

# **Town of Cheektowaga**

## **Police Department**

### **Police Reform & Reinvention Plan**



**March 2021**

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## **PREFACE**

On June 12, 2020, Governor Cuomo signed an Executive Order requiring each local government in the State to adopt a policing reform plan by April 1, 2021. To ensure the plans are developed through an inclusive process, Governor Cuomo called for the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative. The Collaborative process needed to include the following steps:

- Review the needs of the community served by its police agency, and evaluate the departments current policies and practices.
- Establish policies that allow police to effectively and safely perform their duties.
- Involve the entire community in the discussion.
- Develop policy recommendations resulting from this review.
- Offer a plan for public comment.
- Present the plan to the local legislative body to ratify or adopt it.
- Certify adoption of the plan to the State Budget Director on or before April 1, 2021

The New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Resources & Guide for Public Officials and Citizens recommended the following discussion points throughout the collaborative:

### **I. What Functions Should the Police Perform?**

1. Determining the Role of the Police
2. Staffing, Budgeting, and Equipping Your Police Department

### **II. Employing Smart and Effective Policing Standards and Strategies**

1. Procedural Justice and Community Policing
2. Law Enforcement Strategies to Reduce Racial Disparities and Build Trust
3. Community Engagement

### **III. Fostering Community-Oriented Leadership, Culture, and Accountability**

1. Leadership and Culture
2. Tracking and Reviewing Use of Force and Identifying Misconduct
3. Internal Accountability for Misconduct
4. Citizen Oversight and Other External Accountability
5. Data, Technology and Transparency

### **IV. Recruiting and Supporting Excellent Personnel**

1. Recruiting a Diverse Workforce
2. Training and Continuing Education
3. Support Officer Wellness and Well-being

# **DISCUSSION POINTS ACCOMPLISHED BY THE** **CHEEKTOWAGA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## ***The Role of Police***

The Cheektowaga Police Department is a service oriented police agency. The Department is involved in over 50,000 calls for service per year. Of these calls, approximately 10% result in some form of enforcement (arrest/summons issued). The Cheektowaga Police Department is involved in a School Liaison Program with all districts within the Town. The Cheektowaga Police Department employs a full-time Behavior Health Specialist to work with officers in addressing public needs and concerns. The Cheektowaga Police Department provides many community and social events as well as informational trainings to the community.

## ***Staffing, Budgeting, and Equipping the Police Department***

*Staffing* – The Cheektowaga Police Department is budgeted for 129 sworn personnel. Currently, due to retirements, etc., the Cheektowaga Police Department is currently staffed with 120 sworn personnel and an anticipated 5 recruits to be sent to the Erie County Law Enforcement Training Academy in February. The Cheektowaga Police Department also maintains a civilian staff of full time civilian personnel, and part-time personnel. There are 68 people employed part-time at the Department. The part-time personnel encompass areas including court security, cellblock attendants, dog wardens, crossing guards, and central records staff.

*Budgeting* – The Cheektowaga Police Department's total 2020 budget was \$18,500,000.00. The largest expense in the budget is manpower, followed by new vehicle purchases, and communication equipment. The Cheektowaga Police Department received 2020 reimbursements to a total of over \$615,000. Many of these reimbursements are related to task forces that members are assigned to including school liaison programs, grants, and the Walden Galleria Mall. The Cheektowaga Police Department has come under budget for well over 10 years.

*Equipping* – A portion of The Cheektowaga Police Department, approximately \$910,000.00, is the commodities budget. This budget covers everything from vehicles to office supplies. This budget is based upon lowest bid for all purchases over \$2,000.00.

## ***Procedural Justice & Community Policing***

The concept of Procedural Justice is based on fairness and consistency, voice and representation, transparency and openness, and impartiality. The Cheektowaga Police Department has trained all its officers in these concepts. Additionally, the Cheektowaga Police Department trained all its members in Fair & Impartial Policing. The Cheektowaga Police Department trained all officers in VDI (Verbal Defense and Influence). VDI acts as a means to improve citizen/police encounters. The Cheektowaga Police Department has been engaged in Community Policing for over twenty years. Many of our practices involve community engagement and support. The Cheektowaga Police Department partakes in foot, motorcycle, and bicycle patrol on a yearly

basis. Comment cards are provided to the citizens we engage annually. The Cheektowaga Police Department attends community and neighborhood watch meetings. The concerns and information provided through these meetings is utilized to assess and solve the issues and concerns raised by the citizens. Officers are strongly encouraged to engage the community, realizing that we are in a partnership with the community to solve problems. By engaging the public we can address concerns of crime and the fear of crime.

### ***Community Engagement***

The Cheektowaga Police Department, through its Community Services Unit, is deeply involved within the community. Activities and programs include:

- Citizens Police Academy
- Graduate Citizens Police Academy
- Youth Academy
- Neighborhood Watch
- National Night Out
- Recruitment at colleges, job fairs, and through social media
- Do the Right Thing
- Car Seat Installations
- CRASE- Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events
- Social Media presentations geared towards youth and their families
- Maintaining the Department's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts
- School Liaison Program
- Internships
- Mental Health – Full-Time Behavioral Health Specialist performing follow-up on emotional and substance related crisis
- Unused Medication Drug Drop Boxes
- Numerous community related seasonal and holiday events

### ***Community Oriented Leadership, Culture, & Accountability***

The Cheektowaga Police Department realizes that change cannot occur without the belief and support of leadership. The Cheektowaga Police Department understands that accountability is essential for mutual trust between the community and the Police Department. The Cheektowaga Police Department utilizes Blue Team as well as IAPro in reviewing officers conduct. The Cheektowaga Police Department has strong policies related to employee misconduct and rules violations. Every citizen complaint, as well as, internal complaints are investigated to the fullest extent. Additionally, all use of force incidents are documented and maintained. A review of all use of force is performed annually. All officers are given an annual review in which their supervisor assess their individual performance. The Cheektowaga Police Department's Policies and Procedures (consisting of more than 150 policies) are provided through Lexipol which is a nationwide law enforcement policy and procedure review provider. The Cheektowaga Police Department engages in staff development catered towards supervisors. This training updates supervisors on policy changes, trends, and strategies. This development time also allows for the sharing of ideas amongst departmental leaders and supervisors.

