

# Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security Division of State Police

2022-2025 Strategic Plan



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Prepared by the Office of Strategic Development:  
Planning and Research Unit

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# A Message from the Superintendent



It gives me great pleasure to present the Division of State Police's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan for your review. As the women and men of the Delaware State Police find themselves on the verge of officially celebrating our agency's 100<sup>th</sup> year of service to the citizens of the First State in 2023 we collectively strive to demonstrate that we are worthy of serving as Delaware's Finest! As our agency proudly positions itself to enter our second century of compassionate and professional law enforcement service we fully understand the importance of not only establishing, but of also executing a strong vision for the future.

Our agency has technically been in existence for over 100 years as the 'State Highway Police' predates the State Police. As such, our agency's 'history' of strategic planning dates back over 100 years. The men who were entrusted with leading this agency in the early 1920's realized then that the overall scope of the agency's work needed to move from the highway patrol function of that time to what we live 'present day' as a 'full-service' police agency. Today, the women and men of the Delaware State Police are capable of protecting from land, air, and sea, are adept in providing all forms of modern law enforcement services and much, much more.

As we collectively maintain focus on our four overarching goals of Crime Reduction, Traffic Safety, Organizational Development and Management and Community Engagement we must, and will, approach these goals with open minds and a willingness to improve upon everything we have done to this point in our history. This Strategic Plan serves as a framework to forward these goals but also requires an element of adaptability that we are also committed to.

While much of what occurs within the law enforcement profession is inherently reactive, our agency firmly believes that we have an obligation to our personnel, our stakeholders and the people we serve, to proactively plan for anticipated changes within the profession and generally throughout society. That planning is organic, requiring constant assessment, and ultimately requires an agency that is willing to pivot when necessary. That willingness is infused in our approach to this Strategic Plan. This Plan was developed following robust discussion and input across the agency, evaluation of regional and national trends, and an honest assessment of where our agency is and where we believe it needs to be in four years.

I am confident that the personnel I am honored to command will embrace this Strategic Plan and will work to ensure that it is meaningfully implemented. The end result of their efforts will amount to a safeguarding of the 'Delaware Way of Life' for all citizens and visitors to our Great State!

Sincerely,

Colonel Melissa A. Zebley,  
Superintendent

# Planning Our Strategies For The Future

As our Division enters the next four years, we must identify our long term goals. In order to achieve these goals, we have embraced the Strategic Planning Process. This Strategic Plan will serve as a roadmap for how these goals or visions will be attained.



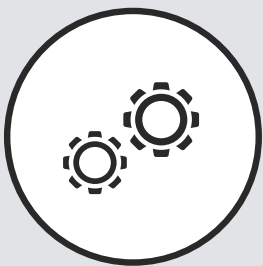
**Determine Current Position**-Evaluate current environment and identify issues. Analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.



**Prioritize Objectives**-Embracing our Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values. Where do we see ourselves in several years and what do we need to succeed? Determine objectives and develop goals.



**Build a Plan**- determining the approach necessary to attain our objectives.



**Implement and Manage Plan**-Publicize goals and strategies to the Division. Provide training, establish responsibilities, and a calendar to track progress and



**Review and Revise**-continuously meet to discuss any changes. Evaluate any new priorities and adapt as needed.

# A Historical View of the Delaware State Police

The Delaware State Police is a Division of the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and is comprised of 718 Troopers and 216 Civilians bound by a singular mission statement. These women and men are tasked with upholding the law and providing police services to citizens and visitors throughout Delaware's 1,982 square miles. The Delaware State Police proudly serves a full-time population of more than 992,035 citizens (2020 Delaware Population Consortium) and approximately 9.2 million annual visitors.

Established in 1921 as the "State Highway Department", the legislature enacted laws to "appoint traffic officers whose primary duties shall be to compel the enforcement of all laws relating to the weight, speed and operation of vehicles on the public highways in this State". Ultimately becoming the State Police in 1923, we are the primary law-enforcement agency within the State. The Division serves as a "full-service" police department investigating everything from car crashes to homicides and everything in-between.

The State Police is led by a Superintendent who is appointed by the Governor and holds the rank of Colonel. With the assistance of her or his Executive Staff, the Colonel continuously works toward ensuring the Division is constantly moving forward, preparing to meet Delaware's future public safety needs.

