



CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS DIVISION

Captain Jennifer Herndon

Violent Crimes, Domestic Violence, & Child Abuse Initiative

To Combat Increases in Aggravated Violent Crimes and Domestic Violence

Incidents during COVID

Purpose

The Sheriff's Office is committed to protecting the citizens of Harris County from violent crime offenders, domestic violence incidents, and children from abuse. During the time of Covid, aggravated crimes increased by 21%, domestic violence incidents by 51%, and child crimes were able to go unchecked without the ability of educational institutions to report signs of abuse to law enforcement officials. Even with schools being closed, Children Protective Services referred 15, 806 incidents to the Sheriff's Office Child Abuse Unit for further investigation. The number of referrals resulted in an increase of 2% from pre-Covid reported numbers.

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this initiative is to focus investigative efforts on protecting victims, enhancing offender's accountability, improving information sharing, and bringing awareness to the citizens of Harris County.

The objective is to reduce violent crimes, domestic abuse, and child abuse by focusing resources to target violent crime offenders. Targeted investigations to quickly remove violent offenders and protect victims from further harm.

- ❖ Focus investigations on repeat offenders and organized criminal activity
- ❖ Enhance offender's accountability with timely investigations
- ❖ Improve information sharing
- ❖ Enhance awareness of violent crimes with the community
- ❖ Provide resources to victims of violent crimes (assaults, domestic violence, child abuse)

Plan of Action

The Violent Crimes, Adult Special Crimes, and Child Abuse Units will use crime analysis to identify hotspots and delayed investigations due to staffing shortages and caseloads.

- ❖ The Violent Crimes Unit will enhance information sharing with the Crime Reduction Units, and patrolmen of known hotspots for violent crimes. Investigations will target those areas for identification and capture of violent crime offenders.
- ❖ Violent Crimes supervisors will review and prioritize investigations regarding aggravated violent crimes, hotspots, organized crime, and the 148 backlogged cases.

- ❖ The Adult Special Crimes Unit will identify investigations of domestic abuse where the offenders have not been captured, where there is a known offender with further evidence needed for charges, the 92 Family Violence, and 439 Adult Sex Crimes backlogged investigations due to caseloads. Adult Special Crimes supervisors will direct the Advocates to the victims in the investigations to provide information on shelters, protective orders, the criminal process, and counseling. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) advising the community of resources available for victims of domestic violence will take place.
- ❖ The Child Abuse Unit will assign additional personnel to target the 651 investigations that are backlogged due to lack of staffing and caseloads. The supervisors will ensure investigators make contact with the victims of the backlogged investigations and prioritize cases for quicker prosecution of offenders.
- ❖ The Violent Crime, Adult Special Crimes, and Child Abuse Units will coordinate with the HCSO's Warrants Division and Patrol Crime Reduction Units for surveillance, quick capture and execution of warrants for known violent crime offenders.
- ❖ Each Unit Lieutenant will receive daily case updates to ensure goals are being met. Lieutenants will maintain a log of all investigators and cases associated with the initiative. Lieutenants are expected to create opportunities to educate the public through community meetings and Public Service Announcements. Lieutenants will create the Operations Plans when necessary. An After Action Report documenting investigations, charges filed, cases closed, and warrants executed during the initiative will be completed by each lieutenant.

Cost Analysis

Adult Special Crimes Unit

Overtime rate is \$60.18 per hour

An average of 25 hours per investigation.

Average cost to close case is $\$60.18 \times 25 = \$1,504.50$

With \$655,000: possible case closures $655,000 / 1,504.50 = 435.36$

Violent Crimes Unit

Overtime rate is \$60.18 per hour

An average of 30 hours per investigation.

Average cost to close a violent crimes investigation is $\$60.18 \times 30 = \1805.40

With \$500,000: possible case closure $500,000 / 1805.40 = 276.95$

Domestic Violence Advocates

Overtime rate is \$35 per hour

An average of 3 hours per investigation

Average cost per Advocate is $\$35 \times 3 = 105.00$

With \$200,000: possible hours of assistance $200,000 / 105.00 = 1904.76$

Child Abuse Unit

Overtime rate is \$52.77 per hour

An average of 18 hours per investigation

Average cost to close an abuse investigation is $\$52.77 \times 18 = \949.86

With \$500,000: possible case closure is $500,000 / 949.86 = 526.39$

Criminal Warrants Division

Overtime rate is \$60.18 per hour

An average of 3 hours per warrant

An average of 5 warrant's personnel needed to execute a warrant

Average cost to execute one warrant $\$60.18 \times 5 \times 3 = \902.70

With \$500,000: possible warrants execution is $500,000 / 902.70 = 553.89$

Patrol Crime Reduction Units

Overtime rate is \$60.18 per hour

An average of 3 hours per warrant

An average of 5 crime reduction personnel needed to execute a warrant

Warrants will be executed by 5 person teams assigned to each of the 5 districts $5 \times 5 = 25$

Average cost to execute one warrant $\$60.18 \times 25 \times 3 = \4513.50

With \$500,000: possible warrants execution is $500,000 / 4513.50 = 110.78$

Unit Lieutenants

Overtime rate is \$44.70 per hour

9 Lieutenants for 10 hours a week for 36 weeks

$\$44.70 \times 9 \times 10 \times 36 = \$144,828$

The total amount requested for success in achieving the Harris County Sheriff's Office goal of removing dangerous offenders from the public and assisting victims is \$2,999,828.00

*The cost analysis is an estimate of possible hours needed to complete detailed systematic investigations. Every investigation is different and require different resources and time.