As Denver entered 2020, it was shaping up to be a year of growth and preparation. But 2020 presented multiple challenges – one of which was a global pandemic that required us to change the way we operated as city departments, including the Denver Sheriff Department (DSD). For the DSD, these challenges were compounded by unique responsibilities and constraints facing correctional facilities.

DSD leadership worked quickly to implement strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our jails, while working closely with multiple partners, including Denver Health and the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment, to reduce the jail population, implement strict sanitary measures, and enforce public health orders that were vital to saving lives.

In 2020, I appointed a new leader of the department, Sheriff Elias Diggins. Sheriff Diggins, a 25-year veteran of the DSD and a Denver native, is the leader this department needs at this time. Sheriff Diggins understands how important the sheriff department is to providing safety and security for the community. He also understands the importance of infusing humanity into the work our sheriff deputies do every day with his philosophy: We LEAD with our humanity! It’s important that this type of movement come from the top, and that is exactly what Sheriff Diggins is doing.

In closing, I want to thank the sworn and civilian staff for their dedication to serve the residents of Denver. The work this department does is difficult and is not always recognized, but every member of DSD works hard every day, and no matter the challenge or obstacle, they always overcome. Thank you for your service.

Respectfully,

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor

To say 2020 was unusual is an understatement. It was a tough year in Denver, navigating a worldwide pandemic and many weeks of civil unrest and protests in our community. Through it all, the men and women of the Denver Sheriff Department have answered the call. From actively working with partners to reduce the jail population, to implementing and supporting COVID-19 protocols and providing assistance during the extended periods of unrest in our city, DSD has played a vital role.

In addition, we’ve seen the sheriff department grow and evolve under the leadership of Sheriff Elias Diggins and his newly appointed leadership team. His vision is to lead with humanity and focus on the great responsibility DSD staff have to the inmates in their care. Naming a Chief of Mental Health Services, forming a community advisory panel, and focusing on ways to improve employee morale are all positive steps to implementing that vision.

I look forward to working alongside Sheriff Diggins and all the members of the Denver Sheriff Department as we plan for 2021.

Murphy F. Robinson III
Executive Director of Public Safety
It is truly a blessing and a privilege to serve as the Sheriff and I am humbled to work alongside the fine women and men of the Denver Sheriff Department. The year 2020 was an unprecedented example of how in the midst of historic challenges, our perseverance shines through as we met each trial with Dedication, Service and Duty to those we serve.

In the beginning of 2020, the world began to shake in the shadow of the Coronavirus and by March, we too had our lives turned upside down as the pandemic reached American shores. In the 119-year history of the Denver Sheriff Department, no greater threat has presented itself to us than the possibility of the virus taking total control of everything our Agency does. Through the amazing work of our Department members, the staff of Denver Health and Hospital Authority, the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment and Denver Public Health, we have survived and to date succeeded in staying relatively safe. We thank our countless partners in the community we serve as well as those in other agencies inside and outside of the criminal justice system who have assisted us in this chapter of our history.

May 28, 2020 was also a day we will never forget as the horrible death of George Floyd sparked unprecedented protests, marches, rioting and destruction across the nation and here in Denver as well. As the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) and other deputies were called into action during the initial response, we witnessed firsthand the frustration felt by the community at these events which lasted 22 consecutive days until June 19, 2020. It was memorable and notable that June 19 is Juneteenth and is now a designated City and County of Denver holiday. The events of the George Floyd protests continued sporadically for months to come. As such, the ERU and many other deputies continued to stand strong in our response to each call for service with the upmost professionalism.

Despite the challenges that 2020 brought to this department, we are answering the call for transformation within the criminal justice system. We are headed in the right direction as we truly began to embrace the philosophy of “Leading with our Humanity.”

Elias Diggins
Sheriff
City and County of Denver

"WE LEAD WITH OUR HUMANITY"

A CAREER WITH THE DENVER SHERIFF DEPARTMENT REQUIRES THAT THOSE WHO WORK IN SERVICE TO OTHERS BEAR A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. CONSCIENTIOUS MINDSETS ARE A CRITICAL ASPECT OF THE JOB, NOT ONLY TO INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS, BUT ALSO TO THE SUCCESS OF THE DSD AS A UNIFIED AGENCY.

“We LEAD with our HUMANITY” – this sentiment should be instilled in everything the DSD does. Every DSD employee should recognize that they are in a profession where they must display one’s humanity in all actions, including the way use of force is utilized. From the way people speak to and treat one another, the public, and those in the DSD’s custody, everything must be guided by our humanity. When we lead and end our actions in this way, we can be confident that they are done thoughtfully.
“The deprivation of a person’s FREEDOM is their punishment.” It is not our responsibility to punish anyone while in DSD custody. The people in the community DSD serves should be confident that those in our custody will not be mistreated. Even when someone violates a rule while in the DSD’s facilities, our responsibility is to correct their behavior, not to punish. Employees will ensure that the conditions of DSD facilities go beyond conventional means and represent the best practices in our field.

