



Executive Order 2022-05: Directing the Seattle Police Department to Assess Policies, Protocols, and Practices Related to the Investigation of Criminal Offenses and Implement Necessary Solutions to Advance Justice and Serve the Needs of Crime Survivors.

An Executive Order to implement immediate solutions to address the need for additional investigation by the Seattle Police Department (“SPD” or “Police Department”) of serious criminal offenses, increase the number of detectives assigned to SPD follow-up investigation units by implementing the recently announced recruitment and retention plan, improve the region’s systemic handling of case investigations, especially regarding sexual assault, and to enhance victim care and support services.

WHEREAS, the number of Washington State certified police officers fully trained and available to be deployed by the Seattle Police Department has rapidly declined since 2019, leaving only 954 deployable officers as of May 2022, the lowest number since 1991; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 2020 and continuing today, the Police Department has been compelled to transfer officers from traffic enforcement, follow-up investigation units, and other specialized units to the Patrol Operations Bureau to respond to 911 calls involving life-threatening public safety emergencies and serious crimes in progress; and

WHEREAS, the necessity of transferring officers to 911 response positions has adversely impacted the Police Department’s ability to conduct follow-up investigations of serious criminal offenses; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and the Chief of Police have identified the current number of fully trained and deployable police officers is inadequate to meet the Charter goal of “maintain[ing] adequate police protection in each district of the City,” and on July 13, 2022, announced the implementation of an innovative and comprehensive police officer recruiting and retention plan to increase the number of fully trained and deployable officers to 1,450, a ratio of 1.9 officers per 1,000 residents of Seattle, which is a ratio consistent with the years before 2020; and

WHEREAS, a fully staffed Police Department is critical to the investigation of crimes of violence, including sexually motivated crimes, and efforts to hold people who commit these crimes accountable; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Chief of Police have identified the need for an objective systemic evaluation of the Police Department’s Investigations Bureau, including the Sexual Assault Unit, and the handling of sexual assault investigations;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor of Seattle, declare that the lack of an adequate number of fully trained and deployable Seattle police officers puts at risk the peace, safety, and wellbeing of the people of Seattle and those who visit the City, and, in collaboration with Interim Chief of Police Adrian Diaz, order the following actions:

1. Bolstering Criminal Case Follow-Up Investigations and Victim Care Services

- a. No later than August 31, 2022, the Seattle Police Department will ensure that every reported felony crime of violence with sufficient evidence allowing for a follow-up investigation, including any backlogged sexual assault cases, is assigned to a case detective in sexual assault. The Human Services Department is piloting an effort to ensure domestic violence cases not assigned for further investigation will be offered victim support services.
- b. The Mayor and Chief of Police will seek additional funding to support efforts by victim advocates and medical providers to better connect survivors to care and support services, so they are treated with respect and compassion and that their crime reports are responded to with urgency following current trauma-informed practices.
- c. The Police Department shall review how victims of crimes of violence are kept informed about the status of their case from the point of initial reporting through the end of follow-up investigations, if any, to strengthen relationships between victims and the police, demonstrate respect for victims, and to acknowledge the dignity and worth of every individual.
- d. The Police Department and Human Services Department will ensure that officers, contracted providers, advocates, and others who interact with sexual assault survivors are directed to inform survivors that they should call 911 to report an assault – even when it is not “in progress” – and not call the non-emergency line.

1. Assessment of Criminal Case Management Practices and Systems Used by the Police Department and Regional Partners

- a. The Police Department shall engage national policing and criminal legal system experts to conduct a systemic review of police investigations of serious criminal offenses, assess current practices and procedures related to criminal case follow-up investigations, including case triage and assignment decisions, investigation rules and procedures, case file preparation, case file presentation-to-prosecutor practices, victim care services, and all management and review practices to determine the sufficiency and quality of investigations, all with the goal of continuous organizational improvement.

The assessment should include system-wide identification of what is working well, what needs to be changed, what additional tools may be necessary, the appropriate types of follow-up units and their organization and staffing, case clearance rates compared to other similarly situated police agencies, and additional observations or recommendations the assessment team may wish to offer. The assessment should emphasize how investigators interact with victims of crime, how victims are cared for, and whether the most current trauma-informed practices are followed.

- b. The retained subject matter experts shall assist the Police Department in creating a follow-up investigations manual of rules, procedures, and acceptable practices to

govern the work of follow-up detectives to ensure continuing compliance with accepted best practices and legal requirements.

- c. The work of the subject matter experts shall also assess the effectiveness of the victim care and support services currently provided by the City, including appropriate staffing levels, qualifications of victim advocates, and where this body of work should be housed to optimize effectiveness, advance justice, assist victims with understanding and navigating the police investigation process and, potentially, court processes and disposition of the case. This work aims to place the dignity and well-being of survivors of violent crime at the center of the Police Department's work.

2. Ongoing Case Review and Appointment of an Advisory Panel

- a. The Police Department shall partner with subject-matter experts and appropriate organizations, including the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, to implement a series of ongoing case reviews of sexual assault investigations to help detectives prepare cases, improve processes, and care for and assist survivors.
- b. The Mayor and the Chief of Police will appoint an advisory panel of no more than six local sexual assault subject-matter experts and victim-survivors to assist the Police Department with the assessments identified in this order. This advisory panel will provide an outside perspective and their experiences with widely used and accepted best practices.

3. Collective Bargaining Law and Processes

- a. In fulfilling this Executive Order, the City will comply in good faith with all required collective bargaining laws and processes.

Dated this 28th day of July 2022.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce A. Harrell".

Bruce A. Harrell
Mayor of Seattle