### ***Citizen Oversight & External Accountability***

The Cheektowaga Police Department is a NYS Accredited Agency, and has been for 20 years. Part of the Accreditation process includes an Accreditation review and assessment of the 64 standards every four years. Accreditation requires the Cheektowaga Police Department to maintain policies, procedures, and practices adhering to State guidelines. The Cheektowaga Police Department provides the citizens the ability to file a complaint through our website as well as in person. All members of the Cheektowaga Police Department have a duty to accept and forward complaints regarding misconduct. All complaints are investigated either as Supervisory or Internal Affairs. Complainants are notified as to the outcome of the investigation.

### ***Data, Technology, & Transparency***

The Cheektowaga Police Department, through its website, provides statistics and data related to law enforcement activities such as drug overdoses, traffic infractions, arrests, and sex offender information. The Cheektowaga Police Department website also includes numerous Departmental policies for public viewing, a link to file a citizen complaint, and employment opportunities. The Cheektowaga Police Department also utilizes some of the latest technology in our efforts. All patrol vehicles are equipped with mobile data terminals providing immediate information and data beneficial to police investigations. Many patrol vehicles are equipped with license plate readers, a technology that indiscriminately provides data on all vehicles crossing within the reader contact. The Cheektowaga Police Department patrol vehicles have been equipped with car cameras for over 10 years. The Cheektowaga Police Department recently issued all patrol officers body cameras. Body cameras are utilized during the engagement of daily patrol functions. The Cheektowaga Police Department maintains a full-time Records Unit that provides comparative statistical data as needed.

### ***Recruiting a Diverse Workforce***

The Cheektowaga Police Department and all local Police Departments are governed by Civil Service with regards to hiring. The Erie County Civil Service offers a police exam every 3 years. Military points are added to the scores of veterans. When hiring, selection is made from one of the top three candidates, as per Erie County Civil Service. Candidates also go through an extensive background check, psychological evaluation, as well as a physical fitness test. The Cheektowaga Police Department, in an attempt to recruit a diverse workforce, attends job fairs, provides study guides, and distributes recruitment pamphlets to residents of the City of Buffalo.

### ***Training & Continuing Education***

The Cheektowaga Police Department is a firm believer in training and continuing education. Recruits attend a 20-week Police Academy located at the Erie County Law Enforcement Training Center. Upon graduation from the academy, recruits have a 15-week Field Training Program in which recruits are placed with Field Training Officers in 3-week increments. Daily grading, evaluation, observation and education take place during this period. Upon successful completion of the Field Training Program all officers are required to have a minimum of 21 hours of annual training of which no more than 8 hours can be firearms training. On average,

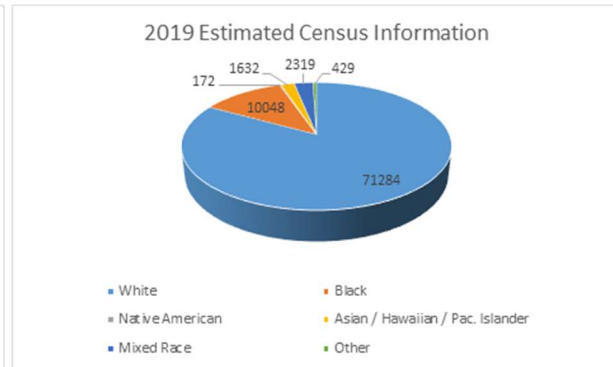
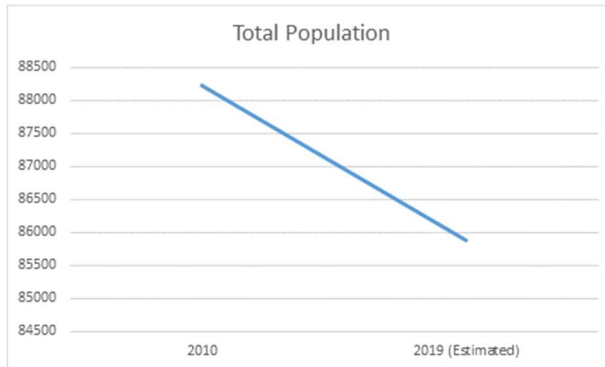


prior to the current pandemic, officers annually attain 40 plus hours of training. The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department conducts firearm training, a minimum of 3 times per year. All officers are trained in Crisis Intervention, De-escalation, Fair and Impartial Policing, Procedural Justice, and the Critical Decision Model.

***Support, Officer Wellness, & Well-Being***

The Cheektowaga Police Department, in an effort to support officer wellness, partners with the Employee Assistance Program as well as the Police Peer Helpline. The Department maintains a well-equipped gym and encourages employee utilization.

# TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA CENSUS INFORMATION



Census Total TOC	2010	2019 (Estimated)
Total Population	88226	85884
White		71284
Black		10048
Native American		172
Asian / Hawaiian / Pac. Islander		1632
Mixed Race		2319
Other		429

POLICE CALLS FOR SERVICE	2018	2019	2020
<i>Police Calls for Service</i>	52504	47695	45032
<i>CHARMS Arrests</i>	4251	4380	2983
<i>Traffic Tickets</i>	11801	11764	6401
<i>Accident Calls for Service</i>	3414	3469	2604

## **DEPARTMENT HISTORY**

The Town of Cheektowaga was incorporated in 1839. The Town's charter provided for two elected constables to act as law enforcement for what was primarily a rural community.

By Civil War time, railroad lines bisected the Town. The railroad boom that followed brought a new era of development. Constables remained as elected officials until 1901 when they were replaced by Town Board appointed special constables. Rules were adopted to govern their duties.

The 1920's was a decade of substantial Town growth with the arrival of the Buffalo Airport (1926) and the construction of the new Town Hall (1927). In 1928 the Town established a full time, salaried constable force. Police Districts were created, motorcycle patrols began traffic enforcement, and call boxes and telephones were installed for better communications.

On July 1, 1932, the Town of Cheektowaga Police Department was officially created and established. Charles Wohlford was named Chief of Police. Eleven Officers were also appointed to patrol the Town.

From these humble beginnings, The Cheektowaga Police Department has grown to a force of 129 sworn officers. Our Dispatch Center consists of 1 Senior Public Safety Dispatcher and 26 Dispatchers. The Cheektowaga Police Department has a support staff of over 70. Together all members of The Cheektowaga Police Department provide the Town with courteous professional service.