The DSD is a proud department with a tradition of “Dedication, Service, and Duty” – we are committed to embracing the Dual Mindset of Humanity and Freedom in our work and as we move forward.

**BODY-WORN CAMERA PROGRAM**

The Civil Unit was the first DSD entity to implement the use of body-worn cameras (BWC) in 2019, beginning the development and implementation of the BWC program.

On May 28, 2020, DSD deputies, including the Emergency Response Unit (ERU), were called upon to assist other law enforcement officers during the marches, protests, and riots taking place in response to the death of George Floyd. These deputies were issued BWCs during these events and the ERU continues to utilize these cameras as part of their response plan.

Law enforcement agencies, including the DSD, use body-worn cameras to:

- Improve evidence collection.
- Strengthen officer performance and accountability.
- Enhance agency transparency.
- Document encounters between officers and the public.
- Investigate and resolve complaints and officer-involved incidents.

The program is slated to continue into 2021 with deputies working in Intake at the DDC.

**NEW EMPLOYEE WEBSITE**

Internal communications, especially in an expansive department, play a fundamental role in building a shared understanding of the policies and procedures that effect the organizational infrastructure. There are many ways to disseminate information to staff working in a multi-faceted agency, one of which is the ability to quickly access an easy-to-navigate, user-friendly website that is only available to active departmental employees. This is also known as an intranet.

A central place for digital gathering, the intranet offers consistency in information and knowledge, regardless of position, rank, or turnover in the workforce. From any facility, on any approved device, every employee has access to departmental documents, policies, videos, electronic forms, and interactive tools to ensure that everything they need to perform their jobs is available to them.

On September 8, 2020, the DSD migrated from an outdated internal website, in use for over a decade, to Microsoft SharePoint, used by agencies across the CCD. The DSD was the last agency within the CCD to make the change, not having the personnel to accomplish the task in previous years. After introducing a Digital Communications Specialist to the DSD Marketing and Communications Team, the project began immediately upon hire and was completed 15 months later.

Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Other goals related to increasing and improving communication within the department include a decreased dependency on email correspondence and a reduction in the amount of submitted help tickets. Quantifying these goals will require additional resources, however the number of views for intranet pages is on par with the number of employees in the department, which means staff are going to the intranet for the information they seek.
WELCOME DIRECTOR OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGY

Elizabeth “Lizzie” Friend joined the DSD leadership team as the first Director of Performance Management and Strategy in mid-December 2019. In her position, Lizzie manages the Assessment & Inspection Team and the Data Analytics Unit.

Lizzie came to DSD from Denver’s Community Planning and Development, where she spent the previous two years as the agency’s Community Insights Program Manager. In that role, she worked alongside the Risk Management and Innovation Unit to manage digital public participation efforts, track and benchmark department-wide engagement strategy, and facilitate process improvement and innovation studies.

Lizzie is passionate about process improvement, strategic planning, and data-driven problem solving, and has applied those skills in her new role. Outside of work, you can find her hiking, reading, working on her trivia skills, or rowing with the Boulder Community Rowing team.

WELCOME CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

Vincent “Vince” Line joined the DSD as the new Chief of Operations in mid-October. Chief Line leads both of Denver’s jails as well as Court Services, the Civil Unit, Warrant Detail, the Emergency Response Unit, and other functions.

Chief Line graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in Denver and has gone on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Business Management degree, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Public Administration. He also served in the U.S. Army as a combat medic where he was honorably discharged.

He served as a deputy with the DSD, then went on to the Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office (ACSO). He spent 19 years with ACSO where he served with distinction in all ranks, including Chief of the Detention Services Bureau, overseeing the Detention Facility and Court Services, among other duties. He previously served as the Chief of the ACSO Public Safety Bureau, which includes Patrol, Crisis Intervention, and S.W.A.T.

Chief Line is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and is an assessor and team leader for the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). He also serves on the Arapahoe County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee and sits on their Behavioral Health Subcommittee.

RETENTION ASSESSMENT EFFORTS

Key findings were summarized and presented to DSD leaders in a formal report. The RMI began forming focus groups and task forces to aid in the implementation of the recommendations included in the report. These retention efforts will continue to be prioritized in 2021.

The Risk Management and Innovation Unit (RMI) partnered with stakeholders in 2020 to conduct an evaluation of retention efforts to determine how best to address employee turnover. The evaluation focused primarily on retention for sworn staff, but highlighted areas for future assessments that will identify and address employee satisfaction for civilians.

On August 10, 2020, the RMI fielded a department-wide survey to identify areas of focus for the assessment. In total, the RMI received 327 responses to the Employee Engagement Survey, which equates to a 35% response rate.
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Wellness Program faced many challenges during 2020, due to public health orders and taking steps to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The workout facilities closed for seven (7) weeks, then reopened with limited capacity, specified restrictions, and daily UV lighting and AroClave spray cleanings. The Wellness team had to rethink how they would provide wellness programs in a virtual setting, including training sessions and videos, physical therapy, meetings, and virtual wellness incentive programs. The DSD Wellness Facebook page also played a large role in communicating these standards and wellness plans to its 671 members.

