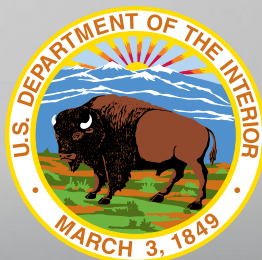


U.S. Department of the Interior
LAW ENFORCEMENT
TASK FORCE



ASPIRATION TO ACTION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 7, 2021, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced the establishment of a Law Enforcement Task Force (LETF) within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) to develop “meaningful solutions to assist law enforcement and communities in strengthening trust and collaboration, while ushering the Nation into the next phase of community-focused law enforcement.” The Task Force, led by Deputy Secretary of the Interior Tommy Beaudreau, was charged with three focus areas:

- ◆ Strengthen trust in our law enforcement programs;
- ◆ Ensure appropriate policy and oversight is implemented; and
- ◆ Ensure supportive resources are available for officer mental health, wellness, and safety.

This document is the culmination of a rigorous research and outreach process to identify opportunities for improvement in the law enforcement programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The comprehensive analysis of the resultant feedback, data, and information led to recommendations that seek to:

- *Enhance the trust afforded to DOI law enforcement officers by those who live, work, and play on or visit public and Tribal lands;*
- *Support the safety, health, and wellness of DOI law enforcement officers serving as guardians of people, critical national infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources on public and Tribal lands; and*
- *Ensure that DOI law enforcement programs effectively continue to provide for safe and equitable access to public lands and the free exercise of fundamental rights in public spaces.*

The findings of the LETF outreach process suggest that many aspects of DOI’s law enforcement programs are effective at meeting the mission intention of their Bureaus and in supporting the people who serve in law enforcement roles. In alignment with the purpose of the LETF, this report focuses on the areas where the findings suggest potential improvements in building and maintaining public trust, supporting officer mental health, wellness, and safety, and increasing law enforcement program effectiveness.

Based on the findings of the research and outreach conducted by the LETF Working Group, twelve overarching recommendations for improvement have been identified. Within each of these areas, the aspirational future state of DOI law enforcement programs has been articulated.

Recommendation 1: Community & Visitor Engagement

THE NEED

Respectful interactions with visitors and purposeful ongoing engagement with communities are critical to building trust between DOI law enforcement officers and the people they serve. There are several dynamics that influence the credibility of DOI law enforcement programs and the trust afforded to DOI law enforcement officers. **Maintaining a visible presence on**

public and Tribal lands is necessary to deter and address increasing public safety issues and quality of life crimes. **Proactive engagement** between a DOI law enforcement workforce, whose **demographics reflect the populations they serve**, and their local communities is vital to building trusting relationships. Finally, **ongoing positive communication** with the public about the accomplishments of DOI law enforcement officers and programs is needed to provide a more balanced and comprehensive picture of law enforcement beyond high-profile incidents.

THE ASPIRATION

Visitors to public and Tribal lands experience DOI law enforcement and security personnel as approachable, professional, and respectful. Residents of communities on or near public and Tribal lands have constructive relationships with local DOI law enforcement and security personnel that build trust over time through continued engagement on public safety issues important to those communities. Adequate staffing ensures that a law enforcement presence is visible to the public and law enforcement assistance is accessible when and where it is needed. DOI law enforcement programs virtually engage visitors, local communities, and the general public using online media platforms to share important information or seek public assistance and highlight employee accomplishments.

Recommendation 2: Crisis & Incident Communications

THE NEED

The importance of timely, accurate communication with the public during and after critical incidents is foundational to building and maintaining trust with communities, partners, and the general public. However, there are circumstances when the timely release of information may **compromise public safety or the integrity of an investigation**, and when this is the case, that message needs to be communicated clearly to the public. To achieve increased transparency, the **levels of review and approval** required for internal and external communications during and after a crisis or critical incident need to be streamlined to minimize delays. Also, **additional communications staffing capacity** will be essential to **fully harness the power of social media** to heighten transparency and ensure the **timely release of body worn camera footage** to strengthen accountability across all DOI law enforcement programs.

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI Bureaus release timely and accurate information to the public during a crisis or critical incident. Skilled, knowledgeable Public Information Officers within Bureau law enforcement programs work in close coordination with their Bureau Communications Offices and DOI's Office of Communications keeping senior leadership informed as an incident unfolds. This increasing transparency builds public trust in the DOI, its Bureaus, and their law enforcement programs.

Recommendation 3: Use of Deadly Force Investigations

THE NEED

There are many complexities involved in managing the investigation of a deadly use of force incident and the **timely communication of the outcomes** of an investigation has a significant impact on public trust in law enforcement. Circumstances that could extend the length of the process include who conducts the investigation and how many other processes, such as criminal and administrative investigations, disciplinary proceedings, and civil litigation, are set in motion by it. As such, the cumulative length of time to investigate and determine the appropriate disposition of a case and communicate the outcomes to both the families of the individuals involved and the public tends to engender a **distrust in the system**. Also, protracted investigative processes commonly result in law enforcement officers being placed on administrative leave for long periods of time, which can further **compound the impacts** and add to the stress associated with an officer-involved shooting for the officers involved, their families, and other personnel within their law enforcement program.

THE ASPIRATION

Officer involved shootings and uses of deadly force within DOI's law enforcement and security programs are investigated using standardized policies, processes, and methods that reflect the principles of 21st century policing and improve the accountability, timely reporting, communication, and integrity of these investigations. Criminal investigations into deadly use of force incidents are conducted by an impartial third party. This approach satisfies the varying demands of each Bureau's law enforcement operating environment while ensuring officer involved shootings and uses of deadly force are investigated objectively and transparently resulting in enhanced public trust.

Recommendation 4: Law Enforcement Program Funding & Staffing

THE NEED

Funding and staffing levels within DOI law enforcement programs have continuously declined for more than a decade. The consequences of this have impacted the public, the law enforcement workforce, and the resource and visitor protection missions of the DOI law enforcement programs. Increased staffing in these programs is needed to ensure **timely response to incidents**, increase the ability to deter or **discourage negative or criminal activities**, and assure the public that **law enforcement is available** when needed.

A survey of the DOI law enforcement workforce cited lack of adequate staffing as one of the primary contributors to **stress and mental health concerns**. It also revealed that over 90% of DOI law enforcement officers believe current staffing levels have impacted their **safety on the job**. These dynamics create a self-reinforcing cycle. As staffing levels fall, the impacts on the remaining workforce increase the challenges of **officer retention**.

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI law enforcement and security programs are adequately staffed and funded, which enhances public trust, accountability, and transparency through increased community-policing interaction, improved responsiveness to incidents and calls for service, and timely and effective communication with the public. Appropriate staffing levels in all DOI law enforcement and security programs improve officer mental health, wellness, and resiliency through the reduction of stressors placed on officers by excessive overtime, travel, and extended details.

Recommendation 5: Recruitment & Retention of a Diverse Law Enforcement Workforce

THE NEED

Since the integrity of a law enforcement program is dependent upon the caliber of its officers, the **recruitment and retention of a diverse and capable workforce** is vitally important to building and sustaining credibility and trust with the public. Changes are needed within DOI law enforcement to address the challenges to recruitment of qualified applicants and retention of experienced officers. In order to attract high quality applicants, **DOI's compensation packages** need to be more competitive with other state and local law enforcement organizations. Targeted recruitment strategies need to be implemented to ensure the DOI law enforcement **workforce reflects the populations** it serves across DOI's expansive and diverse geography. Officer retention needs to be improved through **elevated workforce capacity** that increases officer safety, lowers stress, and contributes to greater work-life balance. Finally, **ongoing support of the law enforcement workforce** is necessary to retain experienced officers committed to public safety and the missions of DOI Bureaus. This support needs to include manageable workloads, access to requisite equipment and technology, healthy and inclusive work environments, career development opportunities, and recognition for individual and collective accomplishments.

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI law enforcement and security programs successfully recruit a diverse and representative law enforcement workforce through the effective utilization of available hiring authorities, collaborative Bureau level workforce planning, outreach, and centralized hiring of entry level law enforcement positions. Retention is increased through effective employee support, adequate pay, consistent training opportunities, top-tier equipment and facilities, active supervision, and an equitable and inclusive work environment.

Recommendation 6: Law Enforcement Wellness Program

THE NEED

DOI law enforcement officers have a duty to protect and serve, and such service to others often comes with a sacrifice to self, particularly if **proactive and comprehensive wellness strategies** are not in place to manage the inherent stress. In addition to the daily stressors of life, law enforcement officers are exposed to an exponential amount of stress and trauma throughout their careers. The last few years have proven to be particularly challenging for law enforcement with pressures compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, periods of civil unrest, and the dramatic shifts in public scrutiny and perceptions. **Enhanced agency resources and staffing** are necessary to **adequately support** and protect the law enforcement workforce from the far-reaching impacts of cumulative stress and unaddressed trauma.

Equally important to investing in and prioritizing mental health and wellness is providing **trusted and sustainable solutions** relevant to the unique experiences and needs of the law enforcement workforce and **applied consistently** across each Bureau law enforcement program. DOI law enforcement officers are not immune from the **stigmas** for seeking help. The stigmas innately connected to the **workplace culture** need to be addressed to eliminate associated barriers such as the fear of retaliation or negative job impacts, perceived lack of confidentiality or anonymity, and the lack of trust. Raising awareness through **education and training** is required to dispel myths and equip the first responder community with the tools and skills needed for a healthy and enduring career.

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI law enforcement and security programs proactively support the mental and physical health of their law enforcement officers from recruitment to retirement. A collaborative first responder approach to employee wellness is implemented at DOI and Bureau levels leveraging resources to provide beneficial support services, education, health monitoring, and wellness data management. Healthy law enforcement officers have effective interactions with the public and make sound operational decisions in the performance of their duties which positively impacts the public's view of DOI law enforcement.

Recommendation 7: Law Enforcement Training & Education

THE NEED

Effective and relevant ongoing training and education sets the foundation for a high functioning law enforcement program. While significant aspects of Federal law enforcement training are managed by other Federal agencies, current opportunities exist for **improvement in the development, delivery, and oversight** of basic and ongoing law enforcement training within the purview of DOI Bureaus and the DOI Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES). For example, **diversity within law enforcement training instructor cadres** is critical to minimizing barriers to learning for individuals in groups that are less represented in training classes and the workforce in general, such as female trainees and officers. Also, ensuring **alignment with contemporary training standards and policies** across all DOI law enforcement programs is essential to the consistent delivery of law enforcement services within the varied missions of DOI Bureaus. These standards and policies need to both **inform the public's expectations** for the performance of law enforcement and **support career development** for law enforcement officers within DOI Bureaus.

THE ASPIRATION

Coordinated and consistent high quality initial and continual law enforcement training programs are implemented across DOI to support ongoing professional development and advance cultural competency, while also being responsive to ever changing legal standards, technology advancements, and societal demands. An inclusive climate within DOI training and education ensures law enforcement officers are prepared to deliver safe, empathetic, culturally sensitive, and constitutionally compliant law enforcement services on public and Tribal lands.

Recommendation 8: Law Enforcement Program Standards

THE NEED

The integrity of the law enforcement profession relies heavily on standardization and consistency in policy, operations, and expectations for individual officer conduct. Across DOI, there is an opportunity to **increase consistency** in management, funding, chains of command, span of control, on-duty supervision, and operational command and control through the development of DOI-wide law enforcement program standards. The implementation of standards related to internal affairs oversight, investigations, and disciplinary actions will bring consistency to the responses of law enforcement program managers to officer conduct issues thus **elevating accountability** across DOI. This consistency is intended to increase the confidence of the workforce that all officers are treated equally and strengthen the public's trust that law enforcement officers are held accountable. Program standards focused on recruiting and hiring will **reduce redundant efforts** through streamlined processes and consolidate a targeted approach to building a workforce that represents the populations served by DOI Bureaus. Program standards intended to support the overall wellness of the law enforcement workforce will **reinforce support for officer safety and physical and mental health** as well as provide professional development throughout a career in DOI law enforcement.

THE ASPIRATION

Minimum standards for DOI law enforcement programs are established and implemented in all DOI law enforcement and security programs which acknowledges and values the unique challenges and complexities of the law enforcement profession and is consistent with the demands of 21st century policing. These standards will ensure programs are led by managers with the appropriate competencies and grade level, who have the authority to manage the operations of DOI law enforcement programs. This will effectively prioritize public safety and officer wellness, maintain accountability within the organization, facilitate fair and consistent application of the law, and ensure effective deployment of resources across geographical boundaries.

Recommendation 9: Land Mobile Radios & Interoperability

THE NEED

Law enforcement officers within DOI rely heavily on field communications, such as land mobile radios (LMR), to serve the public, maintain officer safety, pass critical information, collect data, and maintain situational awareness throughout the United States and its territories in service of the missions of each Bureau. There are several significant opportunities to improve the field communications system to ensure the **safety of individual officers** and the **accomplishment of their law enforcement duties**. A need exists to **increase the coverage** of radio systems to minimize the “no service areas,” within DOI managed lands. Operations in remote locations often patrolled by a single officer, leave that individual disconnected from current networks thus unable to communicate with dispatch or other officers. The **interoperability of radio systems** must be expanded to meet evolving user and partner organization needs and demands for voice, video, and data interoperability. **Centralized planning** for communications systems is required to allow DOI to keep pace with technological changes while still supporting **local implementation** of solutions determined by the mission requirements of each Bureau.

THE ASPIRATION

DOI law enforcement officers in the field have trust and confidence in their communications with local, regional and national dispatch centers, partner organizations, and the public. Law enforcement communications technology ensures effective voice, video, and data transmission and reception of routine and emergency information across all public and Tribal lands served by DOI law enforcement. Effective radio communications, combined with video and data capabilities, increases the physical safety of officers, and those they serve, and reduces the stress resulting from the uncertainty of whether assistance will be available when it is needed.

Recommendation 10: Law Enforcement Data Management

THE NEED

There is a need to **consolidate existing law enforcement data systems** to increase the effectiveness of managing and sharing crime data, evidence, and information about ongoing investigations across all of DOI's law enforcement programs. Opportunities exist to **utilize technology to increase law enforcement officer and program accountability** through expanded analysis of existing DOI data on officer complaints and the utilization of a National Law Enforcement Officer Accountability database under development by the Department of Justice (DOJ). In addition, improving the management of human resources, safety and occupational health data is necessary to allow for **detailed and accurate analyses of trends** that affect law enforcement personnel, such as factors contributing to officer safety, physical and mental health, and overall wellness. **Improved capture and analysis of safety data** could also expose dynamics that contribute to officer decision-making in stressful situations and their impacts on interactions with the public, which could inform the ongoing development of law enforcement training and policy. Additionally, **improvements in personnel data management** are needed to allow for more in-depth analysis of law enforcement staffing and recruiting trends, aiding in workforce planning.

THE ASPIRATION

Systems of record and associated databases are secure and support law enforcement officers and law enforcement programs with accurate data that meets findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) requirements. Data and information derived from the system is sufficient for appropriate analyses and evidence-based decision making.

Recommendation 11: Bureau Law Enforcement Jurisdiction & Legal Authority

THE NEED

It is critical that DOI's law enforcement and security personnel have the **requisite legal authority** to fulfill and prioritize their organic missions. Each law enforcement program has its own unique mission, with its own set of challenges, and requires the **appropriate jurisdiction and authority** to accomplish its mandate. DOI law enforcement officers are often asked to support their partners from Federal, State, Tribal and local law enforcement agencies with matters that extend beyond DOI's central mission. In these situations, it is imperative that DOI law enforcement personnel understand the precise scope of their legal authority and their **ability to provide assistance** in various scenarios.

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI law enforcement and security programs have the requisite legal authority to fulfill their organic mission. DOI law enforcement officers and Bureau of Reclamation Security Response Force personnel have a clear understanding of their jurisdiction, authorities, and duties. DOI law enforcement programs maintain strong working relationships with their partners at the Federal, State, Tribal and local level, and are able to provide law enforcement support when it is within their legal authority to do so and is consistent with their overall mission.