To fulfill the mission of the State Police, Troopers are assigned throughout the state at various patrol and administrative facilities primarily delivering police or investigative services. The most visible of these functions is the Patrol Trooper providing round the clock police presence and responding to 911 calls for service. There are eight patrol troops strategically located though out the state designed to support the Patrol Trooper and meet the needs of the community. Each patrol troop is commanded by a Captain, and two Lieutenants who supervise four Sergeants. The Sergeants are responsible for the day to day supervision of the patrol force, ensuring adequate and impactful coverage is provided 24/7.

Each of Delaware's three counties contains a Criminal Investigative Unit (CIU) consisting of specially trained and experienced troopers responsible for major criminal investigations, evidence collection, and other support services. In addition to Patrol Troopers and Detectives, we have Troopers assigned to various special units (page 8).



## Mission Statement

The mission of the Delaware State Police is to enhance the quality of life for all Delaware citizens and visitors by providing professional, competent and compassionate law enforcement services.

## Vision Statement

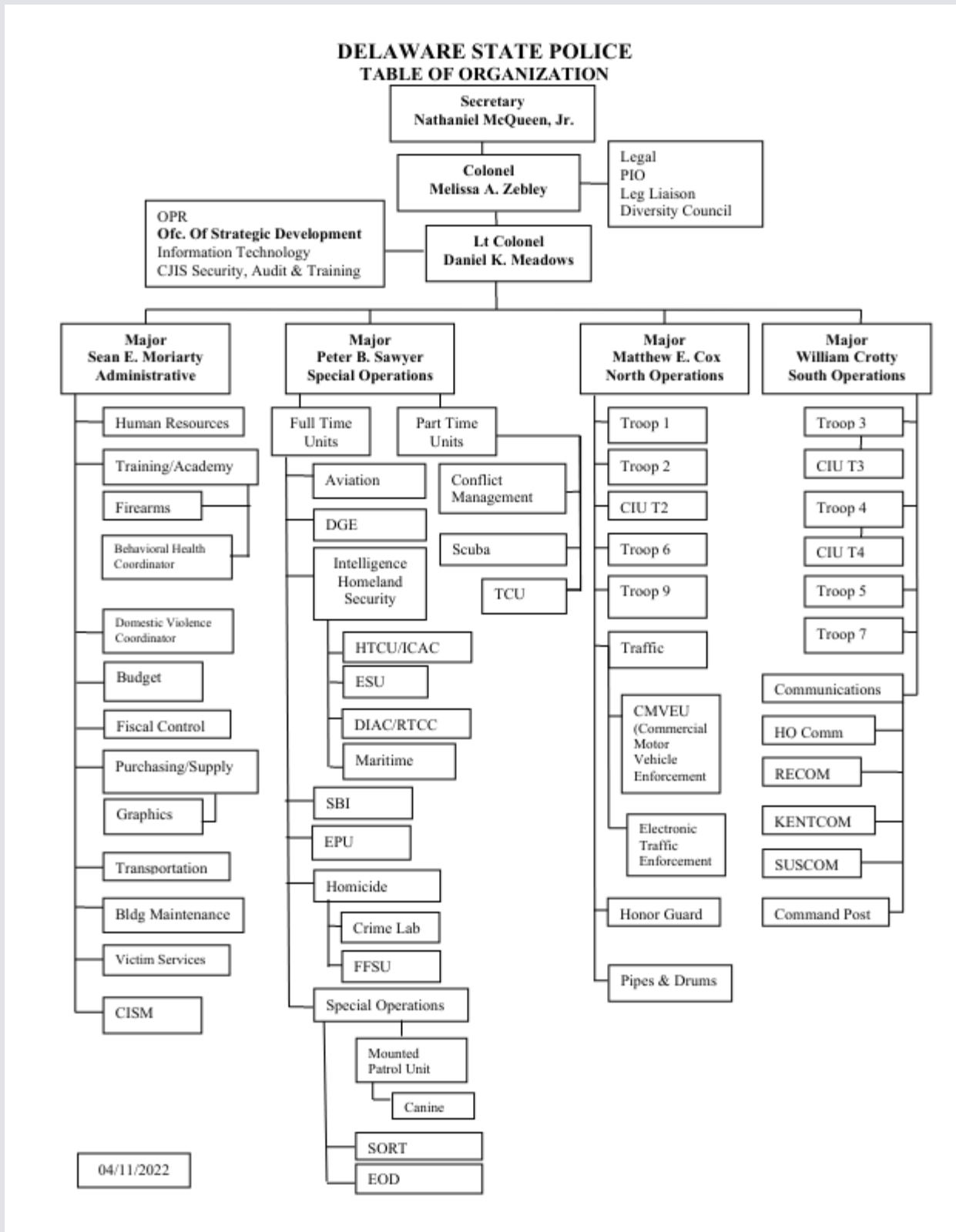
Our reputation for excellence, fairness, and professionalism in all aspects of policing has made us one of the top law enforcement agencies in the Nation. All citizens and visitors to the State of Delaware that come into contact with a Trooper or employee of our agency can expect to receive no less than the best service and treatment possible. We, the men and women of the Delaware State Police will accept nothing less.