The Wellness team continued to pivot as public health orders guided the DSD in creating a plan for “Enhancing and Protecting Employee Well-Being During COVID-19.” In addition, Inward Fitness came on board to assist the personal training program in mid-August, providing roughly 40 hours per month.

2020 SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The Special Olympics CO organization arranged three events: 5K/Polar Plunge, Ford Truck raffle, and the Virtual Law Enforcement Torch Run. DSD employees participated in each event and raised over $5,000.00 for Special Olympics CO athletes in 2020.

BLOOD & PLASMA DRIVE

The DSD Blood Drive Fight Against COVID-19 was very successful with almost 30 donors – 9 were first-time donors. The whole blood/Alyx units collected will enhance and/or save the lives of 72 individuals and the plasma donations will be used to help many patients dealing with COVID-19.

TOP THREE WELLNESS PROGRAMS UTILIZED FOR 2020

1,403
Chaplain Support Contacts with DSD Staff

1,258
Personal Training Class Visits

998
Physical Therapy Visits

*To reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, DSD workout facilities closed for seven (7) weeks and were reopened with restrictions and daily UV lighting and AroClave spray cleaning requirements. Physical therapy appointments decreased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health order mandates.
EMPLOYEE OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Employee Outreach Program (EOP) supports staff by offering resources to relieve critical stress that may impact their well-being and decision-making. This support system may help to foster an increase in staff efficacy, regarding safety and security, as those in the custody of the DSD prepare to rejoin the community. Benefits gleaned from this program are resultant of educating, encouraging, and empowering DSD staff and further inspiring them to lead with humanity in all that they do.

Because of the unique challenges introduced in 2020, the EOP developed, deployed, and collaborated on nine new wellness initiatives specifically designed to enhance and protect employee well-being during COVID-19. Throughout this time, the EOP conducted 46 referral-based outreaches with uniformed and civilian staff. During outreaches, staff are referred to free, confidential, and effective resources that target a variety of personal and professional challenges, such as: postpartum depression, parenting and relationship challenges, financial struggles, domestic violence, loss of a loved one, suicide, legal dilemmas, physical injuries, childcare, homelessness, and even food insecurity.

ANNUAL EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Each year, DSD leadership recognizes employees who have gone above and beyond as an employee or member of the community. In 2020, the employees listed below were recognized and awarded at our first virtual awards ceremony.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Partnership</th>
<th>Lifesaving Award</th>
<th>Commendation Awards Cont.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Edwards</td>
<td>Deputy Donald DeMello</td>
<td>Gabrielle Aragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pony Anderson</td>
<td>Deputy Ronald Simonson</td>
<td>Danielle Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumumba Sayers</td>
<td>Deputy Mesfin Gizaw</td>
<td>Daria Serna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shalonda Palmer</td>
<td>Deputy Rosemarie Redding</td>
<td>Victoria Farley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Lambert</td>
<td>Deputy Joshua Perez</td>
<td>Lisa Dunnigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrett Slater</td>
<td>Deputy Manuel Vasquez</td>
<td>William Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Matthew Book</td>
<td>Deputy Richard Ayensah</td>
<td>Carissa Mah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Sheriff Health Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Service Award</th>
<th>Medals of Valor</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warren Holloway</td>
<td>Deputy Robert Lynn</td>
<td>Andrea Arellano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neza Sarkari</td>
<td>Deputy Maurice Potter</td>
<td>Tim Mills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Peeples</td>
<td>Deputy Justin Payne</td>
<td>Sunny Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Ronald Thomas</td>
<td>Jennifer Kincheloe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Diego Villapando-Hernandez</td>
<td>Courtney Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Christopher Guerin</td>
<td>Amit Kumar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Matthew Townsend</td>
<td>Lizzie Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joe Clasperl</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Service</th>
<th>Commendation Awards</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant Eric Givens</td>
<td>Doctor Bradley McMillan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant Hazel Pablo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Chad Kroupensky</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Diego Villapando</td>
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</tbody>
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7.
INMATE PROGRAMS

INMATE PROGRAMS UPDATE

The year started strong with the Inmate Programs Team continuing to offer a wide variety of classes in collaboration with the HOME Program, operated by Servicios De La Raza. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, Inmate Programs was forced to quickly pivot, beginning in early March, to providing programming by various remote means. The team began to offer classes via correspondence, including the RISE Program by video. All previously provided program services continued via correspondence, excluding DUI Education. The Reentry Program (previously Life Skills) continued to focus on providing services and case management to the population who scored 5+ on the PROXY – a tool that assesses an individual’s risk of reoffending – providing that the inmate’s length of stay was 45 days or more.