Recommendation 12: Office of Law Enforcement and Security Role & Authority

THE NEED

The breadth of the DOI mission requires a dispersed organizational structure, where command and control of operations occurs at the Bureau level. Every law enforcement program embedded within each of these Bureaus has a unique law enforcement mission, which is conducted on public and Tribal lands. The autonomous nature of these programs, coupled with the complexities of the law enforcement profession, requires **consistent oversight and coordination** at the DOI headquarters level to ensure effective governance, alignment with appropriate authorities,

utilization of requisite internal controls, and an ongoing commitment to building internal and external relationships based on mutual respect and trust. The delivery of law enforcement services across DOI can be further strengthened with **standardized policies, processes, and systems** overseen by DOI's OLES.

THE ASPIRATION

DOI prioritizes and invests in law enforcement to enhance public trust, transparency, and accountability, promote a healthy and effective law enforcement workforce, and enhance DOI and Bureau law enforcement program effectiveness. OLES is appropriately structured, adequately staffed and funded, and possesses and utilizes the requisite authorities to support field law enforcement, intelligence, and security programs and operations. OLES provides informed effective direction, oversight, and guidance while catalyzing collaboration across Bureau law enforcement programs to ensure consistency where it is needed and allow for flexibility when appropriate and most effective.



Photo: BIA

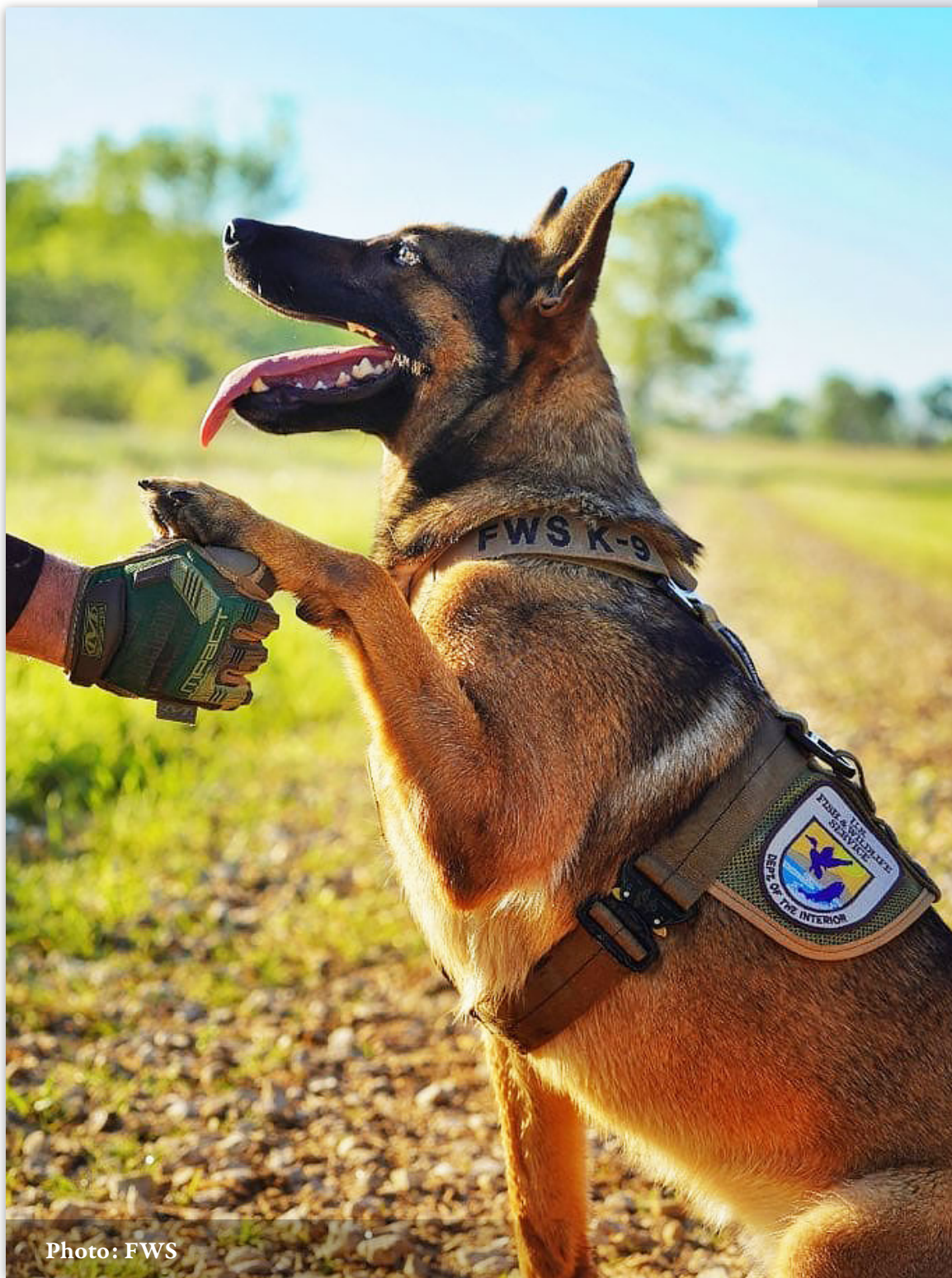


Photo: FWS

INTRODUCTION

DOI protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage, provides scientific and other information about those resources, and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities. DOI plays a central role in how the United States stewards its public lands, increases environmental protections, pursues environmental justice, and honors our nation-to-nation relationship with Tribes. Intrinsically aligned with this mission, DOI protects and serves people, communities, and global biodiversity through a diverse array of law enforcement programs situated within its Bureaus.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

DOI employs nearly 3,000 permanent law enforcement officers assigned to six distinct organizational units within five DOI Bureaus. These six units are the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Justice Services (OJS); Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Law Enforcement Program; National Park Service (NPS) Law Enforcement Ranger Program and the United States Park Police (USPP); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and Division of Refuge Law Enforcement (RLE). Additionally, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) employs a Security Response Force (SRF) to protect its critical infrastructure. DOI's law enforcement contingent is the fourth largest among executive branch departments, after the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, and Veterans Affairs and provides a range of duties that often extend beyond many traditional uniformed law enforcement officers in this country.

DOI law enforcement officers are responsible for protecting some of the most important resources in this country spanning national icons, natural wonders, infrastructure critical to public safety and security, cultural resources on public and Tribal lands, as well as national and global obligations to wildlife protection and preservation transcending DOI boundaries. They protect the integrity of these resources while striving to ensure the safety of those who live, work, play, and visit public and Tribal lands.

The specific duties of DOI law enforcement officers can vary considerably based on the organic mission of each DOI Bureau, geographic location, job position, or specialized assignment. Whether an investigative agent or uniformed officer conducting patrols in a park or refuge, on a mountain or in a desert, on the water or in the air, on a highway or trail, in the backcountry or a community, DOI law enforcement officers have a broad portfolio of responsibilities, expertise and skills. Each of the DOI law enforcement programs described in the following pages serves the public in unique and distinct ways.

DOI AT-A-GLANCE

480 million
acres of public lands for access

532 million
visitors to DOI lands and waters in 2021

17
States in the west
with managed and
supplied water

20%
of the Nation's land stewarded

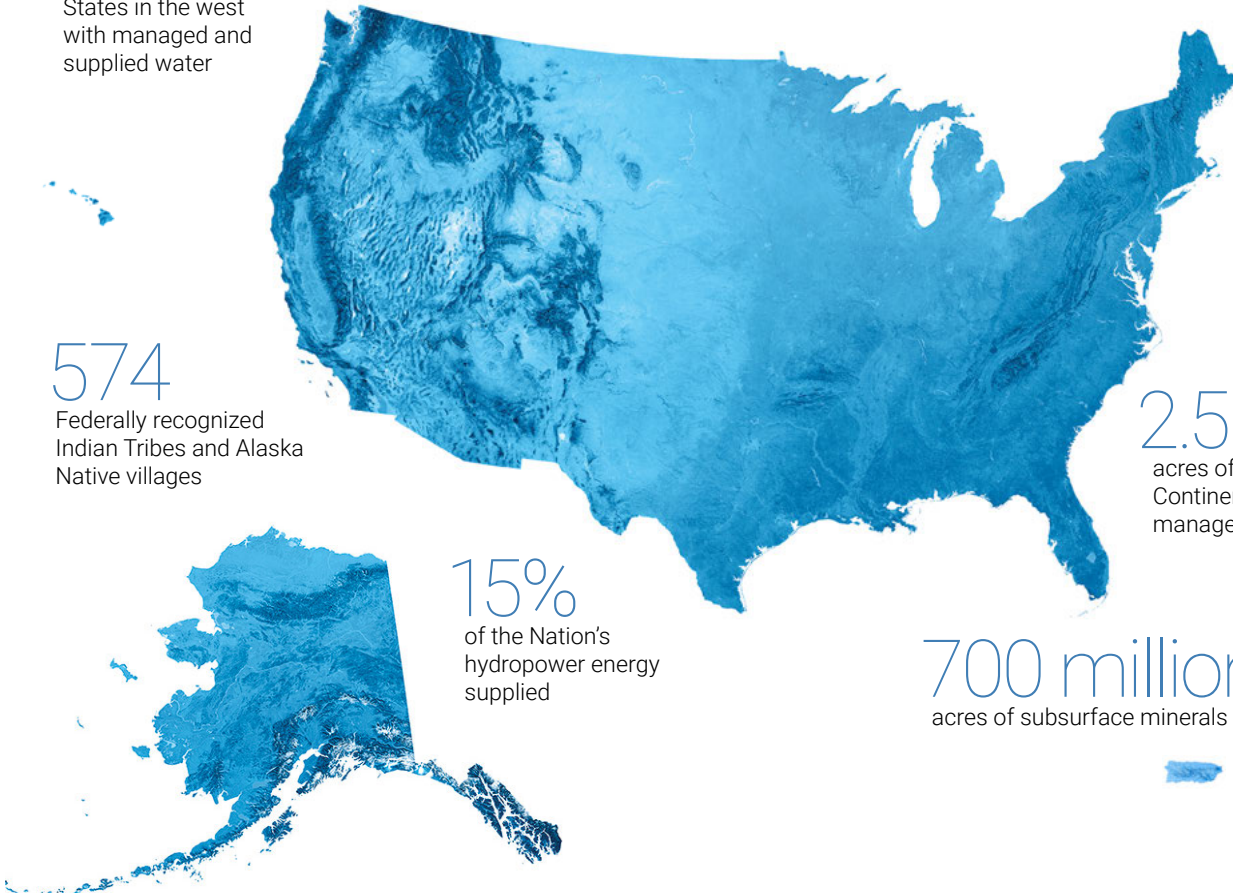
2,920
full-time sworn and
commissioned law
enforcement officers
protecting and serving
on DOI managed lands
in 2022

574
Federally recognized
Indian Tribes and Alaska
Native villages

2.5 billion
acres of the Outer
Continental Shelf
managed

15%
of the Nation's
hydropower energy
supplied

700 million
acres of subsurface minerals managed



Bureau of Indian Affairs – Office of Justice Services



Jurisdiction over offenses or crimes committed on Tribal lands may lie with Federal, State, or Tribal agencies, depending on the offense, the offense location, and whether the offender or victim is an enrolled member of a federally recognized Tribe. Although most police departments and detention centers on Tribal lands are administered by Tribes under their sovereign authorities, some are operated and administered by the BIA, largely under the authority of the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act. BIA employs 358 uniformed police officers and criminal investigators serving over 200 Indian communities across the country. As the exclusive federal entity charged with maintaining law and order on Indian reservations, BIA's Office of Justice Services has several supporting operations and functions, which include missing and murdered unit, victim assistance, drug enforcement, emergency management, internal affairs, land mobile radio program, Indian highway safety, Tribal justice support, and operation of the Indian Police Academy.

Bureau of Land Management – Law Enforcement Program



BLM employs 295 law enforcement rangers and special agents. BLM rangers typically are responsible for the everyday enforcement of laws and regulations governing BLM lands and resources including timber, forage, energy and minerals, recreation areas, fish and wildlife habitat, wilderness areas, national monuments, and archaeological and paleontological sites. Officers also support emergency responses in remote settings and strive to provide a safe environment for employees and visitors to public lands. Special agents typically are plainclothes criminal investigators who plan and conduct investigations concerning possible violations on BLM lands.

National Park Service – Law Enforcement Ranger Program



NPS law enforcement personnel have long had a role in protecting national parklands and enforcing agency regulations. NPS employs 1,330 permanent law enforcement park rangers and special agents. Law enforcement park rangers provide safety and security for the park visitors and its resources while special agents oversee criminal investigations as part of the agency's Investigative Services Branch. While these rangers and special agents fulfill their primary duty as law enforcement officers, many are trained in a variety of other emergency response disciplines including structural and wildland firefighting, emergency medical services, search and rescue, and special event teams. The NPS utilizes time limited employees known as seasonal park rangers who perform similar duties to permanent rangers, typically for a period of several months.

National Park Service – United States Park Police



The USPP is one of the oldest uniformed Federal law enforcement agencies, having been created by President George Washington in 1791, when they were referred to as watchmen and charged with safeguarding public buildings in the nation’s capital. The USPP employs about 525 officers and primarily oversees law enforcement on national parklands in Washington, DC, New York City, and San Francisco. However, USPP jurisdiction generally extends to all NPS parklands nationwide. The USPP also has jurisdictional authority in the surrounding metropolitan areas of the three cities in which it primarily operates, making it one of the few Federal law enforcement units that possess both state and federal authority. In addition to protecting national parkland and enforcing agency regulations, officers also specialize in a variety of other types of emergency response disciplines: maritime patrol, helicopter operations, horse mounted patrol, canine detection, criminal investigation, tactical response, and special event planning.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Division of Refuge Law Enforcement



Guided by the founding principles of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement (RLE) officers, also known as federal wildlife officers, protect wildlife and habitat, make refuges safe places for staff and visitors, and conserve America’s natural resources. A federal wildlife officer combines conservation protection, traditional policing and emergency response to protect, serve, and educate the visiting public and the National Wildlife Refuge System staff. Among the most visible, essential and recognizable conservation professionals in the FWS, federal wildlife officers function as both guardians and ambassadors for national wildlife refuges and America’s wildlife. FWS RLE employs over 200 federal wildlife officers and are often the first FWS employees encountered by the public on national wildlife refuges.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Office of Law Enforcement



The FWS’s Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) protects wildlife and plant resources through the effective enforcement of federal laws. The OLE conducts complex criminal investigations targeting the greatest threats to our nation’s wildlife resources including the growing threat from transnational criminal organizations targeting our nation’s most imperiled species. To accomplish this, the OLE employs just over 200 special agents domestically and abroad working with Federal, State, Tribal, local, and international law enforcement officers and other conservation partners. OLE works to combat wildlife trafficking, help recover endangered species, conserve migratory birds, preserve wildlife habitats, safeguard fisheries, prevent the introduction and spread of injurious and invasive species, and promote international wildlife conservation.

In addition to the six DOI law enforcement programs described above, the two components below perform the following duties:

Bureau of Reclamation – Security Response Force



BOR does not have authority to conduct its own law enforcement activities, therefore, it uses other Federal, State, or local law enforcement officers via contract or cooperative agreements to oversee and conduct law enforcement activities. However, the BOR Security Response Force (SRF) exists to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of water and power to the American public, safeguard employees and visitors, and defend generation assets, transmission assets and cultural resources on Reclamation lands. SRF officers are stationed at national critical infrastructures around the country and conduct security operations at the Hoover Dam, Grand Coulee Dam, and Glen Canyon Dam day and night.

DOI Office of Law Enforcement and Security



OLES serves as DOI’s focal point to provide program guidance and oversight of the DOI’s law enforcement, security, intelligence, counterintelligence/insider threat, and information sharing programs. Since 2001, OLES has provided direction, oversight, and coordination across DOI’s various law enforcement units. It is headed by a Director who reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Services. The Director leads a DOI Law Enforcement Board of Advisors establishing a consortium of the DOI law enforcement programs that seeks a unified, strategic direction to serve and honor the public trust.