The Town is approximately 30 square miles, with a population of nearly 86,000 residents. It is estimated that our daytime population can swell to more than 200,000 due to our large retail, transportation and commercial areas. Answering more than 50,000 calls for service annually makes us one of the busiest Town agencies in all of New York State.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Cheektowaga Police Department exists to protect life and property, enforce all laws, prevent and detect crime, and provide emergency response services within the Town of Cheektowaga.

We interact with and educate the community in matters of public and personal safety.

All members of the Department will provide the highest level of service and carry out their responsibilities so as to exhibit courtesy, diligence, and integrity.

We will be assertive, impartial, and protect the constitutional rights of all people.

## **CORE VALUES**

**Honor:** Honor holds the core values together. Honor means living up to the oath taken upon hire. It means understanding what's right, and taking pride in the community's acknowledgement of that reputation. Be true to your promises, and live the core values in everything you do. Honor creates a bond of trust among members of the department and shows the strength of will to live according to our values even when temptation is there to do otherwise.

**Integrity:** Integrity is the willingness to do what's right, even when no one is looking. A person of integrity has the moral courage to do what's right, even if the personal cost is high. Be honest: we don't lie; we make our word our bond. A person of integrity is responsible; acting according to the requirements of their duty, and accountable for their actions. There is no separation from professional to personal life, the standard remains the same.

**Discipline:** Discipline is our obligation to exercise control over ourselves in all aspects of life. Avoid public displays of anger, discouragement, frustration and any action that would bring discredit. Maintain high standards physically and mentally. It takes discipline to strive for the excellence that is a hallmark of this department every day.

**Respect:** Respect for self, respect for others. Recognizing our authority, rely on the golden rule: treat others as we would like to be treated. Recognize that respect will not be given to us unless we show it to others and to ourselves. How we treat others reflects upon each of us, both personally and as a professional organization.

# **DEPARTMENT DIVISIONS**

## **Patrol Division**

Patrol is the main component of the Police Department whether as first responders to calls for service, conducting preliminary investigations, enforcing traffic laws or engaging in self-initiated activity. The Police Department utilizes foot patrol, one and two man cars, undercover cars, motorcycles and bicycles to patrol the Town of Cheektowaga.

The Patrol Division operates on the community-policing model in which input from the community is vital to determining policing strategies. Officers attend community meetings to interact with the residents and address their concerns regarding law enforcement. The Patrol Division provides the initial response to calls for service from the public. They are responsible for the prevention of crime, enforcement of all laws, the arrest and prosecution of criminals and the protection of life and property.

In addition, Officers also function, as court bailiffs and tax office security. The Patrol Division is also responsible for traffic and crowd control at all the major parades and events in the Town.

### ***Bicycle Patrol Unit***

The Cheektowaga Police Department Bicycle Patrol Unit was started in 1993. The goals of this unit are to make officers more approachable to our residents, and provide an alternative patrol method. Bicycle Patrol Officers may be seen patrolling the entire Town and focusing their patrols in the Town Parks, during all three shifts. They are also often utilized during special events, parades and festivals due to their increased mobility.

### ***Foot Patrol***

The Foot Patrol Program has received funding for over 25 years from the Office of Economic and Community Development through HUD. The funding provides the ability to add additional Officers into the community to increase the safety and security of the neighborhoods and reduce the fear of crime. Officers address quality of life issues and neighborhood concerns through a combination of foot, bicycle, and motorcycle patrols and by conducting traffic safety checkpoints. The location of these patrols directly correspond with the low-moderate income areas of the Town. The program runs from June-October to insure the highest possible interaction rate with the residents of these neighborhoods.

### ***Honor Guard***

The Cheektowaga Police Department Honor Guard was formed in 1980 and is comprised of approximately nine (9) sworn police officers from throughout the Department. Originally established to provide honors for Officers Killed in the Line of Duty. The Cheektowaga Police Honor Guard is now recognized as the Department's official ceremonial unit. Multifaceted, the unit is capable of performing routine duties such as traditional color guard functions, as well as coordinating and performing the intricate details inherent to Police-style funerals. The Cheektowaga Police Honor Guard is consistently asked to provide a wide range of ceremonial functions at Department, Town, and civic events. The Honor Guard members range in rank from Police Officer to Detective with the unit being led by a Lieutenant.

### ***Traffic Unit***

#### ***Accident Investigation Unit***

The Accident Investigation Unit provides technical expertise to the department in the areas of accident investigation, drunk and/or impaired driving detection and arrest and the operation of speed detection. This unit is responsible for the investigation of all serious and fatal motor vehicle accidents that occur within the town. We also investigate citizen complaints of speeding vehicles, illegal parking and other traffic related issues. This unit also utilizes a speed trailer to assess and determine areas of concern with relation to excessive speed.

#### ***Motorcycle Unit***

The Motorcycle unit was founded in 1929. Currently there are 7 members in the Motorcycle unit including officers from the Patrol Division and the Traffic Unit. Officers use the motorcycles during their regular shifts and for special events. The motorcycle unit can be seen in parades as well as many WNY community events along with motorcycles units from other Police agencies. The Motorcycle Unit has also participated as official escorts for victim's families during the annual Police Week in Washington D.C.

#### ***Crossing Guards***

The Traffic Unit is responsible for the crossing guards that work at all 4 school districts located within the town. Currently there are 11 crossing guards that work part time crossing students at busy intersections. The crossing guards ensure safe passage to those students that walk to their schools.

## ***Tactical Unit***

The Tactical Unit is a specialized unit that consists of a Special Weapon and Tactics Team (SWAT) and a Crisis Support Team. The Tactical Unit responds to incidents of a high risk nature that involve the need for specialized training and equipment. The Tactical Unit operates as a coordinated unit as it attempts to resolve these situations without injury or loss of life. In situations that threaten life due to the actions of the suspect(s), the mission shall be one of protecting the lives of innocent citizens and the police.

The Crisis Support Team provides negotiations, communications, and logistical support to the Tactical Unit. It consists of Police Officers and non-sworn support personnel such as Public Safety Dispatchers.



## **INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION**

The Investigative Division is comprised of the General Detective Bureau, Special Investigations Bureau, Youth & Family Services and Crime Scene Investigation Unit. In addition, there are also specialty units that come together as needed, included among them are the Sex Offense Squad & Fire Investigation Unit. The overall supervisor of the Investigative Division is the Captain of Detectives. There are Lieutenant supervisors of the individual units within the Investigative Division as mentioned above.