As the pandemic continued, and the jail population began to decline, the number of participants engaging in program services also declined. Over the course of 2020, decreased enrollment in programs resulted in 1,580 participants engaging in services. Over the course of the summer, the DSD Inmate Programs staff began to return to in-person program offerings at the County jail for Cognitive Behavioral Intervention, Anger Management, and Parents on a Mission. Concurrently, staff working from home continued to offer classes remotely – Substance Use and Job Readiness via video. The remainder of the population housed at the DDC and County Jail received these classes, as well as Healthy Relationships, Conflict Resolution, and Financial Health, via correspondence work. The GED program also continued to offer homework via correspondence and eventually returned to utilizing the GED lab for those residing at the County jail and requiring GED testing.

The Inmate Programs Team hopes to offer more in-person programming in 2021.

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The DSD and Denver Sheriff Health Services have partnered to provide a variety of programs for individuals in Denver’s custody. The Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program is available for inmates with substance use disorders. MAT offers a combination of medication, counseling, and behavioral therapies. Research shows that a combination of medication and therapy can successfully treat substance use disorders and, for some struggling with addiction, MAT can help sustain recovery.

Ultimately, MAT aims to provide a comprehensive, individually-tailored participant experience that leads to living a sustained recovery and self-directed lifestyle. Medications used within the program include: Methadone, Buprenorphine, Suboxone (Buprenorphine/Naloxone), and Naltrexone (oral and long-acting injectable [Vivitrol]).

Table 1. The number of orders placed for each MAT medication and protocol; and the number of individuals who received an order for each MAT medication and protocol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication/Protocol</th>
<th>Numbers of Orders</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opiate Withdrawal Protocol</td>
<td>1,433</td>
<td>1,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buprenorphine or Suboxone</td>
<td>1,864</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naltrexone (PO)</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivitrol</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methadone</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA FROM JAN. 1, 2020 – DEC. 31, 2020
HIGH ACUITY TRANSITION UNIT

The DSD and Denver Sheriff Health Services provide, in addition to medical care, mental health care for the inmate population managing mental illness. The High Acuity Transition (HAT) Unit provides a safer and more focused treatment setting for incarcerated individuals who present significant symptoms of major mental illnesses. The goal is to assist the inmates in stabilizing their acute psychiatric symptoms by taking medication(s), if appropriate, participating in a stable and supportive environment, and receiving additional treatment interventions. In 2020, the HAT Unit had a daily average of 10.3 participants with a maximum capacity of 12 individuals. The medication compliance and group therapy participation was 100% for program participants for the entire year.

MENTAL HEALTH TRANSITION UNITS

Denver Sheriff Health Services provides the Men and Women’s Mental Health Transition Units (TU) that are available to inmates who want to participate. The collaboration between DSD, Behavioral Health, and community partners is essential to the success of the transition units. TU provided support to an average of 131 male inmates and 85 female inmates per month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE PARTICIPATION DATA</th>
<th>FEMALE PARTICIPATION DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Days in Unit</td>
<td>91.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Number of Days</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Number of Days</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Participants      | 85                        |
| Average Number of Days in Unit | 47.93       |
| Minimum Number of Days | 1                        |
| Maximum Number of Days  | 497                       |

MEN'S HEALTH SERVICES TRANSITION UNIT PROGRAM RACE & ETHNICITY JAN. 1, 2020 - DEC. 31, 2020

WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES TRANSITION UNIT PROGRAM RACE & ETHNICITY JAN. 1, 2020 - DEC. 31, 2020
ANNUAL DATA FOR PEOPLE IN-CUSTODY

**2020 INMATE POPULATION BY GENDER**
- **Female**: 5,504 (22%)
- **Male**: 17,520 (78%)

**2020 INMATE POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY**
- **White**: 9,756
- **Hispanic**: 6,667
- **Black**: 5,641
- **Asian**: 189
- **Native American**: 158

**22,579**
Total bookings

**35.7**
Average age

**21 DAYS**
Average length of stay

**62**
Average releases per day

**2020 INMATE POPULATION BY CLASSIFICATION**
- **Level 1 - Max**: 25
- **Level 2 - High**: 216
- **Level 3 - Medium High**: 2,324
- **Level 4 - Medium Low**: 5,965
- **Level 5 - Minimum**: 1,184

**MENTAL HEALTH ALERTS**
- **NONE**: 17,416 (77%)
- **MH CODE**: 5,163 (23%)

**AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION**
- **2018**: 2,110
- **2019**: 2,060
- **2020**: 1,352

**SUICIDE ALERTS**
- **NONE**: 22,189 (98%)
- **SUICIDE CODE**: 390 (1%)

*Mental Health Alert Note: The MH Alerts pie chart is based on a 12-month average. However, daily snapshots of the DSD inmate population typically shows 40-50% of the population with a MH alert, because the MH population has historically longer lengths of stay.*
LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

An expanded process to support incarcerated individuals in need of lactation support began in February 2019. In 2020, the program benefited 14 participants, of which three (3) received lactation consultation, two (2) stored milk at the jails, and one (1) received transportation assistance. Most program participants are released within three (3) days of booking. For 2020, eight (8) of the 14 participants were released within three (3) days and the average length of stay for participants was eight (8) days.