Photo: FWS OLE

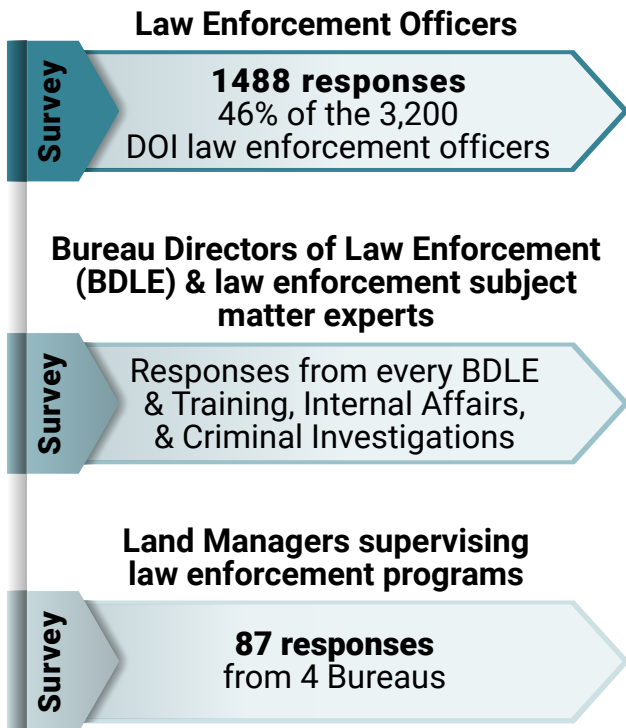
Department of the Interior Law Enforcement Task Force

On July 7, 2021, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced the establishment of a Law Enforcement Task Force (LETF) within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) to develop “meaningful solutions to assist law enforcement and communities in strengthening trust and collaboration, while ushering the Nation into the next phase of community-focused law enforcement.” The Task Force, led by Deputy Secretary of the Interior Tommy Beaudreau, was charged with three focus areas:

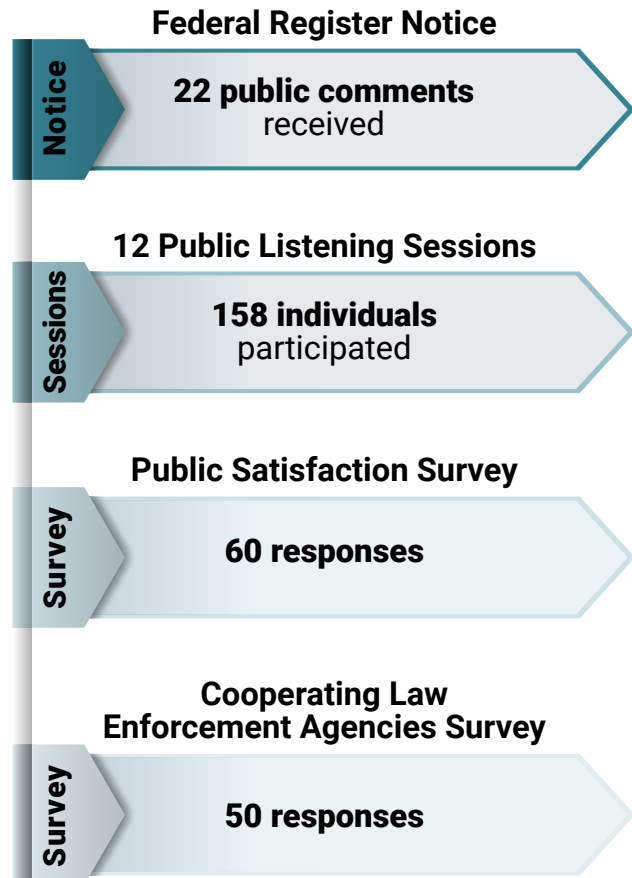
- Strengthen trust in our law enforcement programs;
- Ensure appropriate policy and oversight is implemented; and
- Ensure supportive resources are available for officer mental health, wellness, and safety.

During this process, the LETF engaged in significant internal and external outreach efforts to ensure the broadest possible perspective on issues related to law enforcement within DOI. Stakeholder input was gathered through the following strategies.

Internal Stakeholder Input



External Stakeholder Input



This document is the culmination of the research and outreach process followed by comprehensive analysis of the resultant feedback, data, and information. The recommendations that have emerged from this undertaking seek to:

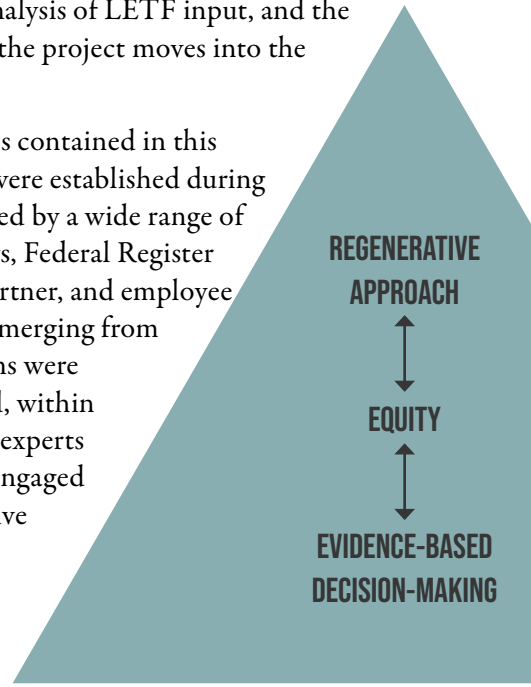
- *Enhance the trust afforded to DOI law enforcement officers by those who live, work, and play on or visit public and Tribal lands;*
- *Support the safety, health, and wellness of DOI law enforcement officers serving as guardians of people, critical national infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources on public and Tribal lands; and*
- *Ensure that DOI law enforcement programs effectively continue to provide for safe and equitable access to public lands and the free exercise of fundamental rights in public spaces.*

Throughout this process, the DOI LETF work has been shaped by several foundational concepts.

REGENERATIVE APPROACH Viewing this project through a regenerative lens required the LETF Working Group to seek a more systemic and nuanced understanding of the connections between DOI law enforcement program operations and the complex and evolving needs of the societal context within which law enforcement officers perform their roles. This approach has not been problem-focused, but instead has explored opportunities to enhance the future conditions for all to thrive. As such, the resulting recommendations seek to realize law enforcement’s contribution to public safety and resource stewardship while supporting the well-being of law enforcement personnel and promoting the continual improvement of program operations across DOI. The aspirational future statements, which precede the recommendations in this document, express these linkages and serve as touchstones for assessing the relevance of specific actions implemented as part of this effort.

EQUITY The dynamism of public expectations regarding the exercise of law enforcement on public and Tribal lands demands an ever-present awareness of the impacts of individual and organizational decisions and actions on the range of people and communities served by DOI Bureau missions. Equity has been considered throughout the research and outreach process, the analysis of LETF input, and the development of recommendations. It will continue to be a critical lens as the project moves into the implementation phase.

EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING The recommendations contained in this document are based on a rigorous process of inquiry and analysis. Goals were established during the scoping phase to guide question formulation. Questions were addressed by a wide range of stakeholders through various media (listening sessions, interviews, surveys, Federal Register Notice, websites). Quantitative survey data was compiled from public, partner, and employee input. Qualitative information was coded to identify significant themes emerging from both internal and external feedback. Trends in issues and suggested actions were aggregated and summarized. Recommendation categories were developed, within which the aspirational future was articulated. Leaders and subject matter experts across the spectrum of related disciplines were repeatedly consulted and engaged in crafting a regenerative path forward. This report describes the cumulative outcomes of this collaborative effort.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the LETF outreach process suggest that many aspects of DOI's law enforcement programs are effective at meeting the mission intention of their Bureaus and in supporting the people who serve in law enforcement roles. In alignment with the purpose of the LETF, this report focuses on the areas where the findings suggest potential improvements in building and maintaining public trust, supporting officer mental health, wellness, and safety, and increasing law enforcement program effectiveness.

Based on the findings of the research and outreach conducted by the LETF Working Group, twelve overarching recommendations for improvement have been identified. Within each of these areas, the aspirational future state of DOI law enforcement programs has been articulated. The need for change, the aspirational future, and the actions proposed to achieve it are described in the following section.

Public Trust in DOI Law Enforcement

- 1 Community & Visitor Engagement
- 2 Crisis & Incident Communications
- 3 Use of Deadly Force Investigations

Healthy & Effective DOI Law Enforcement Workforce

- 4 Law Enforcement Program Funding & Staffing
- 5 Recruitment & Retention of a Diverse Law Enforcement Workforce
- 6 Law Enforcement Wellness Program
- 7 Law Enforcement Training & Education

DOI Law Enforcement Program Effectiveness

- 8 Law Enforcement Program Standards
- 9 Land Mobile Radios & Interoperability
- 10 Law Enforcement Data Management
- 11 Bureau Law Enforcement Jurisdiction & Legal Authority
- 12 OLES Role & Authority



Photo: USPP

PUBLIC TRUST IN DOI LAW ENFORCEMENT

Recommendation 1: Community & Visitor Engagement

THE NEED

The manner in which community and visitor engagement is conducted significantly impacts the public's perception of DOI law enforcement. The nature of long-term relationships with communities and brief interactions with visitors can build or erode public trust. Dynamics identified that influence the credibility of DOI law enforcement programs and the trust afforded to DOI law enforcement officers include the following:

- **Law Enforcement Presence:** Comments received during the public outreach process acknowledged the connection between a lack of officers and the rising challenge of addressing public safety issues and quality of life crimes. Increasing the presence of law enforcement on public lands was identified by public survey respondents as a top priority. (See “Law Enforcement Program Funding & Staffing” recommendation.)
- **Proactive Community Engagement:** There is general agreement on the need to strengthen relationships between DOI law enforcement programs and their local communities but competing resources, lack of staffing, and workload hinder these efforts.
- **Lack of Diversity of Law Enforcement Officers:** There is general agreement that the demographics of the DOI law enforcement workforce do not appropriately reflect the diversity of the populations they serve. (See “Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Law Enforcement Workforce” recommendation.)
- **External Communications:** There is a lack of communication about the positive activities of DOI law enforcement programs. This vacuum is often filled by the generalized negative perception of law enforcement being applied to DOI personnel and programs.

THE ASPIRATION

Visitors to public and Tribal lands experience DOI law enforcement and security personnel as approachable, professional, and respectful. Residents of communities on or near public and Tribal lands have constructive relationships with local DOI law enforcement and security personnel that build trust over time through continued engagement on public safety issues important to those communities. Adequate staffing ensures that a law enforcement presence is visible to the public and law enforcement assistance is accessible when and where it is needed. DOI law enforcement programs virtually engage visitors, local communities, and the general public using online media platforms to share important information or seek public assistance and highlight employee accomplishments.



Photo: FWS RLE

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing public trust will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Community Policing:** Fully integrate a community policing approach, throughout the DOI law enforcement programs that routinely conduct patrol operations, by training all levels of the organization on community & visitor engagement using Community Policing Models that include baseline modeling, metrics, training methodologies, and community-based problem solving.
- **Community Engagement:** Build capacity to regularly engage with community members and visitors to solicit their feedback. Develop mechanisms and processes for tracking public feedback and metrics to assess the effectiveness of community & public engagement.
- **External Communications:** Improve the timeliness and frequency of positive external communications highlighting community partnerships and the accomplishments of DOI law enforcement programs and individual officers.

Recommendation 2: Crisis & Incident Communications

THE NEED

The importance of communicating with the public during and after critical incidents was emphasized in feedback from every stakeholder group who participated in the LETF outreach process. There is overwhelming agreement that timely, accurate communication is foundational to building and maintaining trust with communities, partners, and the general public. The findings of the LETF research and outreach process point to a variety of dynamics that contribute to both the perception and reality of a lack of transparency with the public during critical situations.

- **Levels of Review & Approval:** There is substantial agreement that the levels of review and approval required for internal and external communications during and after a crisis or critical incident need to be streamlined.
- **Compromising an Investigation:** When information cannot be shared because it may compromise public safety or the integrity of an investigation, Bureau or DOI-level Public Information Officers should explain the reason for this to the public. The lack of a response in these situations can erode the public's trust.
- **Lack of Standardized Communication Protocols:** Many law enforcement Public Information Officers and Bureau communications personnel identified the lack of clarity in roles and processes for releasing information to the public during a critical incident as a primary factor that inhibits timely communication.
- **Lack of Personnel Trained in Public Communication:** Many respondents suggested DOI should hire more dedicated law enforcement Public Information Officers across all local offices and units that have specific expertise and experience in law enforcement issues. Also, the majority of the land managers would like crisis communications training to be offered for managers with responsibility for law enforcement programs.
- **Inconsistent Communications Processes across Bureaus:** Many Bureau land managers observed that there is little consistency among Bureau units in managing internal and external communications during and following critical incidents. They believe this inconsistency results from a lack of training for land managers on the proper procedures for critical incident communication.
- **Organizational Structure:** Bureau communications professionals highlighted the need to be engaged earlier in the unfolding of a crisis or critical situation and cited the geographic spread of the Bureaus and their law enforcement programs as adding to the challenge of timely communication.
- **Use of Social Media:** Many comments arose from the public listening sessions and customer satisfaction surveys about the need for the DOI to increase and improve its use of social media to keep the public informed of critical incidents as they unfold and afterward.
- **Release of Body Worn Camera (BWC) Footage:** The public views the timely release of BWC footage as an important component of accountability and transparency. BWC programs are currently being implemented across all of the DOI law enforcement programs. DOI is in the process of implementing the requirements of Executive Order

(EO) 14074, *Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety*”, which requires Federal law enforcement agencies to develop protocols for expedited public release of BWC footage following certain incidents to promote transparency and accountability.

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI Bureaus release timely and accurate information to the public during a crisis or critical incident. Skilled, knowledgeable Public Information Officers within Bureau law enforcement programs work in close coordination with their Bureau Communications Offices and DOI’s Office of Communications keeping senior leadership informed as an incident unfolds. This increasing transparency builds public trust in the DOI, its Bureaus, and their law enforcement programs.



Photo: NPS Ranger

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing public trust will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Protocols:** Develop standardized protocols and define roles at each level for crisis and incident communications within Bureaus and DOI.
- **Reporting:** Streamline reporting and approval processes for expedited public release of information and BWC footage.
- **Training:** Provide training to Public Information Officers, designated communicators, and other key stakeholders (e.g., non-law enforcement managers, solicitors, etc.) within Bureaus and DOI.
- **Staffing:** Assign Public Information Officers to programs who work directly for law enforcement management at appropriate levels within the organization, who have law enforcement-specific experience.
- **Media Management:** Increase law enforcement programs' use of and presence on media platforms to increase the timeliness of communication with the public.

Recommendation 3: Use of Deadly Force Investigations

THE NEED

The manner in which investigations into uses of deadly force are handled, and how the outcomes of those processes are communicated, has a significant impact on public trust in law enforcement. This recommendation seeks to address the following issues associated with the implementation of criminal and administrative investigations.

- **Timeliness:** There are many complexities involved in investigating a deadly use of force incident. An officer's use of deadly force can trigger several investigations by entities with divergent mandates, such as federal investigators, state prosecutors, internal affairs/offices of professional responsibility, and office of inspector general, as well as investigating any criminal conduct that may have precipitated the use of deadly force. A criminal investigation may be performed "in-house" or by an external agency. Federal civil service laws, as well as collective bargaining agreements negotiated by labor unions, add to the complexities of ensuring timely accountability. Inspector General (IG) reports and civil litigation can also delay disciplinary proceedings, as deciding officials may be reluctant to issue final determinations until all evidence has been collected and reports issued. The plethora of criminal investigations, disciplinary proceedings, internal policy reviews, IG reports, and civil litigation can quickly turn what may appear to be a weeks-long inquiry into a multi-year process.
- **Impacts on Officers:** Protracted investigative processes commonly result in law enforcement officers being placed on administrative leave for long periods of time, which can further compound the impacts to officers involved, support staff, and their families. The complex and lengthy process can add to the multiple sources of stress associated with an officer-involved shooting (e.g., media coverage, fear of legal and/or administrative

problems, public perception, staffing needed to fill gaps, effects on families of all involved, etc.). The geographical spread of DOI law enforcement officers presents challenges with access to appropriate employee assistance resources specializing in traumatic and acute incident response. This can be an additional factor leading to mental and financial strain on the officers involved. (See “Law Enforcement Wellness Program” recommendation.)