## Core Values

- We serve with **HONOR**, as we are entrusted with awesome responsibility.
- We maintain our **INTEGRITY**, doing the right thing because it is right.
- We are guided by **COURAGE** in our actions and in our deeds.
- We hold our **LOYALTY** to those whom we serve to be a sacred trust.
- We maintain our positive **ATTITUDE** in our commitment to public safety.
- We embrace **DISCIPLINE** and self control as our overriding guide.
- We have sworn to provide selfless **SERVICE** to our community.

# Organizational Structure

Backing the efforts of our operations personnel are the Troopers and Civilians assigned to various support units.



# Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results

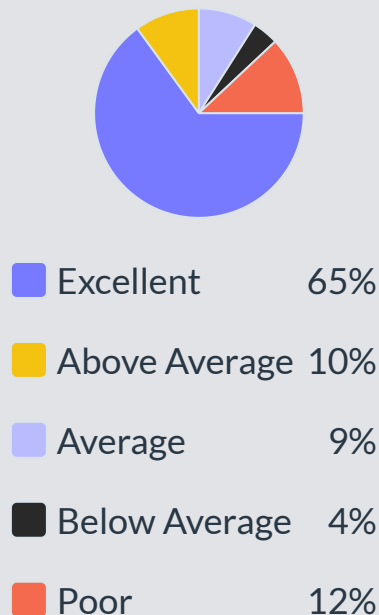
The Delaware State Police constantly strives to improve our service while fulfilling our mission statement: “Enhancing the quality of life for all Delaware citizens and visitors by providing professional, competent, and compassionate law enforcement services”.

An important component of this involves soliciting feedback from those whom we serve. Our Citizen Satisfaction Survey was first made available July 11th, 2011. Links to the survey are found on the DSP website and on announcements from our Public Information Office. Signage is also posted in English and Spanish within all DSP Facilities. Also, requests to participate in our survey appear on all LEISS Report Victim Copies and E-Crash Information Exchange Forms. English and Spanish language versions are offered. A total of fifteen survey questions were created to measure feedback. Specific areas covered include:

- Overall DSP performance
- Competence of DSP Troopers & Civilian employees
- Troopers’ attitudes and behavior toward citizens
- Community safety and security concerns
- Suggestions for improvement

After collecting the results, an annual report is submitted to the Colonel and Executive Staff. In 2021, the majority of those surveyed report being satisfied with our performance. Overall, 75% of survey participants rated their experience as excellent or above average. The type of feedback received by this survey is important. It serves as a valuable tool to track our progress and adapt to the community we serve.

2021 Overall Quality of Service





# Evaluating Current Staffing Levels

As of March 2022, there are 718 Troopers on the payroll. Included are 21 Troopers currently on Terminal Leave, pending their retirements with a service pension. Approximately 49% are assigned to patrol duties while the remaining 51% are assigned to various investigative and support positions.