Those who are eligible are offered a hand pump and educational materials within four (4) hours of booking. After being placed in housing after intake, they are offered access to a medical-grade pump and supplies. Within 24 hours after Inmate Programs staff is notified, the person in our care is offered a lactation consultation, supplies for storage, or assistance with transportation. The level of a participant’s involvement in the program is oftentimes influenced by their length of stay.

INFORMING THE COMMUNITY

The City and County of Denver website is comprised of a large network of city agency websites, including the DSD. To streamline the look, feel, and function of these websites, all city departments moved to OpenCities – a website content management system – on December 18, 2020. All website addresses remain the same – the only noticeable change from a user’s point of view is an improved experience. Behind the scenes, website authors are trained on improving the visitor experience by increasing readability,
making all webpage components accessible according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), offering straightforward information, and building a streamlined network of clickable links, informative pages, and current contacts that provide answers instead of questions.

A primary goal of a city website is to provide the community it serves a clear path to pertinent information. While continuously striving to improve the relationship between the public and easily accessible information, the DSD aims to incorporate the needs and requests of the community. We invite you to visit our website and tell us what you think!

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, it became clear from the number of requests DSD received, that more information was desired by the community. At the conclusion of many coordination meetings, DSD and Denver Sheriff Health Services decided upon providing interactive dashboards for the daily jail population and COVID-19 case data, taking advantage of the recently available technology necessary to incorporate interactive data dashboards on the website.

The ability to provide this level of information in real time each day has reduced the number of requests that staff manages. Feedback has been overwhelming positive from community members and families of those in custody – moving into 2021, information will continue to be provided in this same format on the website.

RECRUITMENT OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the national outcry for law enforcement reform, has opened a window of opportunity for attracting the next generation of deputies. To do so, the Recruitment team had to pivot and apply innovative strategies, adapt to the ever-changing landscape, and strengthen relationships with applicants.

2020 began with the traditional in-person hiring events at colleges and military institutions geared toward finding candidates to attend the DSD Training Academy. That changed in March, as COVID-19 became a threat to the agency’s wellbeing, and the Recruitment Team had to rely more on social media and virtual events to get the word out and also work closely with applicants. During what some may consider a difficult year – for others, a year of opportunity – the DSD successfully brought 50 recruits on board.
COMMUNITY SHOWS GRATITUDE

It was a challenging year for all as the world learned how to live through and navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. Law enforcement officers faced additional scrutiny while managing summer protests and riots focused on law enforcement reform. The department, however, received tremendous support from numerous community organizations and restaurants that donated food, drink, and encouragement to DSD employees in recognition of their service. Every person offering their gratitude, especially during 2020, is greatly appreciated.

SHERIFF ADVISORY BOARD

The Sheriff Advisory Board (SAB) was established in 2017 and provides an avenue for the community to inform and collaborate with the DSD regarding ideas, concerns, and evolving issues with service delivery to inmates, their families, community, and service partners. The SAB is composed of representatives from diverse communities, geographic areas, and interest groups that make up Denver. The members also come from a variety of professions and perspectives, which are reflected in discussions and recommendations.

The SAB experienced challenges in 2020, as did most organizations and groups, maintaining momentum in achieving its goals. Clearly, the biggest challenge was driven by the one circumstance beyond anyone’s control — the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ironically, in addressing the challenges presented by the health emergency, solutions brought the fulfillment of a key SAB priority area — jail population reduction.

New department leadership reinforced the importance of the SAB as a primary source of input and advice regarding the pulse of the community at large. Through its efforts, the SAB has prepared and positioned itself as a vital voice, representative of the community, when corresponding with the DSD. Reflecting on the year 2020, the SAB is encouraged as some of its beginning ideas have manifested in policy and initiatives while others are now a part of ongoing agency conversations.

A focus for 2020 was to ensure the alignment of the SAB priority areas with the evolving strategic plan and dual points of focus of the department — recognizing the humanity of those in our care and custody and working to...
prepare them for a positive return to the community.

In 2020, several high priority SAB objectives, established at its inception, were realized. Results of those efforts, which occurred in conjunction with other agencies, include:

- Reductions in jail population by increased use of administrative and structural changes, such as personal recognizance bonds and the waiving of administrative fees, have occurred due to the coordination of agency efforts, such as the courts, bond office, and DSD.
- Greatly enhanced delivery of mental health treatment and resources for those in our care and custody.
- More visible recognition and appreciation of our dedicated staff – uniformed and civilian.
- Staff and detainee safety and security.

As we move into 2021, we need tell more positive stories of activities, initiatives, and achievements occurring within the department. Fuller utilization of the great departmental communication infrastructure that has developed is a must. Additionally, the impressive leap in available datasets contributes to refined decision-making. The work accomplished from implementing reform bodes well for all of us, moving forward. We need to ensure that all that good goes beyond our four walls.

