reliance on digital evidence and greater complexity in how homicides are being investigated, the Bureau of Detectives must ensure that all investigators have a thorough understanding of the tools and resources available (either internally or via external partners), and receive the proper training to use the tools and resources or request those services.

ATCs are composed of trained personnel and technology resources to recover, process, and analyze digital evidence in homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations. ATC personnel are identified and selected through a formal Notice of Job Opportunity (NOJO) process and, once selected, are required to complete a 40-hour training session for new candidates.

ATC members continue their training and are required to complete specific trainings to be certified to use certain equipment. Assigned ATC personnel are trained on industry best practices and provided with the best digital forensic software and tools available.

In 2024, the Bureau of Detectives embedded training personnel from its Area Technology Centers at a newly designated space for digital forensics training and processing next to the Area 3 Detective Division. In 2025, the Digital Forensics Training and Processing Center is slated to launch to ensure continuing education on the use of technology in investigations as well as for processing more complex digital forensics cases.

Pre-service and lead homicide investigators receive training on the use and request of these Area Technology resources.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 63

The Bureau of Detectives should develop written policies and procedures that govern the collection and processing of all cell phones, computers, video footage, and other electronic devices that are recovered as evidence. All investigators should be trained on these policies and held accountable for following them

In 2022, the Bureau of Detectives established a directive on the use of technology to aid investigations. With advances in technology and developments in the Area Technology Centers, the policy was revised in 2024. The policy is available to all members on the Bureau of Detectives' intranet site. Additionally, detectives receive 17 hours of training on investigative technology in pre-service classes.

The operational guidelines for the ATCs are established in the Bureau-level directive along with digital evidence and video retrieval responsibilities. A distinct section delineates mobile device evidence responsibilities and requirements for processing video evidence, vehicle infotainment, and telematics system data.

The directive addresses investigative technology reports that need to be submitted to request digital evidence recovery and processing. File retention also is outlined for these documents. The standard operating procedure incorporates validation review and forensic audit processes that provide for random quality control audits and an examination of evidence and reports to ensure proper procedures have been followed.

In addition to the special order, the 2022 Investigative Manual Reference Guide and 2023 Operations Manual Reference Guide highlights the Area Technology Center protocols in another streamlined format.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 64

All investigators in the CPD, including homicide detectives, should receive training to understand the technical and legal issues regarding digital evidence collection, extraction, and analysis, regardless of whether they routinely perform these functions.

Pre-service detectives receive 17 hours of training on cell phone investigations and investigative technology, which includes case studies and instruction on search warrants, court orders, and subpoenas. The capabilities of the Chicago Regional Computer Forensic Laboratory (RCFL) are discussed along with resources available to investigators for submitting electronic evidence for analysis or analyzing the evidence themselves. Training also covers the Department's Area Technology Center (ATC) model.

Lead Homicide Investigators receive even more hours of instruction beyond the 40-hour certification course they are required to take every four years. A module on search warrants specifically addresses electronic and social media evidence. Additionally, LHIs receive approximately two days of instruction on mobile device investigations with a focus on search warrants, court orders, and subpoenas. Another four hours is dedicated to case studies that highlight the role of social media and digital evidence in the investigation.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 65

Homicide detectives and other personnel in the CPD who are responsible for handling digital evidence should consider registering with the FBI's National Domestic Communications Assistance Center (NDCAC) for training and assistance related to digital evidence

Every Area Technology Center (ATC) member is required to create an account with the FBI's National Domestic Communications Assistance Center (NDCAC). Pre-service detectives also are informed about NDCAC resources in training and encouraged to sign up for accounts.

Through the NDCAC, ATCs and detectives are able to obtain free training, guidance, best practices, and community outreach in the field of electronic communications.

Additionally, the ATCs have established a working relationship with the FBI's Cellular Analysis Survey Team (CAST). CAST falls under the NDCAC and is comprised of subject matter experts experienced in mobile carrier analysis and location mapping. The CAST provides complimentary software and training to the Bureau of Detectives and is scheduled to teach in February 2025 at the Bureau of Detective's new Digital Forensics Center located next to the Area Three Detective Division, with more training dates to be scheduled.

INTERNAL COORDINATION

RECOMMENDATION NO. 66

Leaders from the Bureau of Detectives and each Detective Area should continuously emphasize the value of cross-department collaboration and taking a team approach to preventing and solving crimes.

It is not only command staff in the Bureau of Detectives but executive leadership across the Department that has driven several cross-department initiatives to address crimes. Two initiatives – the Chicago Crime Gun Intelligence Center and Citywide Robbery Spree Task Force – particularly underscore cross-Bureau coordination of resources and a team-of-teams approach to preventing and solving crimes.