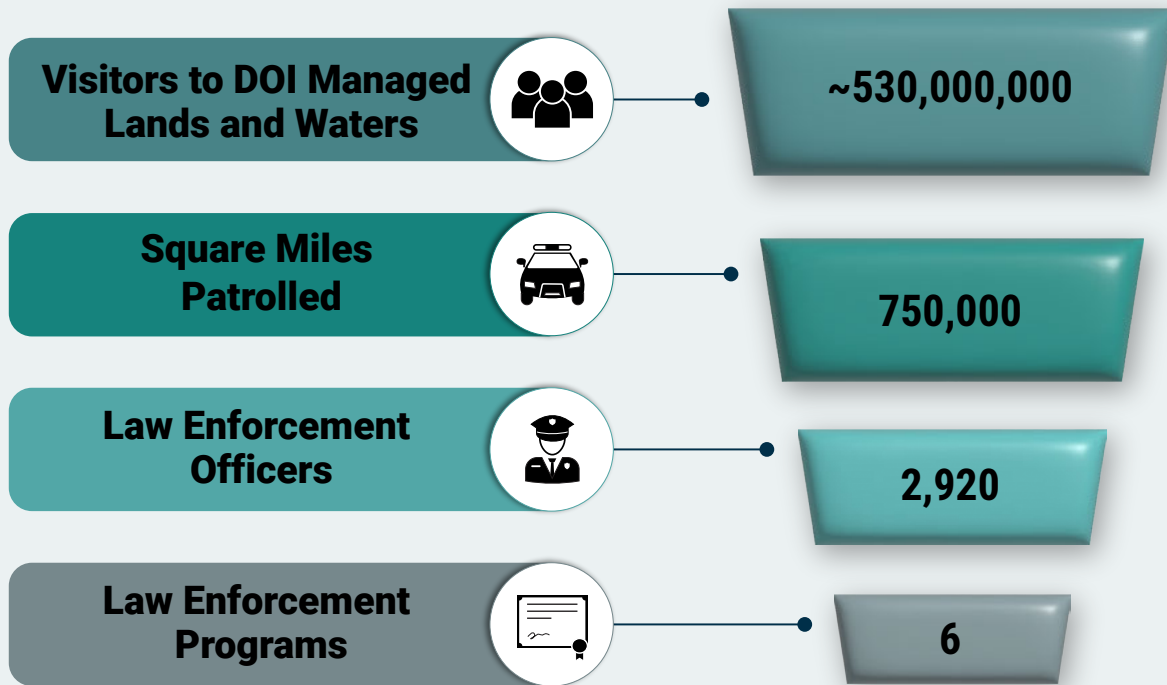
- ▶ **Public Perception:** The length of time to investigate and determine the appropriate disposition of a case and communicate the outcomes to both the families of the person(s) involved and the public tends to engender a distrust in the system.

Subsequent to the launch of the DOI LETF, EO 14074 was issued. Section 2d of the EO, Ensuring Timely Investigations and section 2e, Ensuring Thorough Investigations, states: *“The heads of all Federal LEAs [law enforcement agencies] shall assess whether any of their respective agency’s policies or procedures cause unwarranted delay in investigations of Federal law enforcement officers for incidents involving the use of deadly force or deaths in custody, including delays in interagency jurisdictional determinations and subject and witness interviews, and shall, without abrogating any collective bargaining obligations, make changes as appropriate to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of such investigations.”* This process is identifying potential changes to policy or procedures that could improve the timeliness of criminal and administrative investigative processes and will inform the implementation of the LETF recommendations.

THE ASPIRATION

Officer involved shootings and uses of deadly force within DOI’s law enforcement and security programs are investigated using standardized policies, processes, and methods that reflect the principles of 21st century policing and improve the accountability, timely reporting, communication, and integrity of these investigations. Criminal investigations into deadly use of force incidents are conducted by an impartial third party. This approach satisfies the varying demands of each Bureau’s law enforcement operating environment while ensuring officer involved shootings and uses of deadly force are investigated objectively and transparently resulting in enhanced public trust.

USE OF FORCE IN PERSPECTIVE



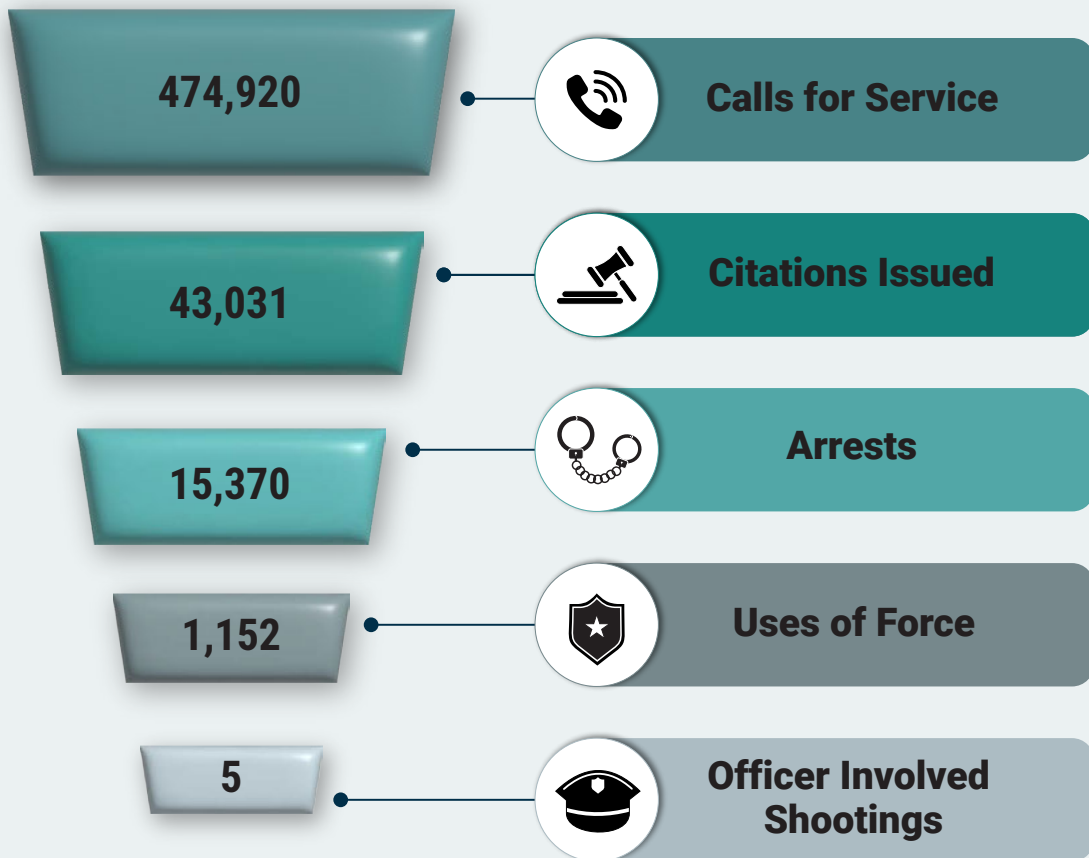
THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing public trust will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Policy:** Review, and update as required, DOI and Bureau policies including Administrative Investigations, Internal Affairs, and Use of Deadly Force Investigations.
- **Accountability:** Fully utilize Bureau Boards of Review and DOI Serious Incident Review Groups to ensure compliance with existing DOI policies and the equitable administration of discipline when required.
- **Timeliness of Investigations:** Conduct a comprehensive review of policies and procedures to identify “unwarranted delays” in criminal investigations, administrative investigations, and disciplinary proceedings and make changes as appropriate.

PUBLIC TRUST IN DOI LAW ENFORCEMENT

CALENDAR YEAR 2022



- **Officer Support:** Ensure law enforcement officers who are directly and indirectly involved in these types of investigations are informed of the process and are provided mental health support (Peer Support, Employee Assistance Program, Counseling).
- **Training:** Adequately train investigators to conduct use of deadly force and internal affairs investigations.
- **Interagency Agreements:** Ensure appropriate agreements are in place for the primary aspects of a use of deadly force investigation.
- **Data Management:** Increase accountability by ensuring the accuracy and fidelity of relevant data.
- **Communication:** Ensure transparency of action by all DOI Bureaus through appropriately communicating the outcomes of investigations to the public and involved parties.

HEALTHY & EFFECTIVE DOI LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKFORCE

Recommendation 4: Law Enforcement Program Funding & Staffing

THE NEED

For more than a decade, the lack of adequate funding and the declining staffing levels within DOI law enforcement have resulted in numerous impacts to the DOI law enforcement workforce, visitors, residents, and communities near public lands managed by DOI Bureaus. Specific impacts include:

- **Law Enforcement Responsiveness:** Understaffing in the DOI law enforcement programs has resulted in a lack of timely response to incidents, an inability to deter or discourage negative or criminal activities, and a perception that law enforcement is not available when needed.
- **Public Safety:** Over half of DOI law enforcement officers believe that reduced staffing levels have had a major impact on visitor and community safety.
- **Officer Mental Health:** Lack of adequate staffing was cited as one of the primary contributors to stress and mental health concerns across the law enforcement workforce.
- **Officer Safety:** Over 90% of DOI law enforcement officers believe that current staffing levels have impacted their safety on the job.
- **Officer Physical Health and Wellness:** DOI law enforcement officers identified increasing staffing as the number one priority to support their physical health and wellness as this would allow for a healthier work-life balance.
- **Officer Retention:** Concerns about their safety have caused almost half of DOI law enforcement officers to rethink a career in law enforcement.



Photo: BIA

The current staffing levels within each of the DOI law enforcement programs and the decline in staffing from each program’s 15-year high to the 2022 staffing numbers are depicted in the table that follows.

DOI LE PROGRAMS	15 YEAR	2021	2022	% CHANGE
	STAFFING HIGH	STAFFING NUMBERS	STAFFING NUMBERS	+ OR - OVER 15 YEARS
BIA	453	336	358	-21.0%
BLM	303	284	295	-2.6%
FWS - OLE	230	211	205	-10.9%
FWS - RLE	286	247	208	-27.3%
NPS LE RANGERS	1500	1358	1330	-11.3%
NPS - USPP	651	495	524	-19.5%
TOTAL DOI LE	3423	2931	2920	-14.7%

The table reflects the staffing totals for position classifications that are designated as full-time sworn and commissioned law enforcement officers (excludes other related positions, such as seasonal law enforcement officers, guards, wildlife inspectors, and correctional officers).

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI law enforcement and security programs are adequately staffed and funded, which enhances public trust, accountability, and transparency through increased community-policing interaction, improved responsiveness to incidents and calls for service, and timely and effective communication with the public. Appropriate staffing levels in all DOI law enforcement and security programs improve officer mental health, wellness, and resiliency through the reduction of stressors placed on officers by excessive overtime, travel, and extended details.

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the health and effectiveness of the law enforcement workforce will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Workforce Stability:** Stabilize the workforce by matching or exceeding the annual hiring of law enforcement officers with the attrition rate in each law enforcement program.
- **Law Enforcement Program Staffing Analysis:** Conduct standardized and consistent staffing analyses and develop a staffing model (or implement current model) within each law enforcement program to determine the appropriate and authorized strength. Bureaus (with OLES oversight) will be responsible for executing the changes based upon the analyses.
- **DOI-wide Approach to Staffing:** Conduct a staffing analysis across DOI to ensure adequate resources are available to address DOI law enforcement priorities that exceed the capacity of an individual Bureau.
- **Workforce Management:** Develop standards based upon human performance science to balance mission success with safety. This will include staff utilization models, overtime targets, and work/rest balance.
- **Budget Formulation Strategy:** Develop a strategic budget formulation process that prioritizes law enforcement staffing to maintain and sustain authorized strength across all law enforcement programs.
- **Staffing & Funding Baseline:** Implement a data call to determine Bureau law enforcement funding and staffing baselines and annually track to support operations.
- **Budget Oversight:** Utilize current DOI-level authorities to review and oversee Bureau law enforcement funding to ensure the sustainability of the authorized strength of law enforcement personnel across all programs.

Recommendation 5: Recruitment & Retention of a Diverse Law Enforcement Workforce

THE NEED

Nationwide, negative perceptions have cast an increasingly dim light on law enforcement. Since the integrity of a law enforcement program is dependent upon the caliber of its officers, the recruitment and retention of a diverse and capable workforce is vitally important to building and sustaining credibility and trust with the public. DOI law enforcement programs experience a variety of challenges to recruiting qualified applicants and hiring them in a timely manner. Some of these challenges include:

- **Competition for Applicants:** DOI's compensation packages often make it difficult to compete with other law enforcement organizations when recruiting new officers.
- **Hard-to-Fill Positions:** The locations and working conditions of certain DOI law enforcement positions make them hard to fill. The remoteness and austere conditions of some DOI lands, as well as the need to work with few or no law enforcement colleagues, present barriers to keeping these types of positions filled.

- **Barriers to Diversity:** Some of the barriers to diversity identified in the outreach process included a lack of prioritization within law enforcement programs for increasing diversity, the need for a more inclusive climate during basic and field training, and a lack of successful recruitment strategies for increasing diversity in the law enforcement workforce.
- **De-centralized Hiring Process:** In some law enforcement programs, officers are hired locally, which limits coordinated hiring efforts and sometimes causes units within the same Bureau to compete against each other for staff.
- **Timeliness of Hiring Process:** The length of time to complete background investigations is broadly seen as an impediment to filling positions in a timely manner.



Photo: USPP

A range of impediments to retention of DOI law enforcement officers was identified in the outreach process. These dynamics include:

- **Chronic Understaffing:** The largest single factor contributing to stress, mental health concerns, feeling unsafe on the job, and a lack of work-life balance for DOI law enforcement officers is inadequate staffing. This can become a self-reinforcing cycle when the annual hiring process does not keep pace with annual attrition. (See “Law Enforcement Program Funding & Staffing” recommendation.)
- **Pay Disparities:** Currently, pay scales across DOI law enforcement programs are not in alignment with each other. Also, higher compensation packages available in other law enforcement organizations accounts for some loss of personnel, particularly in urban areas and Tribal communities.
- **Housing Challenges:** Some law enforcement officers have required occupancy status, so they must live in government housing. The costs of this housing and some of the limitations associated with it (such as the inability to house a family) become barriers to retaining law enforcement employees.
- **Lack of Career Path:** Although some individuals, particularly those who are willing to relocate, can navigate a career path within law enforcement or to general management, there is a lack of organizational structure to assist individuals in managing a career in law enforcement and beyond.
- **Lack of Support for Law Enforcement:** Internally, this lack of support is experienced as untenable workloads, a lack of necessary equipment and technology, and a lack of recognition for accomplishments. Externally, the generalized negativity about law enforcement, increasing incidence of crime on federal lands, and mounting expectations and elevated scrutiny from the public, all contribute to attrition in the law enforcement workforce.

Officer recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention practices are further addressed in Section 3 of EO 14074, with particular attention to promoting an inclusive, diverse, and expert law enforcement workforce. Both the LETF and the EO have informed this recommendation.

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI law enforcement and security programs successfully recruit a diverse and representative law enforcement workforce through the effective utilization of available hiring authorities, collaborative Bureau level workforce planning, outreach, and centralized hiring of entry level law enforcement positions. Retention is increased through effective employee support, adequate pay, consistent training opportunities, top-tier equipment and facilities, active supervision, and an equitable and inclusive work environment.



