

# DC's next Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department must prioritize new metrics to increase safety.

Since 2020, the District of Columbia has had four different interim chiefs or permanent chiefs of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). During that time, a growing body of research and evidence has made clear what policing practices improve safety. Police departments and policing experts around the country are developing new ways to demonstrate the public safety benefit of a policy approach and are expanding measures to determine whether goals related to transparency, safety, cost-effectiveness, and fairness are being achieved.

The next chief should seek to improve upon these **10 metrics** for MPD and DC:

## 1 Increase the use of evidence and research-based approaches.

Research supports approaches that limit the role of police and seek to address safety problems through alternative strategies.

**The new chief must ensure the department acts only on strategies that are proven to increase safety.** As recommended in the two-year-long study by the Office of the DC Auditor:

- Reduce the 30 percent of investigators' time spent on administrative, "non-investigative activities."
- Increase the proportion of professional (civilian staff) from 14 percent to 20 percent.

## 2 Reduce unnecessary interactions with residents.

Research shows that police contact itself causes harm. **A harm reduction approach would lessen the negative consequences of police contact** by reducing it.

- Increase the percentage of Search Warrants served that do not involve pointing a gun at an individual or handcuffing a suspect.
- Reduce high-speed pursuits by federal law enforcement agencies and increase protections of DC's current laws.
- Reduce incidents of use of force, and defend guardrails around the use of force from federal interference.

## 3 Increase the use of the most cost-effective alternatives.

**MPD must align its resources with strategies that reduce violence, not ones that expend enormous public dollars without improving safety.** DC invests a half-billion dollars into MPD's budget, which continues to rise each year. This diverts resources that could be used to fund necessary and evidence-based public safety strategies.

- Increase the number of field citations that allow police to quickly resolve a contact without taking someone to the stationhouse, and spending hours processing an arrest.

## 4 Reduce disparities.

Equity must be a core performance measure. **DC cannot move toward safety without addressing long-standing racial inequities in policing.** The next chief must understand when harm is caused by a practice that impacts one part of the community disproportionately more than another, and be open to changes to reduce the disparate impact of current policies.

- Reduce the percentage (83 percent) of all arrests involving Black residents.
- Reduce the estimated 33 percent of residents arrested who have some indication of a mental health need.
- Reduce the estimated 55 percent of Black disabled people who are arrested.

## 7 Reinvest resources.

**A cost-effective approach to safety would see bigger investments in programs, services, and approaches** delivered by health, employment, or housing entities, and led by community-based organizations.

- Increase the number of non-criminal 911 calls resolved by community-based organizations instead of police.

## 5 Expand civilian accountability options.

**The next chief must strengthen external oversight.** DC's current police accountability and oversight systems are limited to twice-yearly or episodic reviews by the Council of the District of Columbia, and are under-resourced for their current mission.

- Reduce the number of times a police interaction results in an investigation by the Internal Affairs Bureau.
- Collaborate with the DC Council to empower the Office of Police Complaints to review actions by 7,700 Special Police Officers and federal law enforcement personnel.

## 8 Increase community leadership over policing policies and priorities.

**Ideally, the residents of DC should directly select the next police chief.** While the next chief will be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council of the District of Columbia, at a minimum the new leader of the MPD must prioritize community control over how decisions are made around deployment and the policies that govern officers' actions with residents.

- Increase the number of MPD policies, procedures, and deployment decisions developed by civic associations and civic advisory councils.

## 6 Develop new measures that show how an activity increases safety.

Simply reporting on arrest episodes by crime category does not, in itself, increase safety and well-being.

- Increase the number of violent crimes solved by MPD.
- Increase the percentage of police contacts resolved by **referring an individual to treatment rather than an arrest.**

## 9 Increase transparency.

**The chief must lead a department that is transparent in agency operations, spending, and deployment.**

- Increase the number of new civilian oversight bodies that can review MPD's use of surveillance technologies and police interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

## 10 Increase responsiveness to stakeholders and institutions.

**Oversight over operations and deployment should not be limited to the budget hearing or discussion of legislation.**

- Respond fully to the 70 data requests made by the Police Reform Commission and similar bodies.