Facing great challenges with the volume of recovered firearms and ballistic evidence, the CPD set out to create a local Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC). CGIC is an innovative and collaborative concept that uses firearms-related evidence to identify perpetrators of gun violence, link violent individuals to criminal activities, and trace sources of crime guns.

In addition to the participation of federal, state, and local agencies, the CGIC required the Department to dedicate personnel drawn from Patrol, Detective, and Counterterrorism bureaus in order to trace firearms, conduct investigations, and take enforcement action. Every Bureau ensured the full-time assignment of identified personnel to the initiative, ultimately contributing to the CGIC's successful launch in April 2024. By the end of November 2024, the Chicago CGIC had opened 176 investigations, and 41 violent offenders were indicted for their crimes.

In response to rising robbery spree trends, Department leadership developed a targeted plan. In May 2024, the Citywide Robbery Task Force was launched, bringing together personnel from the Bureau of Patrol, Bureau of Counterterrorism, and Bureau of Detectives. The task force was organized into two specialized groups: the Investigative Group and the Operations Group.

The Investigative Group is led by a Lieutenant who, with a team of Sergeants, Detectives, Police Officers, and a civilian analyst, is responsible for timely analyzing and identifying patterns to share across Districts, Areas, and Bureaus. The Operations Group, which is also led by Lieutenant and several Sergeants each in charge of a team, utilizes this information to conduct focused missions that leverage technology. The Helicopter Unit assists in the missions, utilizing three new helicopters the department procured in 2024.

At the end of 2024, robberies were reduced by 25% citywide since the launch of the task force, which had cleared 246 cases, including 158 robbery-related cases and 12 robbery patterns.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 67

The Bureau of Detectives should coordinate regular training briefings to allow members of the various units within the department to brief other units about their policies, protocols, capabilities, and missions.

The Bureau of Detectives participates in regular cross-bureau engagement meetings, including CompStat, weekly shooting reviews, and weekly robbery strategy meetings. Each of these forums provide the Bureau an opportunity to amplify messaging about their resources and initiatives as well as coordinate follow-up missions and activities.

The Bureau of Detectives also organizes special meetings when implementing new initiatives. For example, when the Chicago Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) launched, the Bureau of Detectives scheduled five sessions to ensure each Area Patrol Deputy Chief had an opportunity to select personnel to receive a briefing from the ATF and Bureau of Detective members. This allowed everyone present to ask questions and meet one another. Additionally, Chicago CGIC ATF personnel now attend weekly shooting reviews.

The Bureau coordinated with Bureau of Patrol to identify patrol officers and supervisors who should have access to the ATF's NIBIN Enforcement Support System (NESS). NESS organizes NIBIN leads nationwide, providing for ease in tracking homicide and nonfatal shooting cases with a streamlined display of critical information.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 68

Homicide detectives should be required to document any request they submit to another unit, whether those requests were followed up, and the results of such requests. Supervisors should review this documentation to ensure that detectives are soliciting input and assistance on cases from other units.

Bureau of Detectives personnel use supplementary reports to document the request of assistance from other units. Results of any requests similarly would be documented in this report. For example, detectives consistently utilize the Homicide Investigative Support Team (HIST) and the Fugitive Apprehension Unit (FAU) to locate wanted offenders who have been positively identified. Requests and results are noted in the Detective's supplementary report, which supervisors must review and approve supplementary reports.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 69

The CPD should take steps to improve the communication and coordination between patrol officers and homicide detectives.

Communication and coordination between patrol and detectives are promoted in two regular meetings: CompStat and weekly shooting reviews.

The Department's CompStat format emphasizes information-sharing about trends and investigations within a 7-day, 28-day, and YTD time frame. Select Bureau of Patrol Area Deputy Chiefs and District Commanders are designated to discuss their areas, and the Area Detective Division Commander also is responsible for providing updates. Homicide Lieutenants routinely attend these sessions.

Weekly shooting review meetings are coordinated by the Bureau of Patrol and focus on recent incidents of homicides and nonfatal shooting incidents. Each Area has its own dedicated weekly meeting time, which is attended by Bureau of Detective members as well as key personnel from the Bureau of Counterterrorism and federal, state, and local agencies. These meetings identify and assign action items for follow-up, as appropriate, and ensure a coordinated effort among all available resources to prevent further violence.

In between these weekly engagements, the immediate dissemination of information between patrol officers and detectives is coordinated through the Strategic Decision Support Centers in the Bureau of Patrol and Bureau of Detective personnel who are embedded in the Office of Emergency Management and Communication (OEMC).

RECOMMENDATION NO. 70

To ensure that homicide crime scenes are consistently and thoroughly secured and managed, leaders from the Bureau of Detectives and Bureau of Patrol should develop a standardized worksheet for patrol officers to use when responding to crime scenes.