Photos: BLM (Top) / NPS Ranger (Bottom)

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the health and effectiveness of the law enforcement workforce will be pursued through the following actions.

- **OLES Oversight:** Consider establishing a Workforce Office within OLES, similar to the one in DOI's Office of Wildland Fire, to conduct further analysis of recruiting, hiring, and retention challenges. In the near term, OLES will work with the Office of Human Capital (OHC) to conduct an analysis, the results of which will drive future strategy development and implementation.
- **Recruitment Strategies:** Develop Bureau and DOI-level strategies to attract a more diverse and qualified pool of applicants for law enforcement positions including strategies targeting positions in highly competitive localities and ones that are challenging to fill. Create Bureau level recruiter positions whose full-time work is recruitment, outreach, hiring, and onboarding.
- **Gender Diversity:** Engage DOI law enforcement programs in the 30x30 Initiative to increase the percentage of women in DOI law enforcement to 30% by 2030. Explore the possibility of developing a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification to increase the population of women in law enforcement.
- **Centralized Hiring:** Establish a centralized hiring program for entry level law enforcement positions within each Bureau.
- **Hiring Authorities:** Utilizing merit system principles, intentionally increase workforce diversity through all available recruiting practices, hiring authorities, and incentives.
- **Streamlined Hiring Process:** Streamline law enforcement hiring by increasing the timeliness of the Bureau and DOI processes associated with background investigations.
- **Onboarding New Officers:** Fully integrate new officers through equitable and inclusive onboarding processes and immediate participation in required basic and field training.
- **Compensation Equity:** Address pay and benefits equity across all Bureau law enforcement programs including financial inequities for individuals with required occupancy housing status.
- **Career Development:** Conduct succession planning within law enforcement programs and develop tools to assist individuals in planning their career development within law enforcement.
- **Recognition:** Internally recognize and externally communicate about the accomplishments of law enforcement officers and programs.
- **Inclusive Work Environment:** Develop strategies for an increasingly inclusive work environment within Bureau law enforcement programs.
- **Performance Evaluation and Promotion:** Develop consistent performance evaluation and promotion processes that build public trust, improve law enforcement operations, and increase the overall effectiveness of the DOI law enforcement workforce.
- **Standardized Position Descriptions:** Accelerate the development and use of Standard Position Descriptions (SPDs), where appropriate, for law enforcement to speed up hiring, provide greater balance and equity between equivalent positions within all Bureaus, and identify and emphasize career ladder promotion opportunities, where needed. Allow for flexibility for unique positions that exist within the Bureaus (e.g., international attachés within FWS OLE).

Recommendation 6: Law Enforcement Wellness Program

THE NEED

DOI’s law enforcement officers have a duty to protect and serve, and such service to others often comes with a sacrifice to self, particularly if proactive strategies are not in place to manage the inherent stress. In addition to the daily stressors of life, law enforcement officers are exposed to an exponential amount of stress and trauma throughout their careers. The last few years have proven to be particularly challenging for law enforcement with pressures compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, periods of civil unrest, and the dramatic shifts in public scrutiny and perceptions. Considering the impacts from the complex job demands, staffing challenges, and recurring responses to crises and high-risk/high intensity calls for service, the evidence gathered by the LETF affirmed the need to further invest in officer wellness.

The manner in which law enforcement officers cope with occupational stress contributes to their overall well-being. When the appropriate tools to manage and mitigate stress are accessible and practiced throughout their career, the lasting impacts to their mental health, wellness, performance, and personal life can be significant. Key findings revealed that the current law enforcement program resources are viewed as ineffective in supporting law enforcement officers’ mental and physical health and identified that reliable support is essential to better enable officers to thrive.

The analysis of the data and feedback underlined the following challenges and concerns:

- **Staffing Challenges:** The correlation between staffing levels and officer wellness was prominent throughout the research and outreach findings. Collective concerns with understaffing were cited as one of the principal contributors to stress. Respondents specified that increased staffing levels are the primary means for supporting law enforcement officer mental and physical health and safety. (See “Law Enforcement Program Funding & Staffing” recommendation.)
- **Retention:** Data revealed that a significant percentage of law enforcement officers are rethinking their career in law enforcement due to their concerns regarding officer safety. Many reported that their overall wellness has decreased since beginning their DOI law enforcement careers. (See “Recruitment & Retention of a Diverse Law Enforcement Workforce” recommendation.)

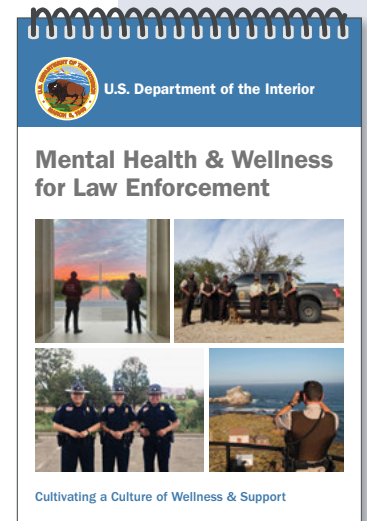
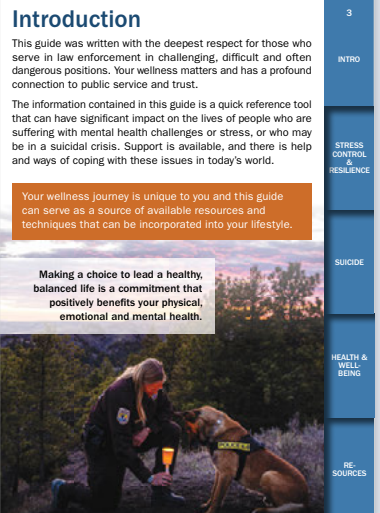


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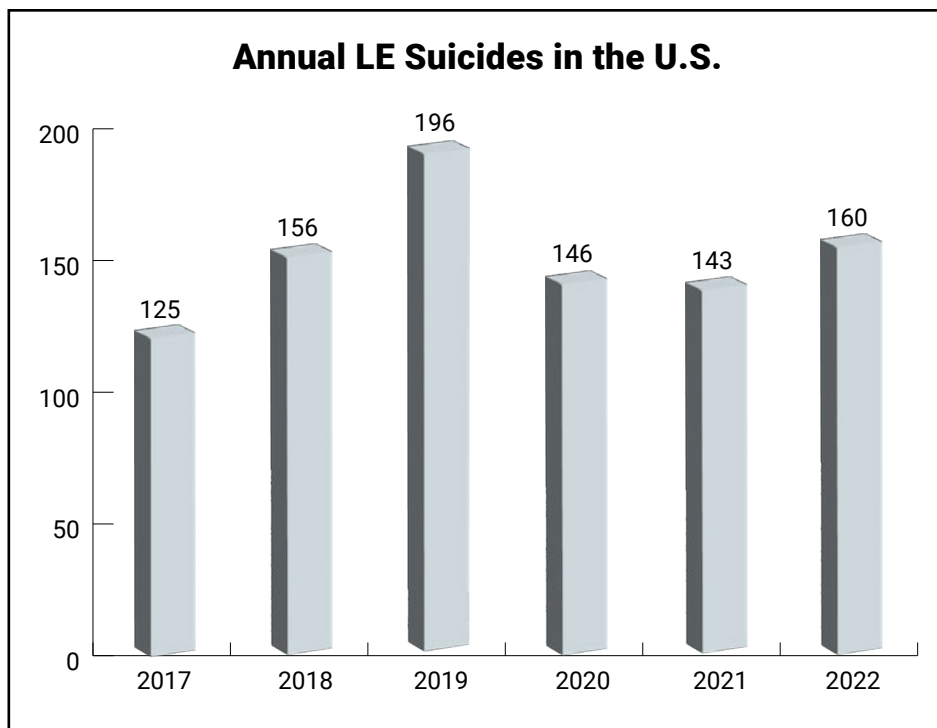
- ▶ **Lack of Appropriate Support:** Current agency resources to support and protect law enforcement officers from the far-reaching impacts of cumulative stress and unaddressed trauma are described as inadequate and inconsistent across law enforcement programs. Programs to address employee suicide awareness, prevention, intervention, and response are not established in every Bureau.
- ▶ **Fragmented Approaches:** Presently, there is no mechanism employed for establishing baselines and monitoring a law enforcement officer's health and wellness over their entire career. Significant exposures to potentially traumatic events were reported by law enforcement officers, most of which have not been documented or monitored. (See "Law Enforcement Data Management" recommendation.)
- ▶ **Workplace Culture and Stigmas:** Stigmas for seeking help currently exist in DOI's law enforcement programs. Barriers reported include the fear of retaliation or negative job impacts, perceived lack of confidentiality or anonymity, negative stigma associated with sharing mental health concerns, lack of adequate resources and support from leadership, and lack of trust.



Photo: BIA

The DOJ released two reports following the issuance of EO 14074, *Best Practices to Address Law Enforcement Officer Wellness and Recommendations Regarding the Prevention of Death by Suicide of Law Enforcement*. The first provides key principles and practices to foster a culture of wellness and psychological health and well-being of law enforcement agency personnel, echoing many of the needs identified in the LETF findings. The latter presents evidence-informed recommendations and practices that advance prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts that reduce risk factors for and build protective factors against suicide.

Studies have found that suicide rates are higher among law enforcement officers and others who work in public safety than among adults in other occupations and DOI is not immune to the loss of law enforcement officers by suicide. The table below reflects reported suicide deaths among law enforcement officers nationwide.



For more information, visit the Blue Help website <https://bluehelp.org/the-numbers>

EO 14074 emphasizes the importance of dedicating sufficient resources to support officer wellness and charges Federal law enforcement agencies to develop and implement changes, where applicable. DOI has prioritized wellness, safety, and mental health of workers in its Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Concurrently, leadership in Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Services is synchronizing a collaborative approach to promoting mental health and wellness within DOI’s first responder community. Leveraging the synergy of these parallel efforts will enhance the momentum towards our aspiration to strengthen and sustain a culture of wellness to safeguard our greatest assets – each one of our employees.

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI law enforcement and security programs proactively support the mental and physical health of their law enforcement officers from recruitment to retirement. A collaborative first responder approach to employee wellness is implemented at DOI and Bureau levels leveraging resources to provide beneficial support services, education, health monitoring, and wellness data management. Healthy law enforcement officers have effective interactions with the public and make sound operational decisions in the performance of their duties which positively impacts the public's view of DOI law enforcement.

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the health and effectiveness of the law enforcement workforce will be pursued through the following actions.

- ▶ **Wellness Program:** Frame a wellness program that is sustainable throughout each Bureau and leverage the connections with DOI's first responder community. Advance comprehensive wellness strategies that enhance one's endurance and optimal performance throughout a law enforcement officer's career. Ideal elements of such a program may include effective support services (see "Resources" below), post-incident support, stress management, proactive wellness approaches and health monitoring, and suicide awareness and prevention training.
- ▶ **Senior Advisors for Deputy Assistant Secretary – Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Services (DAS-PRE):** In support of the DAS-PRE priority for 2023, leverage the assistance of the senior advisors to work towards a DOI-wide approach to increase coordination and better leverage existing capacity to meet the needs of first responders.
- ▶ **Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness (MHW) Program Coordinator:** Requested a full-time MHW coordinator in OLES in the FY 2024 President's Budget request, who will provide consistent support to Bureau law enforcement programs, collaborate with appropriate offices and stakeholders to ensure the availability of supportive resources, and help build and sustain a trusted wellness program for law enforcement officers.
- ▶ **Resources:** Ensure the Bureaus' and DOI's ongoing capacity to support the well-being of the first responder workforce and their families. Boost specialized support services (e.g., psychologists, culturally competent clinicians, mental health professionals experienced in trauma incident response, etc.) as well as current support services (such as the Employee Assistance Program) to ensure they are accessible for every law enforcement program and enhance the use of peer support resources by sharing broadly across law enforcement programs.
- ▶ **Education, Awareness, and Training:** Visibly emphasize the importance of officer wellness across DOI and the Bureaus. Initiate wellness strategies in new employee orientation and build upon that foundation with continued training and a focus on

wellness throughout an officer's career. Improve the level of outreach and education to promote the advantages of seeking and utilizing available wellness resources. Nurture a culture that supports first responder wellness and eliminates the stigma associated with seeking help. Advance the understanding of the unique standards and requirements in law enforcement programs (e.g., medical standards and security clearances) through education and messaging to dispel myths and lessen reluctance to seek behavioral health support. Educate the law enforcement community on the existing employee assistance program contract. Enhance the use of peer support resources by sharing broadly across law enforcement programs. Work with OHC, in their engagement with the Office of Personnel Management, to provide more effective services for our law enforcement officers and other similar programs.

- **Preventative Measures and Practices:** Encourage and promote healthy lifestyles to help employees thrive from recruitment to retirement. Integrate proactive strategies, tools, and skills for law enforcement officers to manage stress and trauma, decrease burn-out, and develop resilience in advance of potential issues. Augment exercise, fitness, and nutrition programs to help achieve optimal outcomes. Standardize suicide prevention, intervention, and response strategies across all law enforcement programs.
- **EO 14074, Section 4 - Supporting Officer Wellness:** Use the evidence-informed recommendations provided by the DOJ and Health and Human Services (HHS) to focus on the targeted areas for improvement where support, collaboration, and financial investments are needed for implementation.



Photo: USPP

Recommendation 7: Law Enforcement Training & Education

THE NEED

Effective and relevant ongoing training and education sets the foundation for a high functioning law enforcement program. While significant aspects of Federal law enforcement training are managed by other Federal agencies, current opportunities exist for improvement in the development, delivery, and oversight of basic and ongoing law enforcement training within the purview of DOI Bureaus and OLES. The focus of this recommendation is not on additional training content needed, but on the development, delivery, and oversight of law enforcement training. Suggestions for the development of additional training content can be found within the following recommendation sections of this report: Crisis & Incident Communications, Use of Deadly Force Investigations, Law Enforcement Wellness Program, Law Enforcement Data Management, and Bureau Law Enforcement Jurisdiction & Legal Authority.

Current opportunities for improvement in law enforcement training include the following.

- ▶ **Training Environment:** Mirroring the larger DOI law enforcement workforce, training instructor cadres within the Bureaus are lacking in diversity. This has been identified as a barrier to learning by individuals in groups that are less represented in training classes and the workforce in general, such as female trainees/officers.
- ▶ **Reciprocity:** Since not all DOI basic law enforcement training programs are accredited through the Federal Law Enforcement Accreditation (FLETA) Board, experienced law enforcement officers wishing to transfer to and within DOI law enforcement programs may be required to attend a Bureau specific basic law enforcement training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) even if they have previously completed another Federal Bureau accepted basic law enforcement training program.



THE ASPIRATION

Coordinated and consistent high quality initial and continual law enforcement training programs are implemented across DOI to support ongoing professional development and advance cultural competency, while also being responsive to ever changing legal standards, technology advancements, and societal demands. An inclusive climate within DOI training and education ensures law enforcement officers are prepared to deliver safe, empathetic, culturally sensitive, and constitutionally compliant law enforcement services on public and Tribal lands.

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the health and effectiveness of the law enforcement workforce will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Training Standards and Policy:** Establish minimum training standards across DOI law enforcement programs, which are reinforced by DOI policies requiring adherence to those standards. Address gaps to facilitate transfer of employment between Bureau law enforcement programs.
- **Trainer Diversity:** Promote a diverse DOI trainer workforce.
- **In-Service Training:** Develop meaningful in-service training curriculum through contemporary delivery mechanisms, which reinforces acquired skills and introduces new information, techniques, and tactics necessary for the continuing professional development of law enforcement officers.
- **Inclusive Training Environment:** Create an inclusive climate within the basic and field training environments that values and embraces a range of perspectives, abilities, and contributions within the diverse population of DOI law enforcement officers.