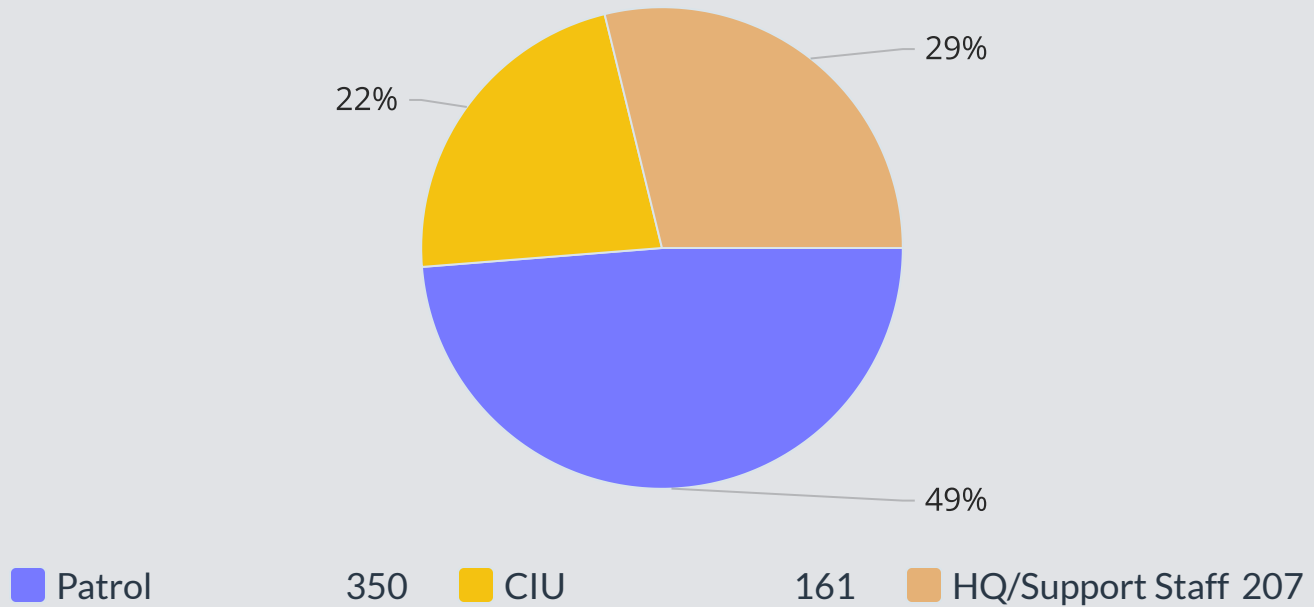
The 350 assigned to patrol are divided among each of our eight Troops. Considering shift work, one-fourth (*approximately 87*) are on duty at any given time. However, the actual number is, in actuality, somewhat lower. Each shift can be expected to manage vacations, mandatory training, sick time, or FMLA. These events would impact day to day staffing levels.

Each county also has a Troop that houses Detectives. These are located at Troop 2 (New Castle County), Troop 3 (Kent County), and Troop 4 (Sussex County). There are currently 161 Detectives assigned to these three Troops. Primary areas of focus include Youth Aid, Financial, Burglary, Robbery, and Major Crimes investigations. The remaining 207 Troopers are assigned to Headquarters and Support Staff (*listed on page 8*). With few exceptions, their operational responsibilities have an effect throughout the state, irrespective of where their office may be physically located. (NOTE: Because Troop 9 is responsible for southern New Castle County and northern Kent County, the 37 assigned Troopers were divided between the two counties for the purposes of this report).

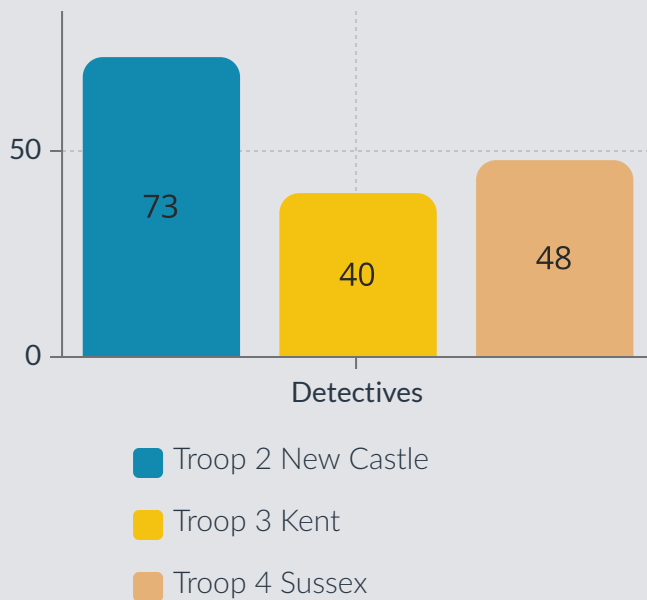
Our attrition rate, which is in part predictable due to mandatory retirement age, is anticipated to remain at approximately 25 Troopers per year. As of March 2022, 27% of the 718 Troopers actively on the Division's payroll are eligible for immediate retirement.