Department directives instruct officers on crime scene protection and processing to reinforce consistent and thorough security and management of crime scenes. The directive currently demonstrates compliance with CALEA Law Enforcement Standards under Chapter 42 (Criminal Investigation) and Chapter 83 (Collection and Preservation of Evidence).

Although evidence will not be disturbed prior to processing, it may be necessary to preserve life or to protect the evidence from loss or damage. The Equipment and Supply Section provides patrol supervisors with Crime Scene Recovery Kits, which include rubber gloves and the Department's Firearm Evidence Envelope. This envelope includes a list of steps to be taken when recovering a firearm; this form set was revised in 2022.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 71

The CPD should ensure that patrol officers receive comprehensive training on the following topics: Crime scene processing and management, working with witnesses and victims' family members, and how to best contribute to a homicide investigation.

The Bureau of Detectives' Investigative Development Group (IDG) delivers several classes to recruits during their Academy training. Topics include but are not limited to the fundamentals of investigations, interviewing victims and witnesses, and interrogation of suspects.

The Training and Support Group also offers a range of complementary courses for recruits, including those focused on crime scene identification and management, as well as crimes against persons. These courses cover key investigative techniques and procedures designed to help officers establish the elements of each offense, alongside training on how to communicate effectively and empathetically with victims. Additionally, recruits receive a presentation from Chicago Survivors, a citywide network dedicated to reducing violence through compassionate support for families and youth who have experienced loss due to violence.

To refresh understanding, the Department created a streaming video in 2021 focused on crime scene management to ensure regular roll call training for patrol officers. The video addresses crime scene structure and physical evidence with an emphasis on the important role of physical evidence in investigations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 72

The CPD should take steps to improve overall coordination between the homicide detectives and other investigative units, such as those that investigate gang and narcotics cases. There is often overlap between the cases investigated by these units, so improving coordination could help investigators solve current cases and prevent future crimes.

To further drive coordination between gang investigators and detectives, a complement of gang investigations personnel was embedded in each Area Detective Division to assist homicide investigators on their cases. Due to the success of this collaboration, these gang team personnel were assigned to the Bureau of Detectives full-time as Homicide Investigative Support Team (HIST) members with a direct report to the Homicide Lieutenant. With their knowledge of gang affiliations and conflicts, HIST expedites efforts to identify, locate, and apprehend homicide offenders.

The Firearms Investigation Team (FIT) traces the ownership of firearms used in criminal incidents or processed by the Department. FIT also conducts and assists in investigations that target gun violence. When the Chicago Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) opened in April 2024, FIT members were assigned and embedded in the CGIC site to provide immediate intelligence to task force officers and detectives regarding firearms used in murders and shootings. Task Force Officers (TFOs) who also were under the Bureau of Counterterrorism similarly were assigned improve overall coordination on investigations into shootings.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 73

Homicide detectives should work closely with gang investigators to share intelligence about criminal networks and groups that are involved in violent crime. This includes intelligence gathered through social media analysis, confidential informants, and community contacts.

The Bureau of Counterterrorism is a vital partner not only to Department members but other local, state, and federal partners. Among many responsibilities, Counterterrorism personnel collect, analyze, and disseminate criminal intelligence and information. Detectives work closely and directly with the Criminal Networks Group (CNG), which is focused on narcotics abatement and gang enforcement. Particularly in homicide investigations where the motive is related to illicit drug and gang conflicts, the intelligence the CNG provides is invaluable.

The Confidential Analytics Section (CAS) is a distinct function of the Bureau of Counterterrorism that provides intelligence assessments of an individual, group, or organization reasonably believed to be engaged in criminal activity. This unit provides actionable intelligence and other assistance to augment investigations members are conducting on violent crimes, property crimes, organized crime groups, and terrorist organizations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 74

The CPD should take steps to improve coordination between CPIC and homicide detectives to ensure that crime analysis is being fully utilized in homicide investigations.

The Department promotes cross-Bureau collaborative efforts and has taken several measures to reinforce the coordination between the Bureau of Detectives and Crime Prevention and Information Center (CPIC). CPIC serves as a premier Fusion Center among more than 75 in the country.

CPIC provides homicide detectives with investigative support responding to requests for information, assisting investigators with sharing criminal intelligence information with state, local and federal law enforcement and homeland security partners. CPIC enhances coordination with these partners, conducting various database system queries on behalf of detectives in support of their investigations all while protecting privacy, civil rights and civil liberties.

Detectives routinely coordinate with CPIC to ensure patrol officers are aware of any vehicle or persons wanted in a homicide or non-fatal shooting. CPIC works with Detectives to generate bulletins seeking to identify a person or vehicle; images and descriptions collected in the course of an investigation are shared directly by Detectives to CPIC personnel.