Photo: NPS Ranger

LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Recommendation 8: Law Enforcement Program Standards

THE NEED

Standards for law enforcement programs vary across all the Bureaus. As an example, there are over 200 distinct law enforcement programs being managed independently within DOI and the continuum includes programs being led and managed by a Bureau Director of Law Enforcement and others by a local or regional land manager. There are also variations and disparities in job series, pay, and budgeting in the numerous law enforcement programs. This creates inconsistency in management, funding, chains of command, span of control, on-duty supervision, operational command and control, internal affairs oversight and investigations, and disciplinary actions in a profession that requires standardization and consistency. The consequences of this include erosion of public trust, inconsistent policy and oversight, and the degradation of the individual and collective mental health, wellness and safety of the DOI law enforcement workforce.

The input received during the LETF outreach process revealed that officers believe law enforcement operations would be enhanced by the development of consistent minimum program standards focused on the core competencies for a leader managing a law enforcement program. Issues raised that support this approach included the following:

- **Lack of Operational Consistency:** In Bureaus where supervision of law enforcement is decentralized, there is significant inconsistency in support (personnel, funding, equipment, technology) and standards for front line operations. There is universal agreement that minimum standards must be established for DOI law enforcement programs and that officers should be supervised by law enforcement supervisors.
- **Inability to Track Costs and Spending:** Dispersed law enforcement operations are funded through a geographically based budget (e.g., park or state), which makes it extremely difficult to accurately assess the true costs of law enforcement operations and track where funds are actually being spent.
- **Funding Challenges:** Dispersed law enforcement operations are supervised by land managers who are balancing budget priorities at a local level. At times, this has resulted in diminished resources for ensuring safe, effective law enforcement operations. (See “Law Enforcement Program Funding & Staffing” recommendation.)
- **Hiring Challenges:** Hiring new law enforcement officers in a decentralized manner often results in redundant efforts, inconsistent communications with potential applicants, and at times, units within a single organization competing with each other for qualified candidates. (See “Recruitment & Retention of a Diverse Law Enforcement Workforce” recommendation.)
- **Inconsistent Accountability:** Decentralized law enforcement operations accentuate the inconsistent processes and organizational structures in place to address officer misconduct, which can lead to a lack of confidence in the workforce that all officers are treated equally and a lack of trust from the public that law enforcement officers are held accountable.

- **Lack of Supervisory Knowledge:** Many land managers who supervise law enforcement personnel are admittedly unaware of critical law enforcement policies and practices. These managers identified the top five training priorities for non-commissioned managers as: 1) DOI/Bureau Law Enforcement Policies, 2) Use of Force, 3) Crisis & Incident Communications, 4) Basic Legal Authorities, and 5) Developing law enforcement program priorities and aligning them with Bureau missions.
- **Liability Exposure:** There is an increased risk associated with non-commissioned personnel directly supervising law enforcement programs. Having law enforcement officers supervised by personnel with subject matter expertise can mitigate liability exposure stemming from alleged officer misconduct and negligent supervision. Supervisors currently engaged in law enforcement with extensive knowledge of law enforcement policies, training, and applicable constitutional standards are well suited to instruct officers in a manner that can prevent future protracted litigation.

THE ASPIRATION

Minimum standards for DOI law enforcement programs are established and implemented in all DOI law enforcement and security programs which acknowledges and values the unique challenges and complexities of the law enforcement profession and is consistent with the demands of 21st century policing. These standards will ensure programs are led by managers with the appropriate competencies and grade level, who have the authority to manage the operations of DOI law enforcement programs. This will effectively prioritize public safety and officer wellness, maintain accountability within the organization, facilitate fair and consistent application of the law, and ensure effective deployment of resources across geographical boundaries.

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of DOI law enforcement programs will be pursued through the following actions.

- **DOI Law Enforcement Minimum Program Standards:** Define the minimum standards that constitute a DOI law enforcement program based on the purpose and required functions of DOI law enforcement.
- **Public Safety Plan:** Identify resources, needs, and opportunities to deliver effective law enforcement services to the visitors and communities served by DOI. Develop and implement an annual plan within each law enforcement program to protect people and resources on the lands within each Bureau's area of responsibility.
- **Law Enforcement Program Budget Tracking:** For law enforcement programs where a dedicated law enforcement budget does not currently exist, implement a budget tracking mechanism that provides visibility into law enforcement-related costs and allocated funding. Annually track program costs and funding at a Bureau level to ensure adequate support for all law enforcement operations.

- **Accountability:** Establish a consistent approach to Internal Affairs investigations and disciplinary procedures within each law enforcement program to ensure officers are treated fairly, and appropriate discipline is consistently applied, regardless of their position or geographical location.

Recommendation 9: Land Mobile Radios & Interoperability

THE NEED

Law enforcement officers within DOI Bureaus rely heavily on field communications, such as land mobile radios (LMR), to serve the public, maintain officer safety, pass critical information, collect data, and maintain situational awareness throughout the United States and its territories in service of the missions of each Bureau. There are several substantial challenges, including significant costs, inherent in the current field communications system which have detrimental impacts on individual officers and the accomplishment of their law enforcement duties.

- **Insufficient Coverage:** Many radio systems in use today lack sufficient coverage, creating “no service areas,” within DOI managed lands. Operations in remote locations often patrolled by a single officer, leave that individual disconnected from current networks thus unable to communicate with dispatch or other officers.
- **Lack of Interoperability:** Many current communications system are insufficient to meet evolving user and partner organization needs and demands for voice, video, and data interoperability. Interoperability is the ability to communicate as needed, on demand, and as authorized at all levels of government and across all public safety disciplines.



Photo: BLM

- **Fragmented Communications Management:** Currently, the Bureaus manage their communications systems independently. The pace of change and demands for interoperability necessitate a move toward centralized planning and strategy with distributed execution of solutions determined by mission requirements. A more collaborative approach will facilitate the integration of new technologies, interoperability solutions, and equitable budgeting as well as the achievement of cost savings on the procurement, operations, and maintenance of systems.
- **Changing Technology:** Advances in wireless technologies over the past decade (from voice-only to voice/video/data) and recent national support for advancing rural, Tribal, and public safety wireless broadband communications efforts present DOI with significant opportunities to improve the level of interoperability and improve the ability of law enforcement officers to work safely and effectively.
- **Impact on Officers:** Insufficient coverage, lack of interoperability, fragmented communications technology management, and the inability to keep pace with changing technologies all result in notable impacts on the safety, mental health and overall wellness of individual law enforcement officers in the field. To feel safe in executing their roles, law enforcement officers need to be confident that when they need assistance, they will receive it in a timely manner. (See “Law Enforcement Wellness Program” recommendation.)

THE ASPIRATION

DOI law enforcement officers in the field have trust and confidence in their communications with local, regional and national dispatch centers, partner organizations, and the public. Law enforcement communications technology ensures effective voice, video, and data transmission and reception of routine and emergency information across all public and Tribal lands served by DOI law enforcement. Effective radio communications, combined with video and data capabilities, increases the physical safety of officers, and those they serve, and reduces the stress resulting from the uncertainty of whether assistance will be available when it is needed.

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of DOI law enforcement programs will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Interagency Agreements:** Establish a Memorandum of Agreement between all DOI Bureaus to share frequencies and provide necessary dispatch services at minimal (or negotiated) cost to other DOI Bureaus.
- **Field Communications Strategic Plan:** Leverage the DOI Field Communications Strategic Plan and the DOI Field Communications Modernization project, to the extent possible, to baseline Bureau infrastructure and requirements. Establish a law enforcement working relationship with the Field Communications Modernization team to identify specific law enforcement needs.

- **Technology:** Leverage, where appropriate, technology (Land Mobile Radio, Mobile Data Terminal, Satellite phone, etc.) to best support mission needs.
- **Policy:** Conduct reviews of new and existing technologies to ensure compliance with DOI policies.

Recommendation 10: Law Enforcement Data Management

THE NEED

As part of the LETF research and outreach process, data requests were made of all the Bureau law enforcement programs regarding staffing levels, budget allocations and tracking, and law enforcement officer disciplinary actions. Bureau responses to these inquiries varied and, in certain cases, no response of value was provided since the data was not being captured or tracked in a findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) manner. The most significant issues in law enforcement data management uncovered in this process include the following.

- **Safety Data Management:** The Safety Management Information System (SMIS) is DOI's authoritative data source for collecting and reporting information on injuries, illnesses, or property damage involving DOI employees, volunteers, contractors, or visitors to DOI facilities. The system is also used to report "near misses" or hazardous conditions, and to report exposures. However, current SMIS database reporting tools do not easily allow for trend analysis among law enforcement officer occupational categories, since there is not a specific field or code to identify workers who meet law enforcement criteria across DOI. Additionally, since SMIS was designed to report incidents as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, it was not set up to include validated fields to report potentially traumatic events and exposures. The SMIS programming team is reviewing system modification to record potentially traumatic events.
- **Personnel Data Management:** Personnel, staffing, and recruiting systems, such as the Federal Personnel and Payroll System and USA Staffing, collect and maintain authoritative data on DOI's workforce and applicants from the hiring process through separation. Yet these systems, which include DOI's in-house exit survey tool and learning management system (DOI Talent), are not integrated in ways that allow for analysis of law enforcement staffing and recruiting trends. The manner in which occupational series are assigned results in mixing law enforcement personnel data with non-law enforcement staff. This makes it difficult to get an accurate count of the current law enforcement workforce and prohibits analysis of the reasons law enforcement officers choose to leave their employment with DOI. For these and other data-related reasons, suitable analyses of law enforcement career lifecycles and staffing trends that would enable evidence-based personnel decisions remain over the horizon.
- **Consistent Law Enforcement Data Management:** Currently there are two systems of record for law enforcement data, Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS) and Incident Management Analysis and Reporting System (IMARS). The existence and use of two separate law enforcement data systems within DOI creates inherent challenges to the management and sharing of crime data, evidence, and information about ongoing investigations. Partitioned systems, unable to communicate

with each other, create exploitable gaps negatively impacting the efficiency and safety of DOI's law enforcement officers and mission accomplishment. Consolidating to a single system would not only mitigate these issues, but also improve the efficiency of training material development as each Bureau would be using the same system. Interagency transfers and law enforcement officer detail assignments would become more efficient as officers would not have to learn a new system when transferring to another program.

- **Increasing Accountability through Data Management:** Decentralized information and data collection systems, such as LEMIS and IMARS, contain information that if reported, shared, or managed appropriately would improve law enforcement transparency and accountability functions. The data in these systems are not treated or managed as valuable enterprise assets or as law enforcement force multipliers. Appropriate law enforcement data management policies and functions - to include transitioning to a single records management system - will enable sharing information and analyses across law enforcement programs that will inform better, more effective, and more efficient law enforcement resource allocation, policies, and oversight, which in turn, build a foundation for improving accountability and increasing public trust in our law enforcement programs.

THE ASPIRATION

Systems of record and associated databases are secure and support law enforcement officers and law enforcement programs with accurate data that meets findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) requirements. Data and information derived from the system is sufficient for appropriate analyses and evidence-based decision making.

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of DOI law enforcement programs will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Safety Management Information System:** Increase the accessibility of law enforcement-specific data within the SMIS database and improve the capabilities of SMIS users to ensure the accuracy of this data.
- **Workforce Data Analysis:** Conduct an analysis of data inconsistencies within workforce data systems and enact changes necessary to accurately identify trends in the law enforcement workforce and increase the collective ability to share data across Bureau law enforcement programs.
- **Law Enforcement Records Management System:** Develop and implement a DOI-wide Law Enforcement Records Management System, which meets the needs of each Bureau's law enforcement program and the needs of its field law enforcement personnel. This will provide better, faster, more accurate data entry and extraction for law enforcement calls, actions, or responses.
- **National Law Enforcement Officer Accountability Database:** Develop policy and process for DOI law enforcement programs to comply with the requirements of the accountability database being developed by the DOJ.

- ▶ **Interior - Management Accountability & Reporting Tool:** Leverage data and information to better understand how grievances and complaints affect law enforcement officer mental health and wellness, employee engagement, and retention while also analyzing, where possible, the situations and factors that lead to complaints and grievances against law enforcement officers (supervisory and non-supervisory) so that those situations and factors can be used for training or education purposes.

Recommendation 11: Bureau Law Enforcement Jurisdiction & Legal Authority

THE NEED

It is critical that DOI's law enforcement and security personnel have the requisite legal authority to fulfill and prioritize their organic missions. Each law enforcement program has its own unique mission, with its own set of challenges, and requires the appropriate jurisdiction and authority to accomplish its mandate. DOI law enforcement officers are often asked to support their partners from Federal, State, Tribal and local law enforcement agencies. Whether it is the Department of Homeland Security requesting support along the southern border or a rural sheriff's office seeking assistance with an arrest warrant, DOI's law enforcement programs are regularly asked to assist with matters that extend beyond DOI's central mission. Yet, DOI law enforcement personnel continue to raise significant questions regarding the precise scope of their legal authority and their ability to provide assistance in various scenarios. Some examples include:

- ▶ **Cross-Designation and Deputation Authority:** Questions persist regarding DOI officers' ability to accept cross-designation and deputation from other law enforcement agencies. The 2017 Interagency Agreement for cross-designation of DOI law enforcement officers memorializes cross-designations of officers within DOI. However, DOI law enforcement programs are unclear about the extent to which they may accept cross-designation and deputation from other law enforcement agencies.
- ▶ **State Arrest Authority, Agreements, and Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs):** Agreements and MOUs memorialize DOI's working relationships with state and local law enforcement entities throughout the country. While each agreement will necessarily depend on specific local issues (e.g., delegated state arrest authority), some nationwide issues remain.
- ▶ **Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Security Response Force (SRF):** BOR recognizes its limited law enforcement authority under 43 U.S.C. § 373b, but further analysis is needed regarding the extent to which it may utilize its SRF at various facilities to accomplish its mission.
- ▶ **BOR Reimbursable Service Contracts:** Bureaus with law enforcement programs provide law enforcement capabilities at BOR facilities through reimbursable service contracts. Issues have been raised concerning the legal sufficiency of these contracts, including questions regarding day-to-day supervision, governing policies, and job performance appraisals.



Photo: NPS Rangers & U.S. Coast Guard

- ▶ **National Park Service’s (NPS) Cooperation with Other Law Enforcement Agencies:** 54 U.S.C. § 102701 et seq. authorizes NPS law enforcement to cooperate with Federal, State, and local agencies within units of the National Park System in certain scenarios. 54 U.S.C. § 102711 further permits limited assistance outside the National Park System in certain emergency law enforcement situations. While NPS policy provides significant guidance on the precise parameters of such cooperation, officers continue to have questions regarding their ability to provide support in specific circumstances.
- ▶ **Legal Authorities Following Officer-Involved Shootings and Other Significant Incidents:** It is critical to have clear understanding of roles and responsibilities of the various law enforcement entities that have jurisdiction following officer-involved shootings and other significant incidents. Defining these cooperative arrangements through an MOU in advance of such incidents will help prevent unwarranted delays in both criminal and administrative investigations.



Photo: BOR SRF

THE ASPIRATION

All DOI law enforcement and security programs have the requisite legal authority to fulfill their organic mission. DOI law enforcement officers and Bureau of Reclamation Security Response Force personnel have a clear understanding of their jurisdiction, authorities, and duties. DOI law enforcement programs maintain strong working relationships with their partners at the Federal, State, Tribal and local level, and are able to provide law enforcement support when it is within their legal authority to do so and is consistent with their overall mission.

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of DOI law enforcement programs will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Gaps in Legal Authority:** Collaborate across Bureau law enforcement programs, OLES, and the Office of the Solicitor to identify any gaps in legal authority and, if necessary, propose new legislation or regulations to address any deficiencies.
- **Cross-Designation:** Ensure DOI law enforcement officers have the requisite ability to accept cross-designation and deputation from other law enforcement agencies.
- **Partnering Agreements:** Examine interagency agreements, MOUs, and other agreements to allow DOI officers to partner with other Bureaus, as well as Federal, State, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies, when appropriate, ensuring DOI's organic mission is prioritized.
- **BOR Law Enforcement Need and Authorities:** Determine appropriate authorities and oversight for BOR to ensure effective support and management of its Security Response Force.
- **Guidance:** Assist each Bureau law enforcement program with the creation of policies, procedures, and guidance based on their respective legal authority.
- **Training:** Educate DOI law enforcement officers on the scope of their legal powers so they have a clear understanding of their duties and consistently act within the parameters of their authority.