### ***General Detective Bureau***

The Detective Bureau is responsible to investigate all homicides, suspicious deaths, robberies, burglaries, frauds, bad checks, identity thefts, computer crime, larcenies and assaults among others. The 8-4 shift is comprised of 1 Detective Lieutenant and 6 Detectives. The 4-12 shift is comprised of 1 Detective Lieutenant and 3 Detectives. Detectives assigned work closely with federal, state and other local police departments as well as the Erie County District Attorney's Office.

### ***Special Investigations Bureau***

The Special Investigations Bureau (SIB), formerly known as the Vice, Gambling and Narcotics Unit exists to investigate all phases of investigations involving the sale and possession of controlled substances, gambling offenses and prostitution. As of late 2020, the unit has taken on the extra responsibilities of retail crime investigations which led to the unit being renamed. The unit is comprised of 1 Detective Lieutenant and 4 Detectives. An additional Detective is assigned to the DEA Task Force. The unit is designed to interact with other law enforcement agencies as well as members of the community.

SIB routinely conducts local and regional narcotics investigations while coordinating and analyzing extensive criminal intelligence. The members of the unit are also assigned all retail crime investigations in an attempt to curtail the rising theft from area malls, plaza's, and big-box stores as well as complaints of prostitution and gambling. The unit investigates violations of the Alcoholic Beverage Control act and made referrals to the State Liquor Authority regarding licensed premises. SIB prepares and coordinates all phases of criminal asset forfeiture and seizure.

### ***Youth & Family Services***

Youth & Family Services (YFS) has a dual mission. They are responsible for investigations in which juveniles (less than 18 years of age) are involved. They are also responsible for investigations involving family violence. Regarding juveniles, the unit is responsible for:

- Conducting investigations into events involving endangering the welfare of a child, unlawfully dealing with a child, child abuse, child neglect or abandonment, children who are unlawfully employed and other related crimes in which an infant or juvenile is a victim
- Actively searching for missing persons, especially missing juveniles and runaways from home, court jurisdictions and institutions

- Supervise the process of making referrals to Family Court, the child abuse hotline, child protective services
- Maintain the security and confidentiality of all juvenile records
- Investigate incidents occurring in the school districts in town and maintaining a good working relationship with school officials
- Making referrals for counseling

Regarding family offenses, the unit is responsible for investigating complaints that involve crimes occurring within a domestic setting. This can involve husband and wife, children and parents, or individuals living together and others.

### ***Domestic Violence Advocate***

In 2005 the Cheektowaga Police Department applied for a grant to the US Department of Justice in partnership with the Town Justice Court, Catholic Charities, Child and Family Services, and Haven House to seek funding for a full-time Domestic Violence Advocate. Since then the Town of Cheektowaga has had a full-time domestic violence advocate assisting the Cheektowaga Police Department and Town Justice Court with the needs of domestic violence victims.

The Domestic Violence Advocate provides services that include follow-up with victims of domestic violence, developing a safety plan, providing resources such as safe shelter, explaining the criminal justice process, advocating for the victim at all court proceedings, assisting victims in filing claims. The Domestic Violence Advocate meets with approximately 100 victims of domestic violence a month. The Domestic Violence Advocate Program is a great resource within the Police Department. The Domestic Violence Advocate further enhances the services given to the victims as well as the Officers. The Domestic Violence Advocate also assists victims by linking them with other domestic violence advocates in Family Court and the Integrated Domestic Violence Court.

### ***Crime Scene Investigation***

The Crime Scene Investigation Unit (CSI) is made up of six Police Detectives and a Detective Lieutenant. Two of the detectives work CSI full time and the other four assist when necessary. The two full time members are extensively trained and certified in many areas of forensic work including digital photography, videography and the collection and preservation of evidence. CSI Detectives photograph and process all major crime scenes. Processing of crime scenes can include the collection of DNA evidence, blood evidence, latent fingerprint evidence, foot and tire impressions, video evidence, laser trajectory work and more. Unit detectives utilize numerous components of high tech equipment to assist them in their forensic investigations. Full time CSI detectives are also Certified Level 3 Fingerprint Examiners, the highest level attainable in NYS. Latent fingerprints are collected at the scene, brought back to the department lab where they are enhanced, analyzed and then checked against the Statewide Automated Biometric Identification System. Many of the major crimes that occur in Cheektowaga each year are solved through the forensic investigations conducted by the CSI Unit.

### ***Sex Offense Squad***

The Sex Offense Squad (SOS) is comprised of a Detective Lieutenant and four detectives. These members take on these investigations in addition to their regular Detective assignment and are only called out as needed. Investigators assigned to this squad investigate any sex crime occurring within the Town. Detectives assigned receive additional training to better investigate these crimes and to assist the victims. In addition, this squad is also responsible for registered sex offenders living within the Town of Cheektowaga and making community notifications on certain registered sex offenders.

### ***Fire Investigation Unit***

The Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) is comprised of 1 Detective Lieutenant and 3 Detectives. As with SOS, the members take on these investigations in addition to their regular Detective assignments. Each has received specialized training in determine cause and origin of fires. Working closely with the volunteer fire companies within the Town the investigators are called to respond to fires of a suspicious origin.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT**

The Professional Standards Unit consists of the Captain of Detectives and Detective Lieutenant(s). Members of the Unit have the authority and responsibility to conduct investigations into matters relating to professional standards only when commissioned to do so by the office of the Chief of Police. Investigators report directly to the Chief of Police within their internal chain of command. Investigators use recognized methods and procedures to complete a competent, thorough and impartial investigation. This investigation includes but is not limited to:

- Interview of complainant to include a recorded and sworn written statement
- Interview of witnesses to include a recorded and sworn written statement
- Collecting any physical evidence and processing pursuant to normal rules of evidence
- Photographs
- Sketches, drawings
- Laboratory tests
- Medical records
- Video and audio recordings
- Criminal histories
- Interview of subject Officer to include a recorded and sworn written statement

A written report will be completed to include the allegation, Duties and Rules of Conduct under examination, administrative insight on the subject Officer, investigative summary, timeline of investigation, ancillary issues, and a conclusion with a recommended finding for each allegation or component as follows:

- Sustained – complaint is sustained by the evidence and apparently occurred
- Not Sustained – insufficient evidence exists to clearly prove or disprove allegation
- Unfounded – evidence demonstrates the alleged act or conduct did not occur
- Exonerated – conduct alleged was lawful, proper, and/or justified
- Training Issue – additional training required
- Policy Issue/Failure – act occurred due to lack of poorly designed or outdated policy
- Not Involved – employee or department not involved

## **TRAINING**

The Cheektowaga Police Department is proud to adhere to and exceed the New York State standards for training. We begin this as soon as our recruits graduate from the Erie County Central Police Services Academy. While New York State requires 160 hours of Field Training, we maintain a rigorous program that exceeds 480 hours and includes multiple training offers per recruit, daily critiquing and grading, written tests; and a full task book detailing all tasks that must be mastered in order to function effectively as a solo police officer.