In order to provide community members a secure and anonymous method of providing information to the police, the Department maintains a text tip line. In 2024, the Department implemented new crime tip software following discussion between BCT and BOD concerning needs for a more user-friendly application.

Individuals can submit a tip anonymously regarding a crime or suspicious activity and include photos or videos related to the tip, involved suspects, involved vehicles, and a general description of the crime or suspicious activity. When tips are anonymously submitted by users from the web application, the information is directly sent to CPIC. The tips are analyzed by CPIC and forwarded to the appropriate personnel for appropriate personnel to investigate the tip.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 75

CPIC should coordinate regular training briefings with homicide detectives as well as other investigative units, in order to educate detectives about the assistance that CPIC can provide and its capabilities, policies, and protocols.

A member of the Crime Prevention Information Center (CPIC) provides an introductory overview of the unit during every pre-service detective training session. The presentation highlights the functions and capabilities of the CPIC, emphasizing how it can support ongoing investigations. Additionally, CPIC offers training modules to Bureau of Detectives personnel that cover key topics such as privacy, civil rights, civil liberties protections in law enforcement, and Suspicious Activity Reporting. Between training sessions, CPIC regularly collaborates with the Bureau of Detectives Policy and Procedure Group and Investigative Development Group, providing updates that are relevant to policy and training development.

The Commanding Officer of CPIC also ensures that the Bureau of Detectives stays informed about national initiatives aimed at improving investigations. One such challenge involves “warrant-proof” encryption, a growing issue for law enforcement and national security agencies. This occurs when critical evidence or data, even with a lawful court order or warrant, becomes inaccessible due to encryption, preventing investigators from gaining access to essential information stored on devices or software.

To address this, in January 2024, national data contributors began submitting incident information to the Lawful Access Data Collection (LADC) centralized repository. The LADC serves as a tool to track the number of investigations impacted by encryption and provides valuable data to help decision-makers address these access challenges. The Bureau of Detectives has kept its command staff informed about this initiative ensuring coordination with CPIC whenever detectives encounter barriers related to encrypted devices or software.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 76

The Bureau of Detectives should work with OEMC to improve the process for requesting 9-1-1 recordings, radio transmissions, and CAD information.

The Department has established a policy in coordination with the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) regarding requests for recorded voice transmissions. The Bureau of Detectives can obtain necessary recordings by submitting an OEMC Media/Data Request form within 30 days of an incident with a detailed description and authorization from the member's supervisor. In order to expedite the process of receipt, recordings now are provided to members electronically through a records management system.

All detectives have Department-issued cell phones with the OEMC Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) application downloaded on the device. This allows members direct access to events, queries, and functions that the computer-aided dispatch system provides telecommunications.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 77

The CPD should work with the OEMC to review and, if necessary, revise the notification procedures for homicides and shooting incidents.

The Department has a strong relationship with leadership in the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) and both participate in workgroups related to public safety policy and procedure. This participation regularly includes discussion of each agency's directives and operations, and policy changes are coordinated with the OEMC through the Department's Research and Development Division when a request from a Bureau or Unit is received.

A telecommunicator assigned to a Citywide channel is required to make immediate notification to the Area Detective Division when a homicide or nonfatal shooting is reported. When a homicide and/or shooting incident occurs, OEMC collects the available information from the on-scene Department members and promptly notifies and shares the information with the appropriate Area Detective Division personnel. Responding Bureau of Detective members establish and maintain communication with OEMC to provide updates and request any additional resources needed to conduct the investigatory process.

In coordination with OEMC and the Department's Crime Prevention and Information Center (CPIC), detectives have real-time access to pending Priority 1 assignments, which includes incidents of homicide and nonfatal shootings. Access is through a web link available to all detectives on their department cell phones and computers. This allows detectives to turn on the radio zone, run information in the CAD, and start preparing for their response. It allows them to get ahead of the information-gathering process so they head to a scene prepared.



EXTERNAL COORDINATION

RECOMMENDATION NO. 78

Top officials from the CPD, the Bureau of Detectives, and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office should strive to maintain a frequent and open dialogue about their goals, capabilities, limitations, and expectations for one another.

The Department and Cook County State's Attorney Office (CCSAO) leadership regularly meet to ensure transparent communication at the top about the partnership and priorities. Discussions at the end of 2024 identified a mutual goal of cross-training and led to each agency's training team collaborating on a joint training plan. These meetings also have reinforced priorities such as participation in the Chicago Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) and strategies to combat gun violence.

The Chief and Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Detectives maintain a regular meeting cadence with the head of the Felony Review Unit. These meetings are an opportunity to discuss trends for potential policy and procedural changes. These discussions also allow each team to elevate matters in question from recently presented cases for additional attention.