# Evaluating Current Staffing Levels (continued)

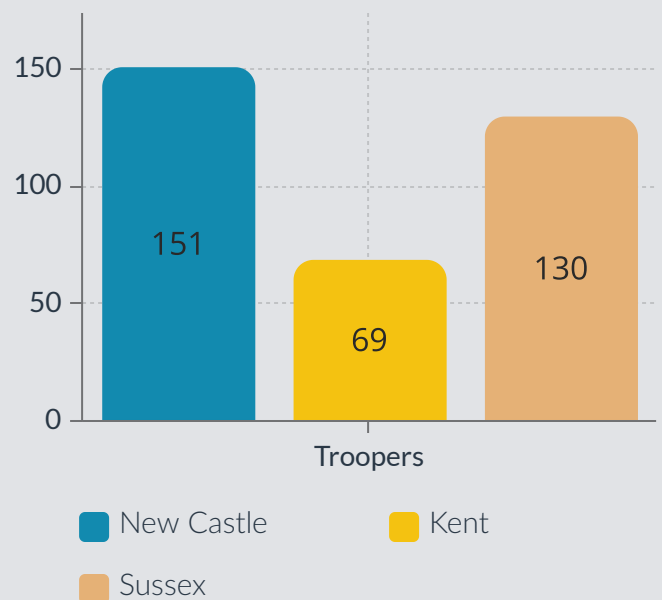
## Analyzing Personnel



## Criminal Investigative Unit



## Patrol Staffing

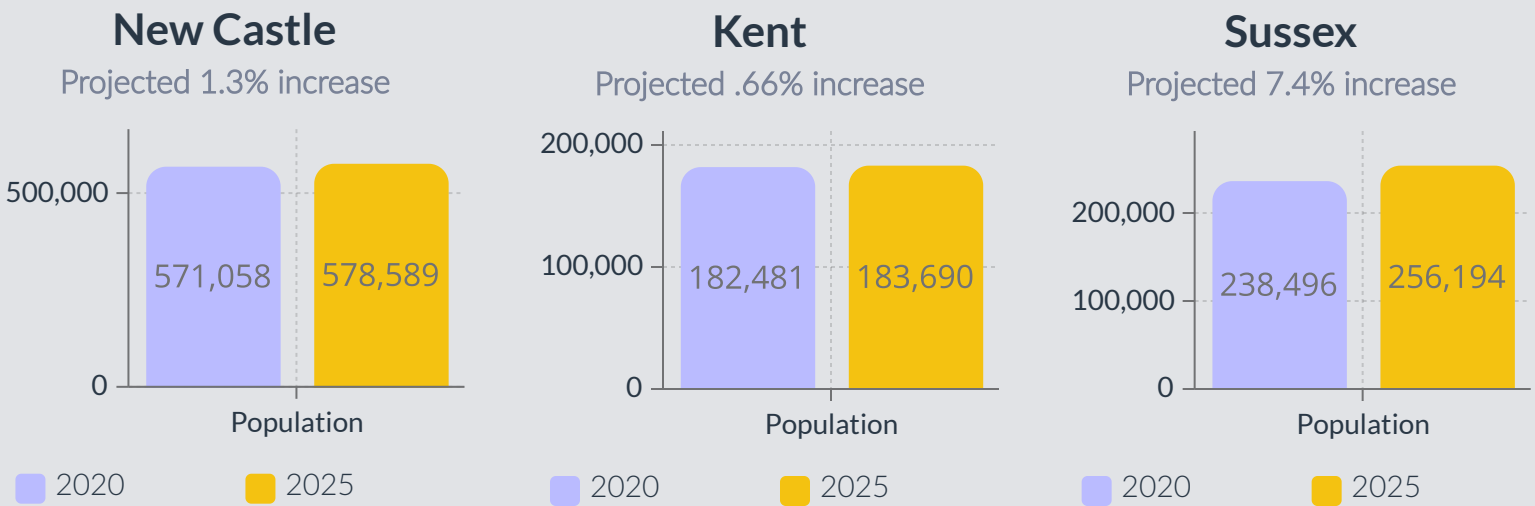


\*Patrol staffing for Troop 9 has been split between New Castle and Kent Counties since this Troop services areas in both counties.\*

# Population Trends

The Delaware Population Consortium published their most recent projections in October 2021. 2020 data indicates that Delaware's population at that time was at 992,035. Between 2020 and 2025, they project an increase of 26,438 residents, which represents a 2.7% overall increase in population. Sussex County is forecasted to see the largest increase, which in part will drive allocation of staffing.

While the ratio of Troopers to residents in New Castle County may appear low, this is because the law enforcement community in New Castle County differs from that in Kent and Sussex. Troopers assigned to New Castle County share their responsibilities with approximately 700 sworn Police Officers in New Castle County.

