

Apex Police Department Three-Year Strategic DIB Action Plan

Updated April 2022

A lot has happened with APD during this fiscal year (June 2021-July 2022). Chief Armstrong began his tenure leading the department, and the department started an internal review in search of areas of strength and areas for improvement and growth.

A significant part of that process is seeking input from staff, including the following:

- Chief Armstrong met with first-line supervisors (corporals and sergeants) to hear directly from them about what is needed inside the department.
- Monthly command staff meetings have been opened for everyone in the organization to attend and participate.
- Questionnaires were administered to seek input from all staff on promotional processes, internal committees, community outreach initiatives, internal communication processes, career progression and career succession.
- Chief Armstrong continues to meet with all staff members one-on-one to seek their insight and learn what people have experienced inside the department. Themes from these discussions include:
 - Fair treatment and processes from command staff
 - Better communication internally, with more detailed explanation of expectations in selection processes
 - Better communication of what specialized units is doing
 - Increased flexibility from supervisors
 - Comparable recognition of civilian staff and sworn officers
 - More concerted effort to create unity among staff

The following is a breakdown of the work in progress, changes on the horizon, and where the department is headed going forward. In addition, we will highlight three focus areas – **Policies, Personnel, and Programs**.

Policies

As a CALEA accredited organization, policies direct our daily activities in how we go about accomplishing our goals and objectives. Our policy system is designed to guide our staff to success. We have approximately 166 policies at APD. We are committed to ensuring that our policies are current, consistent with best practices, minimize the potential for bias, and promote inclusivity.

We currently have over fifty policies in creation or revision. Policy change can result from modifications to state law, CALEA accreditation standards, and internal reviews designed to identify recommended areas of improvement for the department. Challenges associated with promotional practices, discipline, policy enforcement, and equitable policing were highlighted for review. We compare them with national best practices, 21st-century policing, and current reform strategies. In addition, we are working with the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to ensure our policies and processes consider the diversity of the community we serve, are applied equitably, and make anyone who lives, works, or visits our community feel safe and welcomed. Apex Police Department written directives are categorized by a

numerical system designed to group similar policies within a specific numerical category. Apex Police Department Policies can be viewed at the [Written Directives page](#) on our website.

Current policy directives under revision and review include:

- **Promotional Procedures and Process** GO 203
 - Determine ways to build more confidence in the way these processes are implemented
 - Add metrics like community policing into the policy as something that will be considered when evaluating performance
 - Review industry standards and best practices to ensure we are consistent in our approach to identify top candidates
 - Look at ways to add more input from staff on the process
- **Appearance and Uniform regulations** GO 306
 - Review things that might be discriminatory and do not promote racial and ethnic inclusion
- **Disciplinary Procedures and Process** GO 310
 - Create a discipline matrix as a guide for supervisors to use to ensure equitable application across the organization.
- **Training** GO 501
 - Review how we are vetting the training we are sending staff to
 - Ensuring all staff have equitable access to training
 - Identify strategies to build on bias and diversity training efforts in a way that challenges the status quo and engages staff so that they connect with what is being taught
- **Use of force** GO 701
 - Determine if the policy is current with best practices
 - Ensure guidance is clear on the expectations of when force is to be used
 - Insert de-escalation, specifically, as a component of force
 - Implement new use of force reporting with the addition of benchmark software
- **Traffic enforcement** GO 1002
 - Look for weak points where bias could have a negative impact on how traffic enforcement handled
 - Ensure that we are not putting an unwarranted incentive on traffic enforcement over other activity such as community outreach and engagement

Personnel

We are fortunate to have outstanding staff members that work hard to provide quality service to the Apex community around the clock. Our department seeks to recruit people that are compassionate, honest, trustworthy, with high integrity, and good moral character. Most coveted is someone committed to the service of others.

We strive to hold our staff accountable by appropriate oversight of activity and behavior. This is done through in the field monitoring, random video reviews, formal reviews of community complaints, and proper documentation of corrective actions taken. We also monitor progress to ensure we give credit where credit is due to highlight improvements and a job well done. The addition of the compliance manager will be an important part of oversight and accountability.

The following are a few highlights of staff accomplishments, and an overview of some open positions that are new to APD.

Promotions

- Records Supervisor – S. Metz
 - Civilian supervisor for the Records Unit, which reviews all incident/supplemental reports created by the department
- Communications Manager – J. Neuhaus
 - Civilian Manager for the Emergency 911 Center
- Police Corporal – D. Swope
 - Sworn, first-level, squad/team supervisor who assists the Sergeant
- Police Sergeant – J. Asmussen
 - Sworn, first-level squad/team supervisor