**ENSURING FAMILY CONNECTIONS THROUGH COVID-19**

Coupon codes for free remote video visitations at Denver jails, provided by Securus Technologies, were offered throughout April, May, and June of 2020 to friends and families of inmates, attorneys, and social agency partners. Remote visitations allow a person in custody to connect with someone in the community from within their housing unit. It is critical for family members, friends, attorneys, and social agencies who provide valuable reentry resources, to connect with incarcerated persons as frequently as possible, without barriers, to maintain support systems, legal matters, and reentry needs.

Throughout this time, Denver jail lobbies had preventative measures in place due to COVID-19. This change in logistics made remote visits crucial for communication between those in the community and those in our care. Remote visits also offered a way to connect in the safest capacity possible at that time.

Approximately 580 coupon codes were issued for remote visits at the Denver County Jail and approximately 665 coupon codes were issued for remote visits at the Downtown Detention Center.

**COMMUNITY MASK DONATIONS**

Over 7,000 cloth face coverings, surgical masks, and face shields were donated to the DSD during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Most of these donations – cloth face coverings and surgical masks – were offered to every person released from custody and returning to the Denver community. The face
shields were used by contract staff and court personnel for additional protection during the pandemic.

The generosity and care accompanying these donations is greatly appreciated, especially during a time of great hardship for people leaving custody and encountering additional barriers to services, employment, and safe housing resulting from the pandemic. Many individual residents of Denver also provided donations, as well as the organizations noted below.

In addition to the many kind and generous individuals from the Denver community, our thanks go to:

- **THANKSGIVING MEALS**
  A partnership between DSD members of the Black Sheriff’s Protection Association (BSPA) and The Action Center, distribute Thanksgiving meals each year and 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, was no exception.

  Members of BSPA started early in the morning, filling over a thousand boxes with food products for an entire Thanksgiving meal. Approximately 250 boxes were given to DSD BSPA members to deliver to families in need throughout Denver. This is a partnership that will continue for years to come.

- **CHRISTMAS CRUSADE**
  DSD employees volunteer each year for the Christmas Crusade for Children, organized by Metro Law Enforcement Agencies in partnership with KYGO Radio. Established in 1983 by a small group of “Santa Cops,” Christmas Crusade for Children was designed for city and state police and sheriff department personnel to bring Christmas to underprivileged children.

  Every year, law enforcement employees nominate children of families needing assistance with gifts. 2020, however, saw a change in event logistics due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As they normally would, KYGO radio aired the nominees’ stories to solicit donors who were encouraged to give gift cards and monetary donations. The traditional large shopping spree, which requires extensive coordination, had to be scaled back, as well. Despite the many changes and challenges, the Christmas Crusade for Children provided gifts to approximately 1,100 children.
The COVID-19 pandemic has presented immense challenges to all government agencies, forcing them to act quickly to mitigate the spread of the disease, implement safety precautions for employees, uphold service to their communities, and maintain operations amidst unprecedented conditions. For the DSD, these challenges were compounded by unique responsibilities and constraints facing correctional facilities, as well as pre-existing staffing and budget shortages.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the DSD has relied on guidance from local, state and federal public health agencies, executive leadership at the Denver Department of Safety, Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE), Denver Public Health, Denver Health and Hospital Authority, Denver’s Emergency Operations Center, and the Mayor’s Office to identify and implement important procedural and policy changes that have helped to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The agency has acted quickly and decisively to maximize safety and stem the spread of the virus while still fulfilling its essential functions as a public safety, law enforcement, and correctional institution.

On March 12, 2020, Denver Mayor Michael Hancock declared a state of local disaster and emergency (per C.R.S. 24-33.5-701), which allowed all City and County of Denver agencies to immediately mobilize in response to the developing pandemic. Alongside other state and local government agencies, the DSD began closely following guidance from public health departments and medical experts and enacting procedural changes aimed at mitigating the spread of the disease.

DSD adopted new policies and implemented operational changes in real time based on emerging information from government and public health agencies. Operationally, these strategies were determined using three different areas of focus: improving safety for people in custody, staff, and for the Denver community.

As soon as the city mobilized in response to COVID-19, the DSD partnered with the Department of Safety and a large group of external stakeholders to work together to reduce the jail population using a variety of strategies. Through these collaborative efforts, the population was reduced to 60% of its pre-COVID-19 levels within 30 days. This immediate and significant reduction allowed DSD leadership and operations staff the time and physical space to implement additional social distancing, testing, quarantining, housing cohorting, sanitation, and PPE measures to maximize safety among those still in custody.

**INMATE TESTING AND QUARANTINE PROTOCOLS**

In partnership with Denver Health (DH) medical staff, DSD leadership determined in March that aggressive and proactive testing protocols would be one of the most important tools in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 within the jail facilities. Because of the nature of bookings and releases, the layout and capacity of jail housing pods, and updates to policies to ensure safe and appropriate housing, completely isolating or quarantining the jail population was not possible. Instead, medical staff designed a method to ensure all potential cases of COVID-19, and any corresponding exposures, were immediately identified, tested, quarantined, and provided with care and treatment.