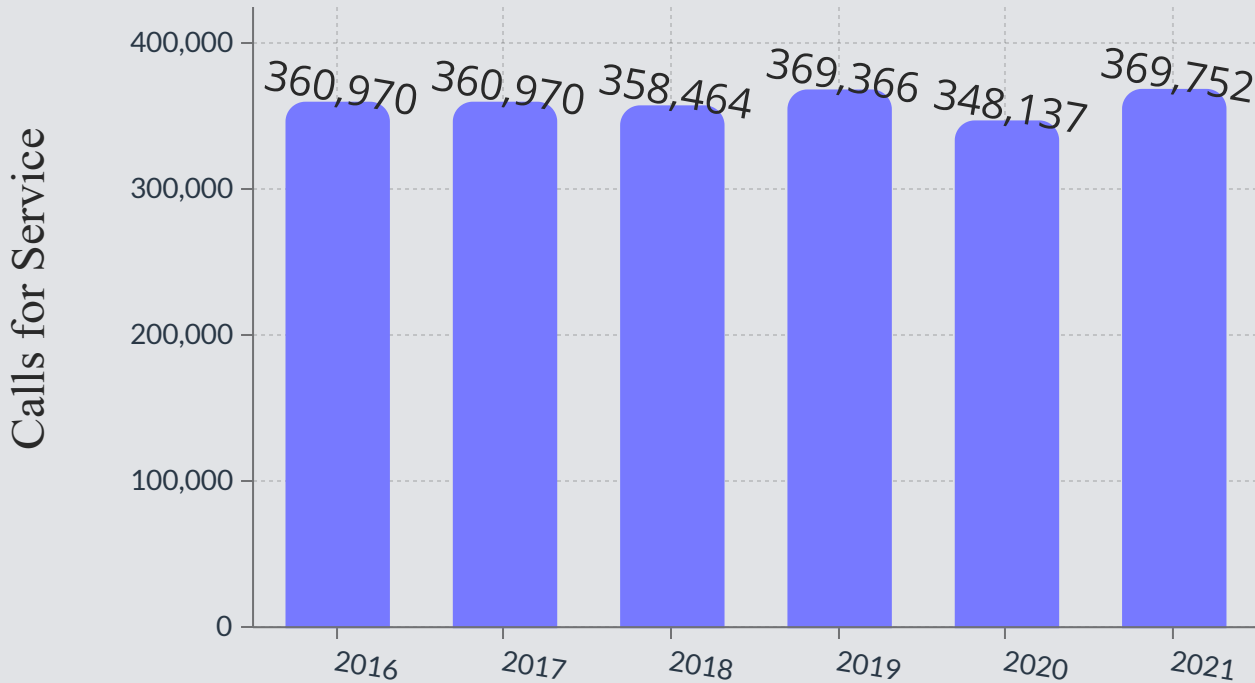


COUNTY	POPULATION	TROOPERS	TROOPERS PER RESIDENTS
New Castle	571,058	224	1:2459
Kent	182,481	109	1:1674
Sussex	238,496	178	1:1339

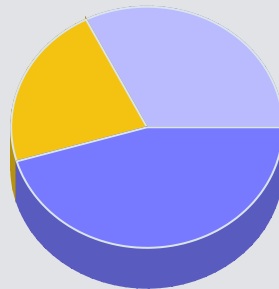
# Calls for Service

## Analyzing Trends and Workload

From 2016 to 2021, calls for service increased by 2.4%.



## Calls for Service by County



- New Castle 45%
- Kent 22%
- Sussex 32%

\*Since Troop 9 serves both New Castle and Kent counties, the complaint load was distributed evenly between both counties for the purpose of this analysis.

# Capital Improvements and Equipment Needs

Several of the Delaware State Police Facilities are older than 50 years old. Due to population growth, expanded complaint loads, constantly evolving security concerns, and technological advancements, facilities will need to be upgraded, renovated, or require new construction. The Division receives approximately \$1,000,000 in an annual budget to provide continuous upgrades to its current facilities. The Division must identify the needs and priorities to distribute this money. We must continually evaluate and inspect our buildings to gauge these needs.

In the next several years, the Delaware State Police will continue the process of upgrades and new construction at the following locations:

- Troop 1- installation of a security fence to enhance our Trooper's safety and roof replacement.
- Troop 3- exploration of a 10,000 square foot, Multi-Purpose Special Vehicle Shelter which will house specialized equipment and vehicles. This Facility will also serve a dual purpose to provide an area for tactical training.
- Troop 4-feasibility study and site planning to procure a new location for a Troop 4 building. Current upgrades include temporary/portable buildings to alleviate crowding concerns and offer more office space.
- Troop 6- a new facility is scheduled on an aggressive timeline to be completed by mid 2024. The site location would encompass the current Troop 6, Justice of Peace Court 10 and John Webb Correctional Facility.
- Troop 9- Repaving of the grounds and new lighting to enhance security.
- HQ Complex-searching for a new location for the Canine Complex in order to gain more space for multiagency training.
- In addition to these upgrades, the Division is installing 20 interview rooms among the Troop locations, with the newest technology, to enhance prosecution and preserve evidence.
- IDENTICO-employing additional finger printing locations to be used by the public for background checks. This will reduce wait times at SBI and afford our citizens more flexibility.
- Each Troop facility is also adding office space for our partnership with Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH). These employees will work and integrate with our Troopers to provide substance abuse and mental health treatment.