Recommendation 12: OLES Role & Authority

THE NEED

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, then Secretary of the Interior issued Secretarial Order 3234, which established OLES to provide leadership, coordination, policy guidance, and oversight to DOI's law enforcement, security, and intelligence programs and functions. This order was replaced by Departmental Manual (DM) Series 02-Organization (Part 112, Chapter 17) and Series 03-Delegation (Part 212, Chapter 17), which established the functions, organization, and authorities of OLES. These policies were last updated in 2010 and 2009, respectively, and require significant updates to reflect contemporary roles and responsibilities with a particular focus on the organization and authorities that best support the Bureau law enforcement programs and the officers.

Since its founding and over time, OLES' sometimes detached and intermittent approach to this critical role has resulted in a lack of standardization, consistency, accountability, and trust. This was prominently reflected in the 2002 Office of Inspector General (OIG) Report entitled "Disquieting State of Disorder" that made recommendations to enhance the management, efficiency, and coordination of the law enforcement programs across the DOI. The current synergy between OLES and the Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement (chartered as the Board of Advisors) is founded on coordination, collaboration, and mutual aspirations focused on public transparency & accountability, a healthy and effective workforce, and DOI & Bureau law enforcement program effectiveness. This Board of Advisors is aptly positioned to create a genuine consortium that leads the necessary changes and stewards the progress toward these aspirations.

The input received during the LETF research and outreach process pointed to several dynamics that suggest a need for more consistent DOI oversight and coordination, governance, and inclusion. These dynamics and their impacts are described below.

- **Inconsistent Oversight and Coordination:** OLES was established purposefully with the intent to professionalize, strengthen, and support law enforcement programs and their officers. However, the inconsistent approach to this role and its functions, combined with the de-centralized nature of DOI's law enforcement programs, has created alignment challenges, which require a recalibration of the appropriate governance, authorities, internal controls, respect, and trust to address them.
- **Lack of a Standardized Policy Development Process:** OLES has not been consistent in implementing a transparent and accountable policy development process that includes and leverages the unique mission and strength of each Bureau law enforcement program. The spirit and intent of such a process would be to develop mandatory minimum standards to ensure consistent governance and guidance and allow the Bureaus the flexibility to operationalize their policies to meet their unique law enforcement missions.
- **Lack of an Enterprise Law Enforcement Records Management System (RMS):** Numerous deficiencies have been identified and cited in the 2002 OIG Report, Secretarial Directives, as well as in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Congressional reviews. DOI currently operates and funds two disparate records management systems that do not share information and have certain redundant and certain unique functionalities. Neither system meets all of the operational, information technology

security, and reporting requirements necessary to ensure public and workforce safety, trust, transparency, and accountability, and connectivity with appropriate external systems. (See “Data Management” recommendation.)

- **Lack of Bureau Subject Matter Expertise:** When OLES was initially established, each Bureau assigned a permanent detailee to OLES to ensure relevant and contemporary subject matter expertise, resulting in a more inclusive environment where Bureau perspectives were ever-present, valued, and reflected. These languished detail positions have created a void and an insular perspective and approach to OLES’ purpose and mission.
- **Lack of Standardized DOI Support:** Bureaus have organically and independently developed internal resources (Peer Support, Critical Incident Stress Management, etc.) and established relevant DOI-level connections for a variety of services and support (i.e., Solicitor, Human Resources, Employee Labor Law, etc.). This has resulted in disparate and inconsistent support and advice.
- **Limited Communications:** OLES and DOI strive to assist Bureau programs through transparent communication intended to support when challenged and amplify when thriving. These communications require prioritization and integration into the day-to-day law enforcement mission of DOI. Visible and efficient communication methods and mechanisms need to be designed with equity, inclusivity, and the stakeholder (internal and external) in mind to promote respect and trust.
- **Funding Challenges:** Approximately 85% of the overall operating budget for OLES comes from the Working Capital Fund, which is funded by the Bureaus. At times, this results in a lack of prioritization of resources to ensure OLES is staffed and capable of adequately supporting Bureau law enforcement programs, its officers, and DOI’s interests.

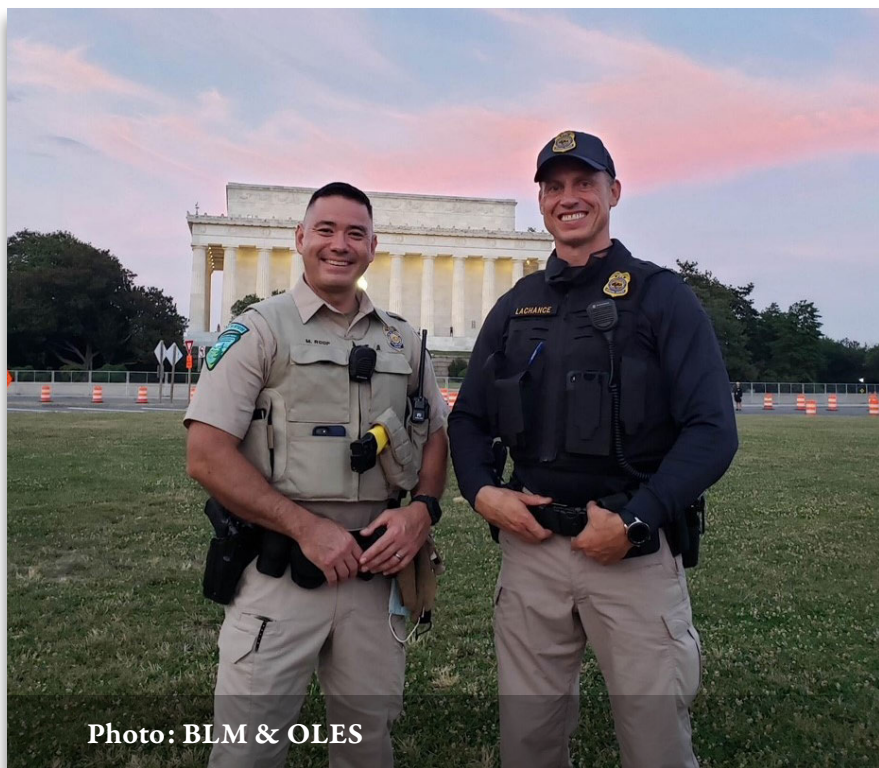


Photo: BLM & OLES

THE ASPIRATION

DOI prioritizes and invests in law enforcement to enhance public trust, transparency, and accountability, promote a healthy and effective law enforcement workforce, and enhance DOI and Bureau law enforcement program effectiveness. OLES is appropriately structured, adequately staffed and funded, and possesses and utilizes the requisite authorities to support field law enforcement, intelligence, and security programs and operations. OLES provides informed effective direction, oversight, and guidance while catalyzing collaboration across Bureau law enforcement programs to ensure consistency where it is needed and allow for flexibility when appropriate and most effective.

THE PATH

Opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of DOI law enforcement programs will be pursued through the following actions.

- **Policy and Governance:** Update the OLES Mission, Vision, and Values Statement, 112 DM 17 (OLES Organization), and 212 DM 17 (OLES Delegation). Define a DOI law enforcement program and set minimum standards. Further define the authority and leadership role of the Board of Advisors as a consortium. Charter relevant Working Groups and establish formal Standard Operating Procedures regarding processes (such as policy development). Develop processes and tracking mechanisms to assess, ensure compliance, and support program success.
- **OLES Support:** Identify opportunities to standardize support of Bureau law enforcement programs and implement as appropriate.
- **Access to DOI Resources:** Update the 2018 DOI Intra-Agency Coordination Plan for Emergency Law Enforcement Assistance Resources or create a new plan to leverage Bureau and DOI resources to ensure broader access (such as Peer Support, Internal Affairs, etc.).
- **OLES Staffing and Funding:** After identifying the role and responsibility of OLES, conduct a staffing and funding analysis to determine the adequate staffing and funding for its mission. This should include supporting the potential change in Bureau staffing commensurate with associated requirements.
- **Management of Law Enforcement Records Management System:** Ensure RMS meets the following criteria:
 - ◆ Meets OMB, DOI, and Bureau/field requirements and needs;
 - ◆ Serves as the authoritative system of record for DOI;
 - ◆ Complies with all information technology security requirements;
 - ◆ Requires all Bureaus with law enforcement programs to participate;
 - ◆ Provides the required advanced functionality and security; and
 - ◆ Enhances transparency and accountability.



Photo: USPP

TURNING ASPIRATION INTO ACTION

Implementation Approach

This report identifies potential investment opportunities that will help to inform the Federal budget development process, but it is not a budget document and does not imply approval of any specific action or investment. All activities and recommendations included in this report are subject to resource constraints and weighing of priorities as part of the annual budget formulation process, as well as the availability of appropriations provided by Congress.

With the adoption of these recommendations by the Secretary of the Interior, the LETF has transitioned into the implementation phase. This includes:

- Development of an action plan implemented at the Bureau and DOI levels. This action plan's timeline guides the sequence of actions to optimize their efficiency and effectiveness.
- Development of performance metrics and a process to track and communicate progress across all law enforcement programs.
- Building an effective consortium of internal and external stakeholders critical to successful implementation of LETF recommendations.

The following intentions will guide the implementation process for LETF recommendations.

- Regular communication across Bureaus, within law enforcement programs, with appropriate union representation, and with partner agencies and the public will be ongoing throughout implementation.
- Collaboration will be broadly encouraged to leverage expertise and resources across law enforcement programs. This will allow for flexibility in implementation when the uniqueness of mission, geography, and operational circumstances necessitate it.
- A consortium approach will be pursued when consistency is critical, resource needs exceed the capacity of individual programs, and overarching outcomes benefit all stakeholders. This will require programs to expand their concern and attention beyond their immediate organizational boundaries.

A consortium consisting of OLES, the Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement, and appropriate non-law enforcement managers and subject matter experts will provide oversight of the implementation process and the Bureau representatives on the LETF Working Group will act as liaisons between DOI and their Bureau law enforcement program throughout implementation.

Accomplishments To Date

During the course of the Law Enforcement Task Force's actions were being taken across the DOI and its Bureaus to improve the daily operations of all DOI law enforcement programs. Actions and accomplishments relevant to the focus areas of this Task Force are described below.

Public Trust in DOI Law Enforcement

- ▶ DOI's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan included a strategic goal entitled "Serve and Honor the Public Trust" focused on both strengthening trust with the public and within the workforce. The Law Enforcement Task Force is reflected and specifically mentioned in the following strategic objectives contained within the Plan:
 - ◆ There is Confidence and Satisfaction in the U.S. Department of the Interior.
 - ◆ The U.S. Department of the Interior Workforce is Diverse, Safe, Engaged, and Committed to the Mission.
- ▶ DOI and OLES updated its public webpage to ensure all DOI law enforcement policies are publicly available and accessible.
- ▶ DOI updated its BWC policy in October 2022 and 83% of the law enforcement programs have fully implemented the use of BWCs. The remaining program is in the acquisition process to implement BWCs.
- ▶ DOI updated its Use of Force policy in October 2022, which meets or exceeds the DOJ's policy and includes: duty to intervene, de-escalation, reporting requirements, and prohibited use of chokeholds and carotid restraints.
- ▶ DOI created a "Knock and Announce" policy for execution of a warrant.
- ▶ NPS established an Office of Public Trust to strengthen public trust and legitimacy through improved availability, timeliness, and transparency of information about law enforcement incidents in the NPS.
- ▶ DOI expedited the public release of BWC footage from an officer involved shooting in March 2023 via a community briefing video. The briefing was released 16 days after the incident, meeting the aspirational intent of 446 DM 41.
- ▶ DOI established a new policy in July 2023 regarding Expedited Public Release of Body Worn Camera and Vehicle Mounted Camera Video Footage.
- ▶ A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the BIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was updated to provide effective law enforcement services on Tribal lands, and to establish jurisdictional guidelines, and protocols for officer involved shootings and in-custody deaths.

Healthy & Effective Law Enforcement Workforce

- DOI created a Mental Health and Wellness Pocket Guide, also available to its law enforcement officers via a safety app, which addresses Stress Control & Resilience, Suicide Awareness, Health & Well-Being, and Wellness Resources.
- The Office of the Secretary FY 2024 President's Budget request included funding for a Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator.
- DOI's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contract was updated to offer services to seasonal law enforcement officers and extends services 6 months past separation/retirement.
- DOI's SMIS is undergoing an evaluation. Proposed changes would provide a mechanism for all DOI employees to document Potentially Traumatic Event exposure.
- The NPS hired a full-time mental health and wellness (MHW) coordinator. The NPS MHW program focuses on the NPS' law enforcement first responder community and law enforcement dispatchers. The MHW program has built a peer support platform and is championing local resources around the country. MHW resources include 4 volunteers that are mental health clinicians, 55 peer support specialists (projected to be over 100 peer support specialists by the end of 2023) and MHW training that has been incorporated into the basic law enforcement training at FLETC.
- In 2022, the NPS centralized the hiring process for permanent law enforcement positions. As part of this move, the National Staffing Office became solely responsible for all hiring actions for GL-0025-5/7/9 Protection Rangers. This action ensured that the National Park Service can effectively recruit locally and nationally to provide for an appropriately trained, skilled, and diverse workforce. This further fulfills the NPS' mandated obligations to provide law enforcement personnel with required training and to better support efforts to recruit, hire, and retain individuals in critical law enforcement positions.
- The Critical Incident Stress Management policy was signed in 2019 which outlined the program for the FWS. During Covid, a toll-free number and direct peer support email was established to access the peer support program. BLM has been granted access to the peer support toll free number. There are currently 75 peer support specialists from all FWS disciplines and a full time MHW. This position monitors the toll-free number and a peer support email. This position coordinates deployments, the basic peer support training, monitors the annual law enforcement/fire mental wellness checks, and provides annual law enforcement training per policy.
- BIA-OJS implemented Resiliency ECHO, an 8-week program in resiliency, open to all law enforcement and correctional officers and other OJS team members. Participants gain valuable knowledge and practical skills to address self-care, relationships, job difficulties, administrative stress, and burnout prevention. The course is co-facilitated by experts in psychology, psychiatry, chronic pain, social work, nursing and wellness coaching.

DOI Law Enforcement Program Effectiveness

- ▶ Office of the Solicitor hired a first-of-its-kind Senior Counsel for Law Enforcement Policy and Litigation to enhance subject matter and legal expertise.
- ▶ DOI received \$11M in FY 2023 to implement an enterprise Law Enforcement RMS to enhance reporting fidelity, accuracy, and efficiency, improve transparency and increase public trust.
- ▶ DOI LETF provided input into the FLETC Land Management Police Training (LMPT) curriculum review to ensure critical training concepts such as duty to intervene, de-escalation, Body Worn Camera use and Officer Mental Health and Wellness preparation were functionally incorporated into the proposed FLETC LMPT Training Program revisions.
- ▶ BIA formed the Missing and Murdered Unit to investigate cases of Missing & Murdered Indigenous People and opened 17 offices across the United States. The MMU created an intake process and reporting protocols while collaborating with other Federal, State and Tribal agencies on cold cases and acute incidents.
- ▶ DOI will obligate \$1.5M to conduct comprehensive staffing analyses of its law enforcement programs in FY 2024.



Photo: DOI LE Programs

LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE STAFF

DOI's Law Enforcement Task Force was led by Deputy Secretary Tommy Beaudreau. The Office of the Secretary, in collaboration with Bureaus and Offices, provided administrative services, funds, facilities, staff, equipment, and other support services as necessary for the Task Force to carry out its mission:

Deputy Secretary of the Interior	Tommy Beaudreau
Policy, Management and Budget (PMB)	Joan Mooney , Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric Werwa , Deputy Assistant Secretary
Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Services (PRE)	Lisa Branum , Deputy Assistant Secretary
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SUNDANCE LODGE

Sundance Lodge

public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management for your enjoyment.