The solid foundation of basic skills given to each new police officer is then built upon annually throughout their career. As a New York State accredited agency, the Cheektowaga Police Department is required to maintain a minimum of 21 hours per year of training per officer. We exceed this, every year for every officer. On average a patrol officer receives between 30 and 40 hours of training that are relevant to their work on patrol. This is for all; it does not include the training for those on specialized units that can run into hundreds of additional hours.

When most think of police training, firearms and Use of Force training comes to mind immediately. Naturally, it is of utmost importance that all officers are proficient with their firearms and receive top level training annually. In addition to annual qualification, our officers also train in short repetitive blocks, to keep their skills sharp. We train in low light shooting, shooting in cold weather with full gear, and drills that require transition from one weapon system to another. In addition, tactical drills that involve possible malfunctions, partner injury, ambush, and skill building are also performed annually.

New York State standards state that only eight hours of firearms can be counted toward accreditation training. So, while we do participate in more than eight hours of firearms training in many years; we also focus our training on other areas. Annual mandates include bloodborne pathogens, discriminatory harassment, and biannual review of policies that are most relevant. We also spend a full day on less lethal methods and tactics.

All this is just the beginning of what officers learn and apply. Each year brings numerous legal updates, from new case law to changes in laws already on the books. All these are parsed, summarized, and disseminated Department wide through an online system that allows for access

to all bulletins anywhere, anytime. This allows officers to refresh their memories or look up something they remember but may need specifics in right on the spot. An example is the updates in bail and “qualifying offenses” that changed several times throughout the year last year.

Training is also careful to vet and incorporate new trends, stay on top of developing theories, and ensure that all are equipped with the tools needed to handle a variety of circumstances. All officers are trained in Verbal Defense and Influence (VDI), a nationally taught de-escalation program. We also have trained all officers in ICAT: Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics. This training focuses on non-firearm encounters that officers often encounter. It teaches a thought process called the Critical Decision Model, that allows officers to slow a situation down, fully realize their options, make a decision and then continuously re-evaluate. While VDI and ICAT are separate programs, they work well together to give officers multiple systems of thought that will allow them to successfully resolve situations.

These trainings are given to all new hires, and they are then reinforced throughout and woven into all other types of training. For example, scenario training does not always involve a shoot-don’t shoot as often assumed. Our trainings also involve using verbal skills to defuse situations. We have a Firearms simulator that allows us to train officers any time, and allows for situations to “branch;” so if an officer uses proper verbal skills the scenario can resolve peacefully. Range/firearms training also often features scenarios that do not involve using a firearm, showing officers that what is expected on any given day may not be what presents.

We also train in unconscious/implicit bias; and in 2015, brought a national expert in to train the entire department in a full curriculum. Command staff included community leaders and stakeholders in their extended, two-day training session. The following year, we hosted a train the trainer session that attracted attendees from across the area. This training has allowed us to conduct our own refresher training on this subject; and to ensure that all our trainings keep in mind the ideas learned.

Mental health is another area of focus. Ours was the first Crisis Response/Intervention Team in the area. We currently have over 70 officers certified. All officers, certified or not, have also been through a full day of training in Dealing with Emotionally Disturbed Persons. This training was developed and taught in house, and was certified by DCJS.

In addition to the variety of trainings that are given department wide, we also have units that receive more specialized training. Our SWAT team trains monthly and maintains the certifications and skills necessary to their higher standards of proficiency. A subset of the SWAT team, the snipers also engage in separate training that hones their expertise. A complement to both is our Crisis Support Team: negotiators and support staff that are called in for certain critical situations.

Within the investigative division, those who work in Internal Affairs all have received full training in conducting effective investigations; with refresher and new training taken as offered.

Detectives assigned to Youth and Family Division or Sex Offense Squad also receive special training.

In addition to the training we do in house for our officers or send them to through outside entities; we also are one of the top agencies to help bring training to others. We host trainings from nationally known instructors and companies not only to avail ourselves of the best instruction, but also to offer the opportunity for other agencies to join. For example, we host Background Investigations for Police Applicants annually. This class, taught through Law Enforcement Seminars based in Texas, brings in officers from across the state. Our Community Services division hosts School Resource Officer Training and Community Service Officer Training. We are always on the watch for new opportunities; we evaluate possible hosting prospects and select only the best.

Our instructors teach not only in house, but bring their skills and expertise outside the agency as well. As previously mentioned, we were the first agency to initiate a CIT team. We have since assisted in instructing all other county agencies, both through Crisis Services and through the CPS Academy. We also have instructors requested through the Academy for Firearms, Emergency Vehicle Operation, Supervisor School, and Field Training Officer's Course.

Whether viewed in categories or in a broad perspective, it is easy to see that the effort devoted by the Cheektowaga Police Department to maintain top standards of training and development is unrivaled. We do not use this as an excuse to rest though; and are on a constant watch for new and better methods and content.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES UNIT**

The Community Services Unit (CSU) is a vital component of the Cheektowaga Police Department. This unit was formed in 1991 as an effective conduit of two-way communication between the Department and the community. It is staffed by one Lieutenant, two full-time Police Officers, one full-time Behavioral Health Specialist and one part-time secretary. Personnel coordinate and implement initiatives designed to decrease crime before it occurs and improve the quality of life in Cheektowaga.