The Department's Deputy Director of Prosecutorial Strategies is a civilian member of command charged with acting as a dedicated liaison to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. The Deputy Director monitors cases that are deemed Continued Investigation "CI" by the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) and revisits these cases with the Felony Review Unit (FRU) as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 79

Leaders from the Bureau of Detectives and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office should explore strategies for improving communication and coordination on homicide investigations. When a case is filed, the lead homicide detective should meet with the forensic scientist and a prosecutor to determine which evidence should be sent for analysis, depending on its probative value.

The Bureau of Detectives, Illinois State Police (ISP) Forensic Science Lab, and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) work collaboratively to promote evidence processing priorities for homicide investigations.

The ISP lab maintains a Command Directives Manual that provides general guidance on characteristics of samples that tend to have a greater probative value based on the type of evidence submitted (e.g., residues, prints, etc.). The ISP lab utilizes a tiered approach to accepting submissions, and the number of items accepted by the laboratory will be limited depending on the nature and type of case submitted. Homicides are considered Tier One Submissions and permit Detectives to submit up to five items/sub-items through the Department's Forensic Services Division (FSD).

Collaboration and coordination in evidence processing has been strengthened as part of the working relationship the Department, ISP Forensic Science Lab, and CCSAO maintain in implementing the goals of a grant award, the Department of Justice “SAKI: Investigation and Prosecution of Cold Case Sexual Assaults” grant. The project is managed by the Bureau of Detectives DNA Processing Unit, which formalized a system for the regular and comprehensive review and evaluation of cases in both the Homicide and Violent Crime units in every Area along with ISP and CCSAO personnel.

Case reviews are held every other month. Attendance is required and includes the Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Detectives, each Area’s Homicide and Violent Crimes Lieutenants, each Area’s cold case and criminal sexual assault detective supervisors, and investigative analysts. Additionally, Illinois State Police Forensic Lab and Cook County State’s Attorney Office routinely are in these case reviews.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 80

The Bureau of Detectives must have clear policies, procedures, manuals, and accountability measures in place to ensure that homicide cases are thoroughly investigated and documented, and to maintain a high standard of quality.

The Bureau of Detectives created the Policy and Procedures Group in 2020. This team is responsible for researching, reviewing, revising, and creating effective policy and procedures for the Bureau of Detectives, including those focused on homicide investigations.

In 2022, the Policy and Procedure Group of the Bureau of Detectives created the Investigative Manual Reference Guide, which provides guidance to homicide detectives on topics including but not limited to the initial scene response, evidence, canvassing, victim information, witness interviews, follow-up procedures, and proper document management.

The following year, the Operations Manual Reference Guide was created to establish uniform Homicide Unit responsibilities, including requirements for homicide supervisors, report approval, homicide assignments, file review, training responsibilities, and community engagement.

The Policies and Procedure Group works with several support units critical to homicide investigation in order to establish policies, standard operating procedures, and guidelines. The result has been several Bureau-level policies focused on the roles and responsibility of investigative analysts, the Family Liaison Office, and the Homicide Investigation Support Team. This information is also streamlined in the Investigative Manual Reference Guide and Operations Manual Reference Guide.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 81

The Homicide Investigation Manual should include a specific process to follow when presenting a case to the State's Attorney's Office for an arrest warrant. Currently, detectives have very little guidance on this issue, and the process appears to be informal and inconsistent.

The Bureau of Detectives maintains a suite of policies authored by the Policies and Procedures Group and is in the process of finalizing several new directives in addition to identifying policy needs in 2025. As the Department continues meeting with CCSAO leadership, directives and reference manuals will be updated to incorporate input and recommendations from discussions.

The Bureau of Detectives' Investigative Development Group (IDG) also coordinates with the Cook County State's Attorney Office to deliver instruction in its Pre-Service Detective and Lead Homicide Investigator (LHI) training. In 2025, members of the IDG along with the Deputy Director of Prosecutorial Strategies will meet with the new CCSAO director of training to review the pre-service and Lead Homicide Investigator courses for enhancements.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 82

The CPD should work with the State's Attorney's Office to strengthen protection for those who come forward to provide information regarding a homicide investigation. These services can help address concerns that potential witnesses may have about their safety and the possibility of retaliation.

The Bureau of Detectives Family Liaison Office, which works with families surviving the homicide of a loved one, meets every other week with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) Victim Witness Assistance Unit. This CCSAO unit assists individuals in seeking counseling, creating safety plans, and obtaining financial assistance for costs related to their victimization. In these meetings, members from each agency jointly review recent homicide investigations and identify any follow-up activities specific to families or witnesses that need to be coordinated.