Achievements, Awards, & Professional Development Milestones

- Hometown Hero award by the NC Auto Dealers Association
 - Awarded to Lieutenant T. Parody
- NC Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run Hall of Fame Inductee
 - Captain J. Best was one of only 22 individuals selected and inducted for our state.
- NCSU's Administrative Officer's Management Program (AOMP)- is an intensive educational program designed specifically for public safety supervisors and managers to enhance their professional development.
 - Completed by Sergeant D. Hansen
- NC Criminal Justice Education & Training Standards Certification - The Professional Certificate Program is designed to award "general," "intermediate," and "advanced certifications." The program requires extensive hours of training, and a minimum of four-to-nine years of full-time law enforcement experience, combined with the applicant's level of collegiate education to determine which level of certification is awarded. General certification is the first level of certification awarded, followed by the Intermediate Certification, and culminates with the highest award achievable, the Advanced Law Enforcement Certification.
 - Intermediate Certification awarded to Officer K. Arata and K. Baker
 - Advanced Certification awarded to Officers M. Perez and K. Trisano
- Apex Police Department utilizes a career progression program designed to provide staff with a roadmap detailing how they can advance through our organization. Our plan includes class and time-in-grade career goals to enhance our staff's knowledge, skills, and abilities.
 - Telecommunicator J. Cole progressed from Telecommunicator I to Telecommunicator II
 - Officers J. Fairclough, S. Hawkins, H. Lange, and K. McClaugherty progressed from Police Officer I to Police Officer II
 - Officers K. Baker, S. Myers, and J. Short progressed from Police Officer II to Master Officer
 - Officers J. Antonsen and W. Hotchkiss progressed from Master Officer to Senior Officer
- New Staff
 - Officers: M. Garcia, A. Quesada, C. Jordan, C. Ferraro, and P. Chamberland
 - Telecommunicators: K. Rhoads and A. Johnson
- Retirements
 - Captain A. Stephens, Officer D. Roberson

New Positions

- Crisis Counselor – With the severity of mental health-related issues we deal with, this specialist will be vital in implementing new strategies to best serve our community. In addition to our service efforts, this position will also be tasked with identifying resources for our staff members to ensure we are proactive in supporting staff well-being.
- Compliance Manager – Our department is fostering a new era of policing by creating this position. The Compliance Manager will be a civilian practitioner leading the professional standards unit. This person will be responsible for ensuring that policies are appropriately followed and enforced equally and equitably throughout the organization. In addition, this position will be charged with assessing how we investigate internal and external complaints to ensure consistency with our application of rules and policies. We are focused on enhancing our level of accountability, and this position will be crucial to our continued progress in this area. This position will also be instrumental in creating and serving as department liaison with the Community Advisory Committee.

Programs

The new positions, policies, and initiatives all illustrate our commitment to providing high-quality service not only to the community but also to our staff. A key point to remember is that many of these initiatives are being done for the first time at APD and will take time to fully implement.

- **Reimagining the community policing model**
 - While community policing has been around for years; and APD has shown a commitment to community policing efforts, we are fostering a new era of community policing. Chief Armstrong’s philosophy on community policing is fostering a culture inside the police department where every officer takes ownership for their contribution to community policing. He expects every officer, including himself, to be an ambassador for community policing. Regardless of what unit, division, or assignment an officer may have, the expectation is for everyone to participate and contribute to community policing efforts. To that end, we are building a new platform within our computer system that will allow us to capture our community policing efforts with more detail and accuracy.
 - New tracking codes for staff will capture the various activities that fit into the wide bucket of community policing. The key is for us to be champions of this model and take every opportunity to connect with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders so we can work together to identify ideas and strategies that will enhance the quality of life in Apex. This platform will provide feedback on our efforts and aid the department in establishing benchmarks that staff will strive to meet. This new tool will also be used as an evaluation tool to gauge how officers are showing their commitment to community policing with their daily activities. We will be able to map activity and see where we need to increase our efforts around the community to increase positive interactions and outcomes. We will use our Computer Aided Dispatch software system data to measure individual activity, team/unit activity and area activity.
 - Most people have heard the term, “community policing” but that term means different things to different people. Chief Armstrong serves on the Community Policing committee for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and through that committee, the IACP has adopted an official definition of community policing, and this is the

definition used by the Apex Police Department. Community Policing is a comprehensive philosophy that guides policy and strategy aimed at achieving more effective and efficient crime control, reduced fear of crime, improved quality of life and improved police services and police legitimacy through a proactive reliance of community resources that seeks to change crime causing conditions. This assumes a need for greater accountability of police, elected community leaders, and the community in general, along with greater public share in decision-making through the identification of service needs and priorities and a greater concern for civil rights and liberties.

- **Creating a crisis response model** – APD has benefited from the services of having a victim advocate on staff. With the addition of a crisis counselor (social worker), we will expand our efforts in this area to enhance our crisis response model. There are several programs around the country that we will research and evaluate to gauge what is applicable to Apex. We have already identified some training and conferences the crisis counselor will attend to bring back ideas and strategies for APD’s program. We will also visit other agencies with documented positive results to learn from their successes and failures, so we have a wide net of resources to turn to as we create our model.
- **Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** – With the addition of the Town’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director, APD will work to expand our DEI footprint, both internally and externally. DEI efforts will not be a stand-alone initiative but an overarching initiative that filters throughout the entire department.

Officer Well-being – A course entitled “Practicing Proactive Wellness” was assigned as part of the NC Criminal Justice Education & Training Standards 2022 training curriculum. The course presented students with practical information that, when applied proactively, promotes increased well-being for law enforcement officers. Executive Staff continues to engage staff in discussions about “wellness.” We are working on revitalizing and reimplementing a department chaplain program. We currently have a member who is certified in peer support through NCLEAP and is leading our efforts to expand that program in hopes of growing to an internal peer support program team. We are also working with our HR department to see what additional resources are available for us to explore with NCLEAP and other service providers.

Nothing mentioned above has an official completion point. However, we will regularly evaluate how these efforts are progressing. We will learn things from staff, from community members, and other stakeholders that will guide us on this journey. We want to be a department that everyone can be proud of and have trust in our efforts to support this community with exceptional service. We encourage everyone to be engaged in this process, and we look forward to growth and progress.