On March 12, 2020, Denver Mayor Michael Hancock declared a state of local disaster and emergency (per C.R.S. 24-33.5-701), which allowed all City and County of Denver agencies to immediately mobilize in response to the developing pandemic. Alongside other state and local government agencies, the DSD began closely following guidance from public health departments and medical experts and enacting procedural changes aimed at mitigating the spread of the disease.

On March 25, 2020, the DSD implemented a screening policy to ensure every person who was symptomatic upon being booked into custody would be immediately tested. By April 27, 2020, testing protocols were expanded to include all people being booked into custody, regardless of whether symptoms were present. This new policy was...
implemented after new research identified the significance of COVID-19 spread via asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic cases. This early action allowed the DSD to closely monitor trends in in-custody cases and take preemptive steps to monitor spread.

The DSD was the first to introduce aggressive testing among people in custody, acting weeks and in some cases months before similar protocols were implemented in nearby jurisdictions. While the DSD relied on comprehensive laboratory testing, the agency also expanded screening questions to include COVID-19 symptoms and implemented temperature checks for all incoming bookings.

Individuals who test positive for the COVID-19 virus are housed alone or with another individual who has tested positive until they are released from “protocol status.” Individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19, but are asymptomatic, are directed to self-monitor for symptoms and report any changes. Symptomatic, confirmed positive, and exposed inmates are flagged respectively and monitored per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

Despite these comprehensive testing and quarantining policies, both Denver jail facilities experienced significant outbreaks and rises in cases throughout the year that mirrored trends in the surrounding community. The first case documented inside DSD facilities occurred on March 30, 2020, at the Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center; the first case at the Denver County Jail followed two weeks later on April 13, 2020. As of December 31, 2020, there have been no deaths associated with COVID-19 among people in custody at Denver jail facilities.
SOCIAL DISTANCING AND PPE USE

Beginning in March 2020, the DSD began an iterative process of implementing new policies related to social distancing among employees and people in custody, the use of PPE among employees and people in custody, sanitation in the facilities, and housing and movement protocols for people in custody who are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. On April 29, 2020, the DSD issued cloth face masks to everyone currently in custody and added the issuance of a cloth face mask to the standard booking protocol during intake. As was the case with early testing protocols, the DSD was at the forefront of the decision to issue masks to people in custody relative to other similar correctional facilities.

Throughout the pandemic, the DSD relied on guidance from the CDC and the Denver Health and Hospital Authority (DHHA) to identify the best ways to enforce social distancing for people in custody and to isolate suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases within the structural limits of the jail facilities. In addition to requiring and enforcing mask-wearing, the DSD also took steps to encourage social distancing by limiting the number of people leaving their cells at a given time, within reason, and by posting signage to encourage social distancing practices.

The DSD managed an unprecedented pandemic within the confines of an institution that was primarily designed to provide secure custody of people housed in relatively dense conditions. Navigating the COVID-19 outbreak within facility design constraints was further complicated by the continued need to separate inmates based on classification level.

PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONAL SAFETY MEASURES

Since the official start of the pandemic on March 12, 2020, the DSD has prioritized the safety of its employees by directing non-essential workers to work remotely (effective on March 13, 2020) and providing essential/on-site workers with PPE and the ability to take leave for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. As part of the plan to maintain employee safety, the DSD focused on four key factors: employee screening protocols, flexible leave policies, social distancing and PPE, and employee immunizations. Additionally, the City and County of Denver and the DSD leveraged...
communication systems to provide employees with updated information throughout the pandemic.

Each agency within the City and County of Denver, including the DSD, selected a COVID-19 Workplace Coordinator (CWC) to spearhead the implementation of preventative measures. The goal of implementing these preventative measures was to help reduce the spread of the virus and ensure the transition of employees safely back into the office workspace. Some of the implementation highlights that DSD has accomplished are:

- Installing physical distancing shields for public facing functions and some of the professional visitation rooms.
- Providing individual hand sanitizers to decrease the need to share.
- Routinely disinfecting housing areas with aerosol sanitization machines.
- Disinfecting vehicles with UV-C lights to protect deputies and passengers.

The DSD also worked with internal and external stakeholders to implement further operational changes, in addition to social distancing and PPE use, to protect people in custody, such as suspending programs and in-person appearances, enhancing cleaning protocols, implementing virtual visits and evaluations, and introducing sanitation devices in various capacities.

**FLEXIBLE LEAVE POLICIES**

Any employee with fewer than 80 hours of banked sick leave or paid time off as of January 1, 2021, was awarded a one-time additional bank of leave time to bring their balance to 80 hours. Under the Colorado Healthy Families and Workplaces Act, employees with more than 80 hours of sick leave or paid time off were not awarded additional leave, nor were employees whose balance dipped below that threshold any time after January 1, 2021.