In 2024, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority announced funding for the Violent Crime Witness Protection Program. The purpose of this funding opportunity is to provide financial assistance to state's attorney's offices or local law enforcement agencies to assist victims and witnesses who are actively aiding in the prosecution of perpetrators of violent crime as well as any appropriate related persons, victims, and witnesses determined to be at risk of a discernible threat of violent crime. The Department is actively monitoring for the notice of this funding opportunity in 2025 in order to seek another avenue to bolster support for victims and witnesses who are vulnerable in the aftermath of a violent crime.

To address safety concerns a witness may have in regards to sharing information with police, the Department maintains a text tip line where individuals can submit a tip anonymously. The message can include photos or videos related to the tip, involved suspects, involved vehicles, and a general description of the crime or suspicious activity. When tips are anonymously submitted by users from the web application, the information is directly sent to the Department's Crime Prevention and Information Center (CPIC). The tips are analyzed by CPIC and forwarded to the appropriate police unit to investigate the tip.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 83

The CPD should conduct a survey of witnesses, family members, and associates of homicide victims to identify problem areas and determine possible solutions to improving relationships. Finding ways to improve the treatment of witnesses, family members, and associates of homicide victims will increase the likelihood of identifying homicide suspects.

In 2022, the Department participated in an initiative aimed at improving the process and outcome of homicide investigations through centering the experiences of surviving family members in conjunction with community perspectives and homicide detectives' experiences. This project was led by a principal investigator with the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) who previously assisted the Bureau of Detectives in implementing the Family Liaison Office in Homicide Units across the City.

In addition to 40 interviews with Department homicide detectives in the Area 4 Detective Division, the principal investigator conducted 40 family interviews with individuals who lost a loved one to gun violence in that same geographic area. The principal investigator also collected 550 surveys in person between June and August 2022 in communities encompassed in Area 4. Taken together, this invaluable input informed potential engagement strategies that can enhance cooperation, especially among residents who may be most reluctant to engage with law enforcement.

The Department has continued to work closely with the principal investigator to turn findings from this initiative into actionable measures. The Department hosted a one-day training designed to empower members in the Family Liaison Office with additional resources that enhance their ability to engage with families they serve. Each training session was co-led by a survivor from the community who has experienced the tragedy of losing a family member to violence.

The Bureau of Detectives also regularly meets with the Gun Violence Survivors Leadership Network (GVSLN). GVSLN includes parents, siblings, and other family members who have lost a loved one to violence in Chicago and have either started grassroots, non-profit organizations to help other gun violence survivors or are leading such efforts in the community to advocate and support gun violence survivors. The group actively provides the Bureau of Detectives with input that has been used to revise policies related to homicide investigations.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 84

Top officials from the CPD and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office should strive to maintain a frequent and open dialogue about their goals, capabilities, limitations, and expectations of each another with regard to witness protection.

Agency heads at the Chicago Police Department and Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) have demonstrated their commitment to prioritizing support for victims and witnesses through similar yet distinct initiatives that work in lockstep with one another – the Bureau of Detectives' Family Liaison Office and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) Victim Witness Assistance Unit. Members from these two teams meet every other week to jointly review recent homicide investigations and identify any follow-up activities specific to families or witnesses that need to be coordinated.

The Family Liaison Office focuses on providing support to families living with the grief of loss from violence. The FLOs are a bridge between homicide detectives and families of victims, providing resources and updates to the families as investigators seek justice for the victims. Since launching in 2021, the FLOs team personnel have expanded their presence for these families through regular engagements and continued contact throughout the investigative and judicial process.

The CCSAO Victim Witness Assistance Unit assists individuals in seeking counseling, safety planning, and financial assistance for costs related to their victimization. In these meetings, members from each agency jointly review recent homicide investigations and identify any follow-up activities specific to families or witnesses that need to be coordinated.

The Department is actively monitoring announcements of a notice of funding opportunity in 2025 pertaining to an Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) grant, the Violent Crime Witness Protection Program. The aim of this grant is to bolster support for victims and witnesses who are vulnerable in the aftermath of a violent crime. Initiatives such as this one reinforce collaboration and coordination between the state's attorney's office and local law enforcement agencies to assist victims and witnesses who are actively aiding in the prosecution of perpetrators of violent crime.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 85

Police agencies should take steps to strengthen services offered to crime victims, and homicide personnel should be closely involved with the agency's victim advocacy efforts.

The Chicago Police Department has a long history of advocating for crime victims' rights and services. To demonstrate this commitment, the CPD established a policy on Crime Victim Witness and Assistance, which outlines general provisions to provide service and assistance to victims of crime. Specifically, the policy provides an overview of the CPD Crime Victim Services Program, which creates best practices for victim services to ensure Department members have access to current, trauma-informed services and resources to best support victims of crime.