- Leave No Trace**
- Plan ahead and prepare
 - Travel and camp on durable surfaces
 - Dispose of waste properly
 - Leave what you find
 - Minimize campfire impacts
 - Respect wildlife
 - Be considerate of other visitors
- BLM also manages all commercial, competitive, and organized groups on public land



RECREATION AREA

APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH & OUTREACH PROCESS

The LETF Working Group convened in September of 2021 to initiate the task force project. The project scoping phase resulted in the development of the “Project Foundation and Scope” document, which describes the need for this effort and the plan for conducting research and outreach to inform evidenced-based recommendations for building and maintaining public trust, supporting officer mental health, wellness and safety, and increasing law enforcement program effectiveness.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Over a six-month period, the LETF engaged in significant internal and external outreach efforts to ensure the broadest possible perspective on issues related to law enforcement within DOI. Stakeholder input was gathered through the following strategies.

Internal Stakeholder Input

- Survey - Law Enforcement Officers: 1488 responses (46% of the 3,200 DOI law enforcement officers)
- Survey - Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement (BDLE) and law enforcement subject matter experts: Responses from every BDLE and Training, Internal Affairs, and Criminal Investigations
- Survey - Land Managers supervising law enforcement programs: 87 responses from 4 Bureaus

External Stakeholder Input

- Federal Register Notice: 22 public comments received
- 12 Public Listening Sessions: 158 individuals participated
- Survey - Public Satisfaction: 60 responses
- Survey - Cooperating Law Enforcement Agencies: 50 responses

RESEARCH & DATA COLLECTION

In addition to the qualitative data generated by the LETF outreach process, quantitative data and information internal and external to DOI also informed the findings of the research and outreach process. Research was conducted using the following data sources.

- **Internal DOI data and information** including existing DOI and Bureau-level policies, operational documents, and data systems.
- **Model law enforcement organizations** situated and resourced in a similar manner to DOI that are making visible progress in increasing trust with the communities they serve, supporting the overall well-being of their workforces, and developing policies that support these outcomes.
- **Partner organizations and agencies** such as the Office of Personnel Management to better understand law enforcement hiring trends and hiring authorities; the FBI and the DOJ regarding policies for use of and investigating uses of force; and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to investigate data and reports on law enforcement mental health, wellness, and workplace injuries; as well as and Tribal law enforcement organizations.
- **External data and information** on overarching societal trends applicable to law enforcement.

APPENDIX 2: OUTREACH FINDINGS

The findings of the LETF outreach process suggest that many aspects of DOI’s law enforcement programs are effective at meeting the mission intention of their Bureaus and in supporting the people who serve in law enforcement roles. In alignment with the purpose of the LETF, this report focuses on the areas where the findings suggest potential improvements in building and maintaining public trust, supporting officer mental health, wellness, and safety, and increasing law enforcement program effectiveness.

PUBLIC TRUST IN DOI LAW ENFORCEMENT

The majority of findings from the LETF outreach efforts related to increasing public trust in DOI law enforcement fell into three areas: public perception, transparency and accountability, and the use of force. Summaries of these findings are described below.

Public Perception

Although the public’s perception of law enforcement in general has become increasingly negative over time, the public’s view of DOI law enforcement officers is generally more favorable as most participants of LETF public listening sessions and surveys stated that their direct

engagement with DOI law enforcement officers was professional and respectful. However, two themes emerged from the outreach process related to public perception that point to areas for improvement.

- Understaffing in DOI law enforcement programs has resulted in a lack of timely response to incidents, an inability to deter or discourage negative or criminal actions, and a perception that law enforcement is not available when needed.
- The demographics of the DOI law enforcement workforce do not generally reflect the diversity of the populations they serve.

Specific findings related to these themes included the following:

- 55% of DOI law enforcement officers reported that staffing levels have had a major impact on visitor and community safety.
- Public comments acknowledged the connection between a lack of officers and the increasing challenge of addressing public safety issues and quality of life crime. Increasing the presence of law enforcement on public lands was identified by public survey respondents as a top priority. The majority of public respondents indicated their direct engagement with DOI law enforcement personnel was professional and they felt safe seeking assistance from them.
- 70% of partner organizations noted the importance of the DOI prioritizing law enforcement officer staffing levels. Partners identified inadequate staffing as a primary challenge they also face.
- Most land managers believe there is a need to strengthen relationships between their law enforcement programs and their local communities but competing resources, lack of staffing, and workload hinder these efforts.
- Six of seven Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement identified “ensuring appropriate staffing levels” as one of their top 5 priorities.
- 50% of land managers indicated the demographics of their Bureau’s law enforcement workforce does not reflect the communities they serve.
- 35% of DOI law enforcement officers believe the current diversity of the law enforcement ranks has a positive impact on the communities they serve and 14% of law enforcement officers believe it has a negative impact.
- All Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement identified “recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce” as one of their top 5 priorities.

Transparency and Accountability

Transparency is critical for building and maintaining trust in law enforcement. Three primary issues repeatedly surfaced during outreach efforts related to increased transparency.

- The timeliness of DOI communication with the public during and after a critical incident is often lacking, which results in other information sources controlling the narrative of an event.

- Bureau law enforcement programs are unable to respond to public information requests in a timely manner, further contributing to claims of lack of transparency.
- There is a lack of affirmative communication about the activities of DOI law enforcement programs. This vacuum is often filled by the generalized negative perception of law enforcement being applied to DOI personnel and programs.

The public demand for increased accountability from law enforcement organizations continues to rise. Two critical arenas for action to increase the accountability of law enforcement personnel and programs were identified.

- As the use of body worn cameras continues to increase to reach full implementation across DOI law enforcement programs, the development of consistent standards for the release of body worn camera footage is necessary.
- While the majority of law enforcement officers believe in the integrity of their use of force investigation process, the lack of transparency to the public leads to perceptions of a lack of accountability.

Specific findings related to transparency and accountability included the following:

- 85% of DOI law enforcement officers believe it is critically important that the DOI develops timely public communications to increase transparency regarding highly publicized law enforcement issues, but 33% are not confident this is taking place now. There is significant agreement across the Bureaus and the public that DOI is behind industry standards relative to crisis communications.
- 30% of land managers cited internal barriers, such as layers of review and approval, within their Bureaus and DOI as consistently inhibiting transparency with the public. Land managers believe there is a lack of consistency in managing internal and external communications during and after critical incidents, which may result from a lack of training for all involved in this process.
- 20% of DOI law enforcement officers feel their law enforcement program is rarely or never transparent during use of force investigations. 13% of DOI law enforcement officers are not confident that their program's policies regarding use of force investigations will lead to an impartial finding.
- 59% of DOI law enforcement officers believe employees are always or often held accountable for misconduct.
- 17% of land managers do not believe they have the resources to consistently ensure impartial investigations into a law enforcement officer's actions and 26% do not know if the resources are available.

Use of Force

Many factors contribute to a law enforcement officer's ability to determine the need for and apply the appropriate level of force in a law enforcement encounter. Input from the outreach process identified the following dynamics.

- Several aspects of workplace culture were described that contribute to officers' fear of retribution if they intervene during an incident involving excessive use of force.
- Recurring in-person refresher training, to include scenario-based methods and de-escalation tactics and techniques, can be strengthened to ensure relevant information and legal updates are received by all law enforcement officers.

Specific findings related to use of force included the following:

- 24% of DOI law enforcement officers stated they have some or significant fear of retribution if they intervene during an excessive use of force.
- Although all Bureau law enforcement programs provide de-escalation training, 22% of DOI law enforcement officers were unaware of this training.

HEALTHY & EFFECTIVE DOI LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKFORCE

The DOI Law Enforcement Officer Survey provided a comprehensive picture of the current state of officer mental health, wellness, and safety across DOI law enforcement programs.

Supporting Law Enforcement Officer Mental Health

The following issues related to the mental health of DOI law enforcement officers, and the impact on the overall health of the workforce, were identified in the law enforcement workforce survey.

- The majority of DOI law enforcement officers have experienced potentially traumatic events while on the job and half of those individuals feel it has negatively impacted their mental health.
- Lack of adequate staffing was cited as one of the primary contributors to stress and mental health concerns across the law enforcement workforce.
- Mental health resources provided by the DOI are generally not viewed as effective by the law enforcement workforce.
- There is still a stigma in the workplace that impacts individuals from reporting some level of psychological distress.
- Many land managers who supervise law enforcement programs are concerned about the mental health of their employees.

Specific findings related to officer mental health included the following:

- 54% of DOI law enforcement officers said staffing levels at their worksite had a major impact on their mental health. An additional 28% said it had some impact.
- 13% of DOI law enforcement officers said their mental health while performing their job is poor.
- 44% of DOI law enforcement officers said they have had a concern with their mental health at least once in the last six months.
- 44% of DOI law enforcement officers do not feel comfortable disclosing mental health issues to their law enforcement program.
- 51% of DOI law enforcement officers stated they engage in one or more of the following as a response to job-related stress: excessive consumption of alcohol, poor dietary tendencies, reduced exercise frequency, anger, or sleeplessness.
- 50% of DOI law enforcement officers are not comfortable using mental health resources. 69% of DOI law enforcement officers believe the resources available within their Bureaus are not useful.
- 50% of DOI law enforcement officers who have used DOI's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) did not find it helpful. The main reasons given for this assessment included a lack of counselors who understand law enforcement specific issues, and services that were not provided in a timely manner.
- 28% of DOI law enforcement officers feel their training has not prepared them to effectively manage their mental health.
- Most DOI law enforcement programs do not engage in pre-employment psychological screening as part of the hiring process.
- There is a need for consistent mechanisms within DOI for establishing baselines and monitoring a law enforcement officer's health and wellness over the course of their career.
- Only two of the Bureaus have a Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response Program for their employees.
- Five of the seven Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement identified "ensuring the appropriate resources and standards necessary for a healthy career in DOI, which support the officer's health, wellness, resilience, and safety" as one of their top 5 priorities.

Supporting Law Enforcement Officer Physical Health and Safety

The survey of the law enforcement workforce pointed to officer safety and overall wellness as significant concerns across the DOI law enforcement programs. Key findings in this arena include the following:

- Half of the law enforcement workforce feels their overall wellness has decreased since joining their law enforcement program.
- A significant percentage of the DOI law enforcement workforce stated their feelings regarding officer safety have made them rethink a career in law enforcement.

- Increased law enforcement staffing is viewed by the law enforcement workforce as the primary means to increase officer safety.

Specific findings related to officer physical health and safety included the following:

- 34% of DOI law enforcement officers feel their law enforcement program's ongoing medical standards program is minimally effective or ineffective at determining their medical qualification.
- 43% of DOI law enforcement officers are not confident their law enforcement program leadership will appropriately utilize their medical information in making decisions about their duty status.
- DOI law enforcement officers identified the top priorities for resources needed to support their physical health and wellness. These included: 1) increased staffing to facilitate work-life balance and shared workloads, 2) physical training time during work shifts, 3) physical health resources (e.g., gyms), 4) training standards that match current job demands, and 5) wellness program offerings.
- 43% of DOI law enforcement officers stated their feelings regarding officer safety have made them rethink a career in law enforcement. Reasons given included: 1) understaffing leads to increased duties, 2) negative public perception of law enforcement decreases officer safety, 3) lack of support from management/leadership, and 4) lack of boundaries between work and personal life.
- 64% of DOI law enforcement officers said staffing levels at their worksite had a major impact on officer safety. An additional 27% said it had some impact.
- DOI law enforcement officers identified the top priorities for resources needed to support their safety. These included: 1) increased staffing (41%), 2) improved radio and dispatch operations (10%), 3) improved training (9%), and 4) updated equipment and technology resources (6%).

DOI LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Feedback received from the LETF outreach process regarding law enforcement program effectiveness fell into three main categories: policy effectiveness, organizational environment, and supporting the career of law enforcement officers from recruitment to retirement.

Policy Effectiveness

Although the majority of feedback from the law enforcement workforce about DOI and Bureau level policy was positive, several opportunities for improvement were apparent.

- Communication about policy updates is not reaching the entire law enforcement workforce.

- There is a need to assess law enforcement program use of force policies to ensure they support the implementation of an impartial investigatory process that can render independent and credible findings.
- A portion of the law enforcement workforce believes the policies of their law enforcement program do not ensure consistent accountability for law enforcement officers' actions.

Specific findings related to policy effectiveness included the following:

- 14% of DOI law enforcement officers are not confident that their program's use of force policies are updated regularly.
- 12% of DOI law enforcement officers feel that their law enforcement program's policies do not make them more effective at their job.
- 10% of DOI law enforcement officers state they are not informed on updates to law enforcement policy.
- 10% of DOI law enforcement officers state that the policies they need to do their jobs are not easy to find.

Organizational Environment

Issues of organizational structure and program standards surfaced across the range of audiences responding to LETF outreach efforts. Key themes in this feedback included the following.

- In programs where Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement do not directly supervise all law enforcement officers, they lack visibility and oversight of day-to-day operations.
- Many non-law enforcement managers who supervise law enforcement personnel are unaware of critical law enforcement policies and practices.
- Increased collaboration is needed between law enforcement program leadership and local land managers in planning for and supporting law enforcement operations.
- Many law enforcement partner organizations want more direct engagement and collaboration with DOI law enforcement programs.

Specific findings related to organizational environment included the following:

- 39% of DOI law enforcement officers feel the organizational reporting structure of their law enforcement program should be changed to increase effectiveness.
- 74% of land managers reported a lack of adequate support from DOI for their programs including community outreach, resource protection, funding, and staffing.
- 86% of partner organizations have not been involved in serious incident response planning with their local DOI law enforcement counterparts.
- 74% of partner organizations stated the most desirable outcome of partnering with DOI law enforcement programs is interoperability between agencies.



Photo: USPP

Law Enforcement Officer Career: Recruitment to Retirement

The LETF outreach efforts identified a series of factors which significantly influence the ability of DOI law enforcement programs to recruit and retain a talented and diverse workforce.

- Competitive and equitable compensation, availability of appropriate training, equipment and facilities, and effective supervision are foundational to the retention of a productive law enforcement workforce.
- DOI law enforcement programs often find it difficult to compete with other law enforcement organizations in recruiting new officers.
- There is general agreement about the need to streamline the hiring process across all DOI law enforcement programs.
- In order to diversify DOI law enforcement ranks, attention needs to be paid to making both the academy and field training and the daily work environment increasingly equitable and inclusive.

Specific findings related to a law enforcement officer's career included the following:

- Pay parity does not exist across all DOI law enforcement programs.
- Compensation packages within DOI are not competitive with other law enforcement organizations.
- 39% of DOI law enforcement officers feels their law enforcement program focuses little effort on building or retaining a diverse workforce.
- All Bureaus cited the length of time to complete background investigations as an impediment to filling positions in a timely manner.
- The majority of Bureau training managers believe that basic training/academy courses are only somewhat effective at preparing law enforcement officers for the expectations of 21st century policing.
- Four of the seven law enforcement programs do not have an active mentoring program.
- Understaffing limits the ability of law enforcement personnel to attend training which leads to stale skills and knowledge.
- Five of the seven Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement identified “development of high quality basic and ongoing training for law enforcement officers” as one of their top 5 priorities.

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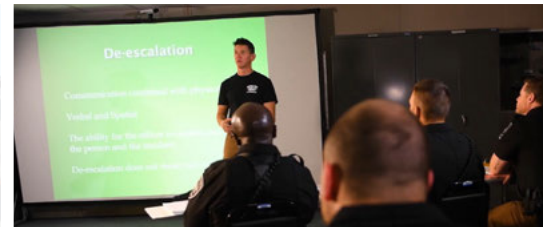
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