# Capital Improvements and Equipment Needs (continued)

Additionally, we must provide our Troopers with the latest technology, equipment, resources and training. We will continue to monitor, research, upgrade, and replace technological systems. This will maximize the safety of our Troopers, increase public safety, and enhance transparency.

Such enhancements include the following:

- Purchasing of a mobile new state of the art Command Post which is used for critical incidents.
- Feasibility study to merge our Communications Section's Center Operations into one centralized location within three years.
- Acquisition of Axon body cameras for our Troopers. A total of 560 cameras would be purchased by 2023.
- Upgrading to Axon in-car camera systems for the patrol fleet. This is also slotted to be completed by 2023 and would require 480 new units.
- Researching various virtual reality machines to enhance de-escalation and use-of-force training.
- Switching rifle platforms which affords easier storage and weapon manipulation.
- Increasing the number of issued less-lethal shotguns on the street. This provides yet another alternative, effective force option that is less likely to result in a fatality
- Aviation-securing funding for a 4th helicopter and engine upgrades to our two oldest helicopters.
- Scuba and Maritime-securing an underwater drone which will be used for rescue and salvage efforts.
- Purchasing additional drones not only for critical incident support but for collisions investigated by our Collision Reconstruction Unit.

# Strategic Plan Goals

1

Crime Reduction

2

Traffic Safety

3

Organizational Development  
and Management

4

Community Engagement

# Goal #1 Crime Reduction

Delaware State Police employees will work toward improving the quality of life for Delaware citizens and visitors through crime reduction efforts. Our monthly SPEAR meetings will serve as a forum for the Executive Staff and Command Staff to formulate solutions for both criminal and traffic offense trends. The Delaware State Police will promote these crime reduction strategies through the following strategies:

**INVESTIGATION:** Personnel will conduct initial and follow-up investigations in accordance with Divisional Policy and Procedures.

- Enforcement of criminal laws to improve quality of life to citizens
- Providing investigative assistance to other agencies

**PREVENTION:** Personnel will focus Divisional efforts on violent crime reduction and on those programs and initiatives which serve to strengthen our state and improve community safety for all citizens and visitors.

- Improve public awareness regarding crime prevention and available services
- Engaging with the community and developing strong relationships

**HOMELAND SECURITY:** Personnel will work under a culture that espouses constant vigilance; namely that protecting the safety of people and property is of the utmost importance.

- Continuously assessing domestic security threats
- Gathering intelligence, analyzing this information, and sharing it with the law enforcement community.
- Identification and mitigation of vulnerabilities/weaknesses



## Goal #2 Traffic Safety

According to a 2020 Federal Highway Administration report, Delaware has approximately 14,000 miles of roadway. Delaware State Troopers will endeavor to increase highway safety throughout Delaware through a concerted effort aimed at reducing traffic fatalities and injuries. Doing so will improve quality of life and reduce needless suffering for all Delaware citizens and visitors.

Our monthly SPEAR Meetings will serve as a forum to formulate solutions addressing traffic offense trends. Partnerships with the Delaware Office of Highway Safety, DelDOT, Attorney General's Office, DMV, NHTSA, municipal departments, and Delaware's legislators are another important component. We will improve highway safety through the following strategies:

**INVESTIGATION & ENFORCEMENT:** Troopers will conduct traffic enforcement and crash investigations in accordance to Divisional Policy and Procedures.

- Fulfill mission through standard traffic arrests and warnings.
- DUI checkpoints/patrols to effect DUI arrests along with seatbelt, distracted driving, speed enforcement, and motorcycle safety patrols.
- Utilize data and focus enforcement in high crash and hazardous areas.
- Commercial Motor Vehicle safety inspections and enforcement.

**PREVENTION & EDUCATION** Personnel will focus their efforts on those programs and initiatives which promote traffic safety education to the public.

- Coordinate with Department of Transportation for increased usage of highway message board, portable radar signs, and resign of roadway infrastructure.
- Improve public awareness about driving behaviors and vehicle equipment standards through expanded use of social media. Pursue educational initiatives to raise awareness of the dangers to pedestrians and provides tips to keep pedestrians safe.
- Community Outreach efforts to educate youth and students on safe driving practices.
- Securing funding for training for accident reconstruction and and expanded child car seat technicians.