The Department's Crime Victim Services Program hired three non-sworn civilian crime victim specialists in 2021 to expand the domestic violence advocacy efforts that had been in place for more than two decades. These positions were enabled with the support of a federal grant from the Office of Victims of Crime and ensured dedicated support to victims of non-fatal gun crimes. At the end of 2024, budgeted positions for crime victim specialists increased to ensure every district has access to this service and to encompass all forms of aggravated battery.

In 2021, the CPD expanded victim services from domestic violence and nonfatal shootings to include a special pilot program in the Bureau of Detectives (BOD) to serve families surviving the homicide of a loved one. The BOD Family Liaison Office (FLO) Program is a function of each Area Detective Division's Homicide Unit and assists families who have experienced a homicide by providing practical support, coordinating community services, and offering resource information. This response is provided in a sensitive and compassionate manner, securing the trust and confidence of affected families.

The Office of Crime Victim Services and Bureau of Detectives maintain a close working relationship. For example, the Office of Crime Victim Services coordinates an Emergency Assistance Center in the aftermath of an incident of mass violence in order to connect community members with resources to help them heal and recover. This center provides therapy dogs, youth services, social services, and assistance with crime victim compensation applications. The Bureau of Detectives participates in this initiative and ensures a Detective and representative from the Family Liaison Office in each Area's Homicide Unit are in attendance to engage with victims, witnesses, and family members.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 86

The CPD should require all homicide detectives to receive training in death notifications. If possible, the primary detective assigned to the investigation should make the notification to the victim's family to establish a relationship in the early stages of the investigation.

Pre-service Detective training addresses homicide investigations, drug-induced homicides, and death investigations, among other topics. At the end of 2024, the module on death notifications in pre-service detective training was expanded to emphasize grief literacy and personal testimony in coordination with a national subject matter expert.

Topics in this two-hour Grief and Trauma Literacy course include but is not limited to trauma responsive language; compassionate death notifications; skills for post-notification trauma management; grief literate language training; compassionate conversations with suicide survivors; and self-care specific to primary and secondary trauma. During the course, the personal story of an individual's experience in being notified of the death of their spouse also is shared with the class.

The training is designed to equip members with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver clear, compassionate death notifications; identify common grief and trauma reactions and their cumulative effects; and increase grief literacy and use of trauma responsive language. Additionally, participants are able to identify several healthy coping techniques for processing secondary trauma and practice effective boundary setting when involved in complex or lengthy investigations.

In 2025, the Bureau of Detectives will work with the training partner to implement this module into the 40-hour Lead Homicide Investigator (LHI) course.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 87

The CPD should continue to implement the CPAP's recommendations for strengthening department wide community engagement and rebuilding trust with the public. Homicide personnel should be involved in the CPD's efforts to improve the relationship between the police and the community.

The Department remains committed to deepening relationships with community members through meaningful engagements and collaborations with community partners to create safe neighborhoods.

The Department's Office of Crime Victim Services maintains a protocol for coordinating an Emergency Assistance Center in the aftermath of an incident of mass violence in order to connect community members with resources to help them heal and recover. The center provides therapy dogs, youth services, social services, and assistance with crime victim compensation applications. The Bureau of Detectives participates in this initiative and ensures a Detective and representative from the Family Liaison Office in each Area's Homicide Unit are in attendance to engage with victims, witnesses, and family members.

In 2022, the Bureau of Detectives launched the Brunch en Blanc engagement, an annual initiative designed to foster a resilient community and remind family members who lost a loved one to violence that they are not alone in their grief. Family members are invited to bring a framed photograph of their loved one and to join other survivors in hearing from panelists and guest speakers over a shared meal. In 2023, the Family Liaison Office coordinated a peace walk in advance of the Brunch en Blanc. In 2024, the Family Liaison Office unveiled an original artwork at the Brunch en Blanc that had been created by survivors.

Family Liaison Office members also host and attend numerous community engagement events. In recognition of National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2024, every Family Liaison Office hosted community engagement events consisting of resource expos, blood donation drives, youth violence prevention events, community walks, candlelight vigils, and journeys to healing events. Family Liaison Office community engagements feature topics focused on trauma recovery, community resources, and crime victim rights and compensation.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 88

The CPD should work with Chicago Survivors to improve communication with victims' families and members of the community.

Chicago Survivors is a citywide network that works to reduce violence by providing a compassionate response to families who have experienced loss due to violence. Trained crisis team members with Chicago Survivors are notified by the Department's Crime Prevention Information Center (CPIC) whenever there is a homicide. Chicago Survivors crisis workers immediately respond to meet with and give support to the victim's family.