The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department recognizes the importance of maintaining an atmosphere of openness with the Community we serve. We actively seek to establish a cooperative relationship and keep the community informed on matters of public interest. In doing so, we often work together with different community groups. Some of the groups are the Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce, Resurrection Life Food Pantry, and Buffalo Peacemakers Violence and Gang Intervention Program. The CSU actively engages with all of these groups to further their specific mission. The mission of the Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce is to assist, support and promote business in the Cheektowaga Community through economic development, educational and legislative programs, and in doing so, strengthen the Cheektowaga community. Resurrection Life Food Pantry is a registered distribution center for the Food Bank of Western New York serving the 14227 and 14225 zip codes area within Western New York. Buffalo Peacemakers Violence and Gang Intervention Program provides proactive intervention into the cycle of violence in the lives of gang-involved or at-risk youth.

A main ongoing function of the CSU is maintaining a virtual presence on Social Media and working with many local news agencies to disseminate information about ongoing concerns of crime and the various programs offered by the Police Department. The CSU has exclusive control over content on the Department's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Ring Community, YouTube, and TIP411. None of these programs are utilized for crime reporting or emergency response services. The CSU works diligently to present information that is within the law, policies and procedures of the department, and meet common sense guidelines. The CSU also makes an effort to get relevant collected information back to Police Officers within the department. For interdepartmental use CSU utilizes work email and maintains E-Briefing, a presentation given to all Officers at the beginning of their shift to pass information about persons, areas, and events of importance.

C.R.E.B. (Crime Resistance Executive Board) is a prime example of the CSU working within our community. C.R.E.B. was created by the Police Department to give the CSU an opportunity to meet with the Presidents of each neighborhood watch group. Monthly meetings disseminate information from the Police Department to the neighborhood watch presidents and gather relevant information from the neighborhood watch group presidents. Cheektowaga had as many as 30 separate neighborhood watch groups at one point, and this program brought them all together. CSU members facilitate an independent civilian board with meeting setup, attend the

monthly meetings, and participate in ongoing communication with members of the community about Police areas of concern while receiving feedback.

The CSU runs many annual community involvement programs. The goal is to bring our Officers and the community together in a positive light so an ongoing flow of information and confidence in each other can exist. It allows for the general public to become better informed about how the law shapes the way a police officer may act and gives insight into police tactics. The CSU offers a one night a week Citizens Police Academy that takes place over the course of thirteen weeks and a follow up Graduate Citizens Police Academy that meets one night a week for eight weeks. The Department's Ride Along program is also run through the CSU offering adults or young persons with parental approval an opportunity to get into a police car and interact with an Officer in a one-on-one setting during the course of an actual work shift. A driving force behind all of this is to instill faith and trust in our Officers from the community.

Other annual programs include participation and planning of National Night Out which is typically run in three different venues across Town and has a pizza contest for our local pizzerias. The CSU has a partnership with the NYS Child Passenger Safety Advisory Board. Car seat installations are provided at no cost to the public throughout the year and our Department hosts certification classes each year to train Officers from around the State. Car Fit for seniors is an educational program that provides a quick, yet comprehensive review of how well a senior citizen and their car can work together and to improve driver safety and comfort behind the wheel. The program was developed by AAA, AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association.

### ***School Liaison Program***

The CSU is also responsible for the school liaison program. There is one full time school liaison at an alternative school called "The Edge", and five part-time School Resource Officers who are responsible for the four school districts that divide the Town of Cheektowaga and the vocational school "Harkness". The goal is not to arrest children and enforce the laws, but to serve the schools in a mentorship role for children and to actively engage in keeping the school safe. Arrest and prosecution decisions are made in concert with the school's administrative staff and is generally used as a last resort. The CSU prepares School Liaison Weekly Updates to share points of interest and concerns with all of the SROs and senior staff at the Police Department. The CSU manages the Active Shooter Response program for schools to include assisting with lockdown drills annually.

The Do the Right Thing program encourages teachers to nominate students they have observed take commendable action during the school year. The Do the Right Thing program (DTRT) is open to all students in grades kindergarten through 12th, who reside in Cheektowaga, attend school in Cheektowaga, or do the recognizable deed in Cheektowaga. Nominated students receive recognition of their accomplishment.



### ***Blue Bridges Initiative***

The CSU also has a special partnership with the Blue Bridges charitable organization. Blue Bridges is an organization started by two of our members. Blue Bridges targets children at the middle school age in order to establish a rapport with our Officers. During a typical school year, the events take place during school assemblies and range from volley ball games against teachers to relay races with students. A main goal is to let kids who are at risk know that the Police are not their enemy, that the Police are human beings, and they can always come to us for help. We additionally aid Blue Bridges with their Blue Mittens program. Blue Mittens program identifies and donates to children in need at Christmas time. They are provided with gifts that their families would not otherwise be able to afford.

The CSU participates in many other programs and has created programs to better serve the needs of the community. Some events include: Christmas Drive Through Dinner Party, Christmas decorated Police Car for parades and display, CRASE (civilian response to active shooter events), Wednesdays in the Park, Operation Safechild, Lucky Duck Scavenger Hunt, Trunk or Treat Drive Through Event, Galleria of Treats, birthday parade drive-bys, Police station tours, Reinstein Park Reading to kids, Senior SCAMs Program, Girls and Boys empowerment sessions, Family Fun Night, Fantastic Friends (Christmas events and cookies with cops), ConnectLife blood drives, blanket drives, Stranger Danger Presentations, security surveys for businesses and homes, FATHERS fishing program.

### ***Selection, Recruiting, and Retention:***

The hiring process is handled by the CSU and starts with recruitment. Since becoming a police officer is dependent on taking a civil service test, the most important step is that we spread the word about upcoming Erie County civil service examinations for entry level police officers. The more applicants that take the test, the larger our selection pool becomes. The process starts with pushing all the information out about the exam on our Social Media Platforms. This is the quickest and easiest way to start spreading the information. Getting this information out on social media is only the first step. Historically when an examination is approaching we attend many career fairs. While there, we will hand out give away items such as pens, patches, pencils, and distribute a pamphlet “Procedures for Becoming a Cheektowaga Police Officer”. This pamphlet gives a broad overview of our hiring process to those who are interested. Alongside this pamphlet we will hand out a study guide for the test if one has been created by Erie County. The events we have attended include Colleges Job Fairs at Erie Community College, Bryant & Stratton, Hilbert, Niagara University, Medaille, and business job fairs at the Walden Galleria.