By providing employees with enough paid leave, the DSD ensured employees could isolate, quarantine, receive treatment, and provide care for family members per CDC guidelines, without impacting their pay. In turn, this flexibility helped to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in DSD workplaces.

**EMPLOYEE IMMUNIZATIONS**

Through a partnership with Denver Public Health and Denver Health’s Center for Occupational Safety and Health (COSH), DSD employees began receiving voluntary COVID-19 vaccinations on December 28, 2020 as part of Phase 1B.1 of the Colorado distribution plan. As of February 8, 2021, 70% of eligible City and County of Denver employees have received their first vaccination shot, while 42% have received their second shot and are fully inoculated.

**Chart 14: Vaccination Progress Among Denver First Responders**

Since medical experts do not yet know if immunized individuals can still carry and transmit the virus, the DSD will continue to mandate the use of PPE, social distancing, and good hygiene practices following wide-spread employee immunization.
COMMUNITY SAFETY

The DSD adopted new practices to protect the community by maintaining transparency in reporting and implementing changes to the inmate release process. To protect the community, the DSD focused on 3 key areas: transparency in reporting, new inmate release protocols, and public-facing services.

The DSD also leveraged virtual applications to facilitate personal and professional visits. When virtual meetings are not possible, precautions are in place to protect visitors to include distancing shields in meeting rooms at the DDC and the Lindsay Flannigan Courthouse.

The DSD also maintains records of all visitors for the purpose of contact tracing. Court hearings are conducted virtually, when possible, and when in-person facility visits cannot be avoided, the DSD enforces social distancing by adhering to maximum occupancy guidelines and posting signage. In line with local, state, and federal guidelines, the DSD enforces the use of facial coverings in all DSD buildings.

In further support of community safety, the DSD Civil Unit suspended the execution of evictions and the VIF moved to a virtual vehicle auction process (beginning on May 13); vehicle pickup is facilitated by appointment only. The Recruitment Unit reduced community interaction by moving to virtual events, when possible, and leveraging social media to recruit new employees. Social distancing and facial coverings are used when contact cannot be avoided.

The DSD also increased sanitization of high-touch areas and strategically placed hand sanitizer dispensers for visitors to use in all DSD facilities and buildings. The department also implemented a process for supplying visitors with masks when needed. By adhering to public health guidelines for public buildings, the DSD is doing their part to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 virus for community members who enter its facilities.

COVID-19 WORKPLACE COORDINATOR

In alignment with the City and County of Denver’s effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, each agency selected a COVID-19 Workplace Coordinator (CWC) to spearhead the implementation of preventative measures. The goal of implementing these preventative measures was to help reduce the spread of the virus and ensure the transition of employees safely back into the office workspace.

DSD selected the CWC to build a team of about ten COVID-19 Workplace Assistants to support the more than 900 DSD employees. The CWC in July 2020, has since overseen the integration of new procedures into daily operations, the installation of distancing shields, issuance of PPE supplies (N95, KN95, surgical masks, face shields, gloves, hand sanitizers, etc.), and equipment sanitization, such as UV-C lights and the AeroClave aerosol disinfecting machine.

In 2020, and moving forward into 2021, the DSD COVID-19 Workplace team will continue to ensure the DSD follows the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, and Denver Department of Public Health & Environment. Some of the implementation highlights that DSD has accomplished are:

- Installing physical distancing shields for public facing functions and some of our professional visitation rooms.
- Providing individual hand sanitizers to decrease the need to share.
- Routinely disinfecting housing areas with aerosol sanitization machines.
- Disinfecting vehicles with UV-C lights to protect deputies and passengers.
SECURITY MANAGEMENT

As the DSD was navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic, the city began to experience unprecedented unrest. Protests and riots demanding law enforcement reform began forming across the country, following the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, who died while being arrested in Minneapolis, MN. The DSD had to redirect resources to assist the city with protecting city buildings and transporting arrestees to the DDC. The social unrest lasted for a couple of months, which led to the creation of partnerships and new processes.

DSD’s Security Management Unit developed interagency relationships with the Denver Police Department Intel Unit, FBI Denver, and the Denver Security Office to receive and share critical information during the protests and riots. Those relationships continue today and have expanded to sharing critical intelligence.

The unit also established a notification system with the Court Security Committee to ensure the committee members were apprised of protest activities. This system has also expanded to include security and threat information. The Security Management Unit, along with DSD’s Court Services Captain, secured access to the city’s HALO camera system. This allowed the DSD to establish a “mini-command post” during the protests to advise on activities that would impact the DDC, Lindsey-Flanigan Courthouse (LFC), and the City and County Building. The Security Management Unit also secured fencing for the DDC, LFC, and Denver County Jail during the protests. The unit has initiated discussions for a long-term, improved security solution for the DDC and LFC to include the design and acquisition of a permanent fence.
We LEAD with our humanity.