Members of the Bureau of Detectives' Family Liaison Office work closely with Chicago Survivors whenever a homicide occurs to ensure the family's needs are addressed. The Family Liaison Office also has hosted and attended numerous community engagement events with representatives of Chicago Survivors to promote community awareness and strengthen relationships with community members.

The Bureau of Detectives also supports the Chicago Survivors' Unsolved Case Meeting Program, which elevates questions or concerns a family may have about an investigation through a Chicago Survivor liaison. An unsolved case meeting arranged by Chicago Survivor staff members and Family Liaison Office members at a safe, neutral location.

In these case meetings, a Chicago Survivors criminal justice advocate joins two family members at their request. Homicide team members attend and address the questions or concerns raised by the family. This engagement reinforces a current, shared understanding of the status of the investigation by all parties.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 89

The Bureau of Detectives should work with the Medical Examiner's Office to develop clear policies and procedures on the role and responsibilities of detectives assigned to the Medical Examiner's Office.

In 2020, the Bureau of Detectives revised the Death Investigations Guidelines directive, which includes a dedicated section on the responsibilities of Bureau of Detectives personnel assigned to the Medical Examiner's Office.

Detectives at the Medical Examiner's Office assist pathologists by making available for their review all relevant Department reports that may assist them in determining the cause and manner of a person's death. In addition, Forensic Institute Detail Detectives prepare the appropriate reports on cause of death rulings pursuant to the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office in all death investigations that occur in Chicago when the victim's remains are transported to the Forensic Institute. Detectives also work to establish the identity of all unidentified deceased persons by utilizing available databases to evaluate fingerprints, tattoos and scars, LEADS messages, and missing person reports and Critical Reach flyers.

The Department's collaboration with the Medical Examiner's Office extends beyond the day-to-day responsibilities of the Forensic Institute Detail. For example, the Department supports the Medical Examiner's Office in its Cook County Missing Persons Day engagements. This is a free event for the community and provides an opportunity for family to provide DNA samples, connect with counselors and other families, report family members as missing and have information entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). Detectives and personnel from the Department's Missing Persons Section participate in planning sessions with the Medical Examiner's Office as well as the event when it is scheduled.



GLOSSARY

| | | | |
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| AFIS | Automated Fingerprint Identification Station | HSI | Homeland Security Investigations |
| ALS | Alternate Light Source | IAI | International Association for Identification |
| ANAB | ANSI National Accreditation Board | ICJIA | Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority |
| ATC | Area Technology Center | IDG | Investigative Development Group |
| ATF | Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives | IDOC | Illinois Department of Corrections |
| BCT | Bureau of Counterterrorism | ILETSB | Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board |
| BJA | Bureau of Justice Assistance | ISP | Illinois State Police |
| BOD | Bureau of Detectives | JAG | Justice Assistance Grant |
| CAD | Computer Aided Dispatch | LADC | Lawful Access Data Collection |
| CALEA | Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies | LHI | Lead Homicide Investigator |
| CAS | Confidential Analytics Section | NamUs | National Missing and Unidentified Persons System |
| CAST | Cellular Analysis Survey Team | NDCAC | National Domestic Communications Assistance Center |
| CCS | Cook County Sheriffs | NESS | NIBIN Enforcement Support System |
| CCSAO | Cook County State's Attorney's Office | NIBIN | National Integrated Ballistic Information Network |
| CGI | Crime Gun Intelligence | NOJO | Notice of Job Opportunity |
| CGIC | Crime Gun Intelligence Center | NRTAC | National Resource and Technical Assistance Center |
| CNG | Criminal Networks Group | OEMC | Office of Emergency Management and Communications |
| COPA | Civilian Office of Police Accountability | PERF | Police Executive Research Forum |
| CPD | Chicago Police Department | PIP | Performance Improvement Plan |
| CPIC | Crime Prevention and Information Center | PSTC | Bauer Plummer Public Safety Training Center |
| DEA | Drug Enforcement Administration | RCFL | Regional Computer Forensic Laboratory |
| EAP | Employee Assistance Program | RD | Records Division |
| ET | Evidence Technicians | RFP | Request for Proposal |
| FAU | Fugitive Apprehension Unit | RMS | Records Management System |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation | SAKI | Sexual Assault Kit Initiative |
| FIT | Firearms Investigation Team | SOP | Special Order Procedures |
| FLO | Family Liaison Office | TFO | Task Force Officer |
| FOP | Fraternal Order of Police | UCR | Uniform Crime Reporting |
| FRU | Felony Review Unit | UIC | University of Illinois at Chicago |
| FSD | Forensic Services Division | USAO | United States Attorney's Office |
| GSR | Gunshot Residue | USSS | United States Secret Service |
| GVSLN | Gun Violence Survivors Leadership Network | VCAP | Violent Criminal Apprehension Program |
| HIST | Homicide Investigative Support Team | | |