The Cheektowaga Police Department is constantly trying to hire a representation of our diverse community and have worked with the NYS Department of labor to get this same information spread in areas where there is a larger statistical representation of minority candidates. Before the last examination was given the CSU worked with the NYS Department of labor to gain access to two job fairs run in downtown area of the City of Buffalo. The CSU additionally printed up over

300 pamphlets and gave them out to community leaders at various Churches and Community Centers along the Eastern edge of the City of Buffalo, which borders the Town of Cheektowaga. Three programs utilized by CSU in an ongoing effort to build interest in the Cheektowaga Police Department and to identify possible future applicants. The three programs are the internship program, the Cheektowaga Police Youth Academy, and the Cheektowaga Police Explorers.

### ***Behavioral Health Unit – Mental Health and Outreach***

The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) was started officially on August 12, 2019. The Cheektowaga Police Department formed a partnership with Endeavor Health Services to address the issue of mental health in our Community. Specifically, the Behavioral Health Unit attempts to identify mental health concerns in the Town and link individuals with services in order to get them the help they need and prevent an escalation into criminality or a crisis situation. The Unit partners a Behavioral Health Specialist with a Police Officer to attend emergency calls and conduct follow up as necessary. The partnership brings together the perspective of social work and pairs it with police work in real time eliminating a lot of confusion and delay. The goal is to de-escalate the situation and through follow up prevent a crisis from ever happening. Officers at the department refer calls to the BHU for follow up when they identify a mental health or other concern. This partnership has brought about significant change within the police department and the community. The unit has been so successful that the Buffalo Police Department has now copied the model.

On average the BHU responds to 15 calls either directly or on follow-up per week with 123 calls answered in the first two months of 2021. Additionally, the BHU assists in the teaching of CIT at the Erie County Police Academy, aids our local homeless population with linking services, and is responsible for petitioning and testifying at Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) hearings.

## **CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM**

In 2013, The Cheektowaga Police Department created a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). CIT was developed by the Memphis Police Department after a tragic police involved shooting of a mentally ill man. The concept was not new, however, there was only one police department in New York State with a CIT.

Cheektowaga Police partnered with Crisis Services to develop a 40-hour training program which followed guidelines from CIT International (an international organization that exists to help departments create CIT's). The training was approved by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services and the first Cheektowaga Police Officers were trained in CIT in August 2013. The training consists of identification of mental illness, understanding treatment options, communication skills including de-escalation and numerous scenario based training. The Cheektowaga Police CIT training was unique in that it included an 8 hour ride along program where officers spent time with Crisis Services counselors on the streets observing evaluations. Various outside presenters assisted with the training, including doctors from Erie County Medical Center, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Alzheimer's Association and others.

Initially, the training was offered to officers who volunteered to attend the training. All patrol supervisors were also assigned to complete the training. Today, nearly every patrol officer has attended CIT training. Cheektowaga Police formed a strong relationship with treatment providers in the community including Crisis Services. The goal of our CIT was to reduce the use of force incidents involving those suffering from mental illness and divert those who are ill from jail and hospitals. One statistic that showed great success was the number of involuntary hospital transports (under Article 9.41 of the Mental Hygiene Law) decreased from 298 in 2011 to 236 in 2015. We also saw our instances of use of force during involuntary transports decrease. Following the early success of the Cheektowaga Police CIT, Officers assisted other local police departments in creating CIT's. Our Officers also began teaching CIT to all police recruits at the Erie County Central Police Services Basic Police Academy.

Today, CIT is a well-established part of policing in The Town of Cheektowaga. In fact, we have augmented our CIT with a full time behavioral health specialist assigned to the Cheektowaga Police. We continue to review and evaluate the program and make changes when necessary. The Cheektowaga Police Department recognizes the need to provide officers with advanced training in assisting those in mental health crisis and the importance of working with the experts in our community to provide the best possible assistance to our residents.

## **IA PRO**

In 2009, the Cheektowaga Police Department partnered with IA Pro, a software program that provides a set of specialized applications designed to support Professional Standards, front-line uniform and supervisory elements of the organization. The software is designed from the ground-up to meet the needs of internal affairs and professional standard units. For example:

- Creates a digital file for any Internal Affairs investigation
- Stores all files related to the Internal Investigation to include statements, police reports, audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, IA summary, and IA findings.
- Tracks assignments, tasks, and the status of both in relation to an IA investigation

The second component of the IA Pro software program called Blue Team is designed to support patrol, command and supervisory staff on the front-lines. The web-enabled application enables citizen complaints, uses-of-force, vehicle accidents and pursuits to be entered and managed by field personnel in a straightforward fashion. Blue Team greatly streamlines intake and assessment of information from the field while eliminating significant data entry.

The third component of IA Pro is the Early Intervention solution. This enables supervisors to efficiently familiarize themselves with the incident involvements of employees under their purview. The software is designed to emphasize and highlight employees by performing peer group analysis to determine who may require closer observation.

## **LEXIPOL**

Lexipol, LLC is a nationwide organization producing, among other things, law enforcement policy manuals based on federal and state laws, regulations and law enforcement practices, written by legal and public safety professionals who constantly monitor major court decisions, legislation and emerging trends affecting law enforcement operations.

Lexipol provides the Town of Cheektowaga Police Department with a clear, straightforward, professional policy manual with proven, legally defensible content, which addresses issues related to risk management, liability, safety, and best practices for law enforcement agencies.

The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department receives Daily Training Bulletins to bring the manual into practice through real-life, scenario-based training exercises emphasizing high-risk, low frequency events which may qualify for continuous training certification, as well as manage administration of critical updates consistent with current case law for the Town's policy manual. As a NYS Accredited Agency, Lexipol allows for ease of administration in the deployment, monitoring and tracking of policy updates amongst its personnel as required by the Department of Criminal Justice Services,

The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department has been using Lexipol services and content since it contracted with them in March of 2016.

## **NEW YORK STATE ACCREDITATION**

Accreditation is a progressive and contemporary way of helping police agencies evaluate and improve their overall performance. It provides formal recognition that an organization meets or exceeds general expectations of quality in the field. Accreditation acknowledges the implementation of policies that are conceptually sound and operationally effective.

The New York State program became operational in 1989 and encompasses four principle goals:

1. To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement agencies utilizing existing personnel, equipment and facilities to the extent possible;
2. To promote increased cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies and other agencies of the criminal justice services;
3. To ensure the appropriate training of law enforcement personnel; and
4. To promote public confidence in law enforcement agencies.