# Goal #3 Organizational Development and Management

As members of the Division work towards implementing this Strategic Plan, we will provide proper training to our employees to help make them successful. Secondly, our recruiting unit will seek to hire well qualified and a diverse applicants. Lastly, we must foster an environment for success for our employees and the ability to function in an ever evolving world.

**TRAINING :** The Division must ensure that our employees are prepared to deliver professional services by utilizing standards of training. By facilitating professional development, this will provide the opportunity to cultivate leaders. We will continue to prepare our recruits with quality training. Future leaders will be developed through the International Association of Chiefs of Police leadership training. Additional related initiatives will include:

- Annual in-service/firearms qualification training and monthly shift briefings.
- Continuing education opportunities and Temporary Assigned Duty assignments to foster personal enrichment.
- Leadership Development Program and newly promoted Sergeants-administrative training.

**RECRUITING:** Hiring society's best and brightest is crucial to the Division's health. We must continue to hire those persons reflective of the community we serve; possessing the highest degree of impeccability in terms of personal background, judgment, maturity, integrity and credibility. Participation in the Governor's Council on Equal Employment Opportunity serves to guide this commitment to Division-wide dedication to diversity. Additional initiatives include:

- Full-time recruitment unit for marketing and campaigning applicants.
- Soliciting input from minority population bases to also increase under-represented demographics.
- Expanding the Trooper Youth Program, the Cadet Program, and Internship programs.

**ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH:** Ensuring our Division functions effectively by building cohesive leadership, establishing clarity among our leaders for a unified vision, and communicating that vision to everyone within the organization.

- Maintaining fairness, and objectivity of the Career Development Program, the promotional process, and all transfer selections. Doing so will also serve to encourage participation in all three of these important processes.
- Developing policies and resources to protect our employees from internal and external conditions such as our Fatigue Management Policy, the Employee Assistance Program, or the Delaware State Police Wellness App.

# Goal #4 Community Engagement

By reaching out to all communities we will build relationships and help to create a safer environment. Every member of the Delaware State Police reside within the Delaware community. While there are several outreach initiatives in place, we have an opportunity to improve. These bridges between our communities and the Division will provide us with increased awareness and understanding. They will also serve to foster open dialogue on challenging issues. The Delaware State Police will support our citizens and communities through the following strategies:

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Continue to cultivate partnerships with community groups and leaders, schools, and other organizations.

- Citizens Police Academy- Encouraging active participation by prior graduates will help to enable them to better serve their communities through effective partnerships.
- Coffee with the Commander Events –Troop Commanders host events with community members. The small group setting promotes an open dialogue that allows participants to address issues directly with the Troop Commander.
- Honorary Commander Program - The Honorary Commanders Program partners the Troop commanders with community leaders. The program encourages an exchange of ideas, experiences, and friendships between key leaders.
- Community Engagement Unit meets regularly with a number of stakeholders from Kent County to ensure the Division remains aware of community concerns. It is anticipated in 2022, that a New Castle County Advisory Board will also be created.
- Inform media outlets and the public of relevant topics as it relates to crime, safety and community engagement-provide communities with real time information. This two-way communication will foster an environment where citizens can provide updates on activities.

**MENTORING AND BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS:** Maintain bonds with youth and serve as role models. Ensure our youth are equipped with the tools needed for their future and successful citizenship within our communities.

- Trooper Youth Week- Annually host Trooper Youth Week at the Training Academy. This week long academy is designed to give high school students who are interested in law enforcement an opportunity to experience the rigors of training that police officers receive at the Delaware State Police Academy.
- Trooper Youth Program- Designed for High school students to participate in Community Service events like fingerprinting young children, maintain the missing children's area at the State Fair, Polar Bear Plunge, and other community related events. We teach a variety of police procedures including fingerprinting, evidence collection, radar operation, criminal investigations and patrol procedures.
- Cadet Program- This program is designed for College students who have an interest in the Law Enforcement Profession. Students assist at Division event, conduct parking ticket enforcement and assist with directed enforcement efforts.

# In Conclusion

As the Division's Centennial Anniversary approaches, our Troopers have had the privilege of serving the First State and its citizens for nearly 100 years. As society and technology advances, so must our agency. Our tactics and strategies must evolve to serve the community needs and desires. The Strategic Planning Process helps our agency evaluate our current environment, identify goals, plan for the future, and adapt to our new environment. This process helps ensure the Delaware State Police remains effective in an ever changing world.

