

2025 Public Safety Agenda for Law Enforcement



INTRODUCTION



Law enforcement agencies across the country are struggling to identify actionable strategies to address critical issues including recruitment and retention, implementation and expansion of de-escalation training, and most notably, finding plausible solutions to solve and deter violent crime. Although crime and law enforcement operations are primarily **local issues** that require a more micro-level approach, the **federal government** has recognized that they have the power to aid states and localities in solving some of these problems. Pragmatic system initiatives rooted in principles of public safety, efficient resource allocation, and a culture of respect for the rule of law will improve the effectiveness, accountability, and trustworthiness of law enforcement agencies across the nation. These initiatives will also decrease officer burnout, reduce injuries sustained by officers and members of the public, and help increase case clearance rates, potentially restoring faith in law enforcement and bringing victims the justice they deserve.

AGENDA

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION



❓ **Why:** **Recruitment and retention** are essential to maintain a fully staffed, capable, and motivated law enforcement workforce. Recent years have seen a **marked decline** in applications to law enforcement positions, driven by a combination of political scrutiny, reduced morale, differences in generational cohorts, and competing private-sector opportunities. This crisis **threatens the ability of agencies** to meet public safety demands and undermines the trust of communities reliant on timely and effective policing.


✔ **Benefit:** Addressing recruitment and retention challenges **ensures operational readiness**, reduces the strain on existing personnel, and fosters a diverse workforce that reflects the communities served. Moreover, **retaining experienced officers** reduces training costs and preserves institutional knowledge, which is critical to effective policing. A **well-staffed department** can also lead to quicker response times and enhanced community engagement.


 **Keep in Mind:**

- Competitive compensation and benefits packages are essential to [attract high-quality candidates](#). Departments must regularly assess market rates to remain competitive.
- Positive workplace culture, clear career development pathways, and robust mental health resources [contribute toward officer satisfaction and longevity](#). Initiatives like peer counseling and wellness programs can help mitigate burnout.
- [S.546 – Recruit and Retain Act](#) provides vital funding to states and localities, enabling them to implement incentives like student loan forgiveness, signing bonuses, and tuition reimbursement. This legislation also allows for targeted recruitment campaigns, particularly in underserved communities.

 **Where States Stand:**

- Florida and several other states have implemented aggressive recruitment campaigns, including financial incentives and streamlined hiring processes. For example, new recruits are eligible for [\\$5,000 signing bonuses](#) or [homeownership assistance](#).
- [Innovative programs](#) like mentorship initiatives and leadership development training are gaining traction to retain younger officers. In Ohio, mentorship programs have shown a [20 percent increase in officer retention rates](#) over three years.
- Some states are exploring [public-private partnerships](#) to provide housing allowances and other community-integrated benefits to law enforcement personnel.

 **Why:** De-escalation training is a [cornerstone of modern policing](#), equipping officers to resolve conflict without resorting to force whenever possible. Amid growing public scrutiny, such training is essential to [build community trust and reduce liability](#). The [increasing complexity](#) of policing requires tools that prioritize communication and non-violent solutions.

 **Benefit:** Well-executed de-escalation programs improve officer safety, decrease use-of-force incidents, and foster better community relations. [S.4003 – Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act of 2022](#) (LEDTA) underscores the federal government’s commitment to funding standardized, evidence-based training across the country. Effective de-escalation also reduces legal costs associated with excessive force lawsuits.

 **Keep in Mind:**

- [De-escalation training](#) must be consistent with real-world scenarios, emphasizing communication, situational awareness, and cultural competency. Scenario-based training has been shown to [improve retention and applicability](#) in field situations.
- Agencies should integrate [community feedback](#) and use role-playing exercises to enhance training relevance. Transparency in training methods can further bolster public trust.
- Federal grants provided under [LEDTA](#) should be allocated strategically to ensure training programs are sustainable and scalable.

 **Where States Stand:**

- In the last few years, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, and Virginia have [passed legislation](#) related to de-escalation training. Other states passed similar legislation prior to 2020.
- Regional training centers, such as those in [Georgia](#) and [North Carolina](#), provide centralized access to innovative de-escalation techniques. These centers emphasize multidisciplinary approaches involving mental health professionals.

ADDRESSING
VIOLENT CRIME

FOR
ADDITIONAL
SUPPORT

- Evaluations from agencies implementing these programs indicate reduced use-of-force complaints and improved officer decision-making under pressure. In Illinois, the [Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity-Today \(SAFE-T\) Act](#) requires all officers to undergo additional de-escalation training every three years. This has led to a [15 percent decline in force complaints](#) throughout the state.

? **Why:** Rising violent crime rates, particularly in urban centers, demand a comprehensive and proactive approach. Concern stemming from the [violent crime surge](#) of 2020 and 2021 has left neighborhoods with the perception that crime is still high, [even in areas where it has stabilized](#). Law enforcement agencies must prioritize [data-driven strategies](#) to combat violent crime while collaborating with community stakeholders to address underlying causes. Not only do [effective intervention strategies](#) save lives, they also improve the economic and social stability of affected communities and restore police legitimacy.

✓ **Benefit:** [Reducing violent crime](#) strengthens community trust, promotes economic stability, and enhances the quality of life. [S.3763 – VICTIM Act of 2024](#) prioritizes victim support and provides critical resources that enable agencies to investigate and address these crimes effectively. This legislation emphasizes the importance of solving violent crimes to bring justice to victims and deter future offenses.

🗉 **Keep in Mind:**

- [Holistic approaches](#) that combine enforcement with community engagement yield the best results. Programs that incorporate education, job training, and mentorship for at-risk youth show significant promise in reducing violent crime.
- Technologies like predictive policing tools and [real-time crime centers](#) are invaluable in optimizing resource allocation; however, safeguards must be used to ensure transparency and prevent unintended biases.
- Victim support is essential to foster healing and cooperation in investigations. [Victim advocacy programs](#) can improve case outcomes by encouraging community members to come forward.

📍 **Where States Stand:**

- Evidence-based programs like Group Violence Intervention (also called Community Violence Intervention) have shown success in states like [New York](#) and [Massachusetts](#) by reducing gang-related violence through targeted interventions. In Boston, these programs have [reduced gang-related shootings by over 30 percent](#).
- Investments in technology, including [license plate readers](#) and [ShotSpotter detection systems](#), are improving response times and crime-solving capabilities in states across the country. A notable example is [Operation Blue CRUSH](#), which leverages data analytics to identify crime hotspots in Memphis, Tennessee.
- Multijurisdictional task forces focusing on violent crime hotspots have demonstrated measurable success, with reductions in violent crime rates in cities like [St. Louis, Missouri](#). In Georgia, [Project Safe Neighborhoods](#) integrates federal, state, and local resources to target violent offenders.

If you need help with further research around these issues, information on implementing these types of initiatives, or anything else, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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