The Accreditation Program is comprised of a set of standards developed to further enhance the capabilities of an agency, and is divided into three categories. Standards in the Administrative section have provisions for such topics as agency organization, fiscal management, personnel practices, and records management. Training standards encompass basic and in-service instruction, as well as training for supervisors and specialized or technical assignments. Operations standards deal with such critical and litigious topics as high-speed pursuits, roadblocks, patrol, and unusual occurrences.

The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department was first Accredited on June 2, 1994. The Department has been recertified five times since that date, in the years of 1999,2004,2009,2014, and 2019. The Accreditation Program Manager also submits an annual compliance survey and he or she will notify the Office of Public Safety (OPS) within 30 days, at any time the Police Department can't maintain compliance with any of the program standards.

## **THE PROCESS**

When Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 203 went into effect Chief Michael Sliwinski conferred with Supervisor Diane Benczkowski regarding the path to take to meet these requirements. Discussions were held regarding recruitment of committee members within the community. Committee members were canvassed and all accepted the appointment.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions personal meetings were not an option. A survey was created and placed on the Police Department website as well as the Town of Cheektowaga's website. Information regarding the survey was placed on all forms of social media, electronic marquees, as well as a local paper tailored to Cheektowaga (The Cheektowaga Bee).

Comments and concerns from the public could be forwarded to the committee via an email address set-up, as well as personal contacts from the committee.

All meetings were in Zoom format and live streamed on YouTube video for the public to see. Three Zoom meetings were held in which many topics related to the reinvention process were discussed as well as issues sensitive to the Town of Cheektowaga Police Department. The final Zoom meeting was held on March 4, 2021 and was also live streamed on YouTube. The final meeting was to discuss and review the Police Reform and Reinvention Plan.

Upon agreement of the Town of Cheektowaga Police Department Police Reform and Reinvention Plan it was available for public review and comment.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

### **1. I am a resident of the Town of Cheektowaga?**

Yes	<u>91 (96.81%)</u>
No	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

### **2. With which gender do you most identify?**

Female	<u>39 (41.49%)</u>
Male	<u>53 (56.38%)</u>
Transgender Female	<u>0 (0%)</u>
Transgender Male	<u>0 (0%)</u>
Non-conforming	<u>0 (0%)</u>
Prefer not to answer	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

### **3. What is your age?**

18 to 24	<u>1 (1.06%)</u>
25 to 34	<u>11 (11.7%)</u>
35 to 44	<u>14 (14.89%)</u>
45 to 54	<u>21 (22.34%)</u>
55 to 64	<u>24 (25.53%)</u>
65 to 74	<u>20 (21.28%)</u>
75 or older	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

### **4. Are you of Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish origin?**

Yes	<u>1 (1.06%)</u>
No	<u>93 (98.94%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

### **5. How would you describe yourself?**

White or Caucasian	<u>83 (88.3%)</u>
Black or African American	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
Hispanic or Latino	<u>1 (1.06%)</u>
Asian or Asian American	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
American Indian or Alaska Native	<u>0 (0%)</u>
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	<u>1 (1.06%)</u>
Another Race/Ethnicity	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
Unknown	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**6. How satisfied are you with the Department's presence in your neighborhood?**

Very Satisfied	<u>33 (35.11%)</u>
Satisfied	<u>31 (32.98%)</u>
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<u>19 (20.21%)</u>
Dissatisfied	<u>6 (6.38%)</u>
Very dissatisfied	<u>5 (5.32%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**7. How effective do you feel the Cheektowaga Police Department is at reducing crime?**

Extremely effective	<u>26 (27.66%)</u>
Very Effective	<u>35 (37.23%)</u>
Somewhat effective	<u>25 (26.6%)</u>
Not very effective	<u>4 (4.26%)</u>
Not at all effective	<u>4 (4.26%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**8. How likely are you to call the Cheektowaga Police Department if you have a criminal or safety concern in your neighborhood?**

Very likely	<u>71 (75.53%)</u>
Likely	<u>15 (15.96%)</u>
Neither likely nor unlikely	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
Unlikely	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
Very unlikely	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**9. How satisfied are you with the Cheektowaga Police Department's ability to respond to problems in your neighborhood?**

Far above average	<u>31 (32.98%)</u>
Above average	<u>31 (32.98%)</u>
Average	<u>22 (23.4%)</u>
Below average	<u>8 (8.51%)</u>
Far below average	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**10. Do you feel your level of safety in the Town of Cheektowaga has changed in the last six months?**

Yes, feel safer	<u>12 (12.77%)</u>
No, it has stayed the same	<u>59 (62.77%)</u>
Yes, feel less safe	<u>23 (24.47%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>



**11. How likely are you to take additional steps to protect yourself from crime (starting a neighborhood watch, downloading Tip411 app, and/or adding security systems)?**

Very likely	<u>30 (31.91%)</u>
Likely	<u>36 (38.3%)</u>
Neither likely nor unlikely	<u>21 (22.34%)</u>
Unlikely	<u>4 (4.26%)</u>
Very unlikely	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**12. Do you feel the Cheektowaga Police Department is respectful to all people?**

Strongly agree	<u>41 (43.62%)</u>
Agree	<u>23 (24.47%)</u>
Neither agree nor disagree	<u>22 (23.4%)</u>
Disagree	<u>4 (4.26%)</u>
Strongly disagree	<u>4 (4.26%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**13. Do you feel the Cheektowaga Police Department is trustworthy?**

Strongly agree	<u>40 (42.55%)</u>
Agree	<u>29 (30.85%)</u>
Neither agree nor disagree	<u>19 (20.21%)</u>
Disagree	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
Strongly disagree	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**14. Do you feel the Cheektowaga Police Department allows for public input and comment?**

Strongly agree	<u>29 (30.85%)</u>
Agree	<u>31 (32.98%)</u>
Neither agree nor disagree	<u>26 (27.66%)</u>
Disagree	<u>6 (6.38%)</u>
Strongly disagree	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**15. Do you feel the Cheektowaga Police Department acts to promote public safety?**

Strongly agree	<u>38 (40.43%)</u>
Agree	<u>37 (39.36%)</u>
Neither agree nor disagree	<u>12 (12.77%)</u>
Disagree	<u>5 (5.32%)</u>
Strongly disagree	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**16. Would you feel comfortable voicing a concern with the conduct of an officer of the Cheektowaga Police Department?**

Yes, very comfortable	<u>43 (45.74%)</u>
Yes, somewhat comfortable	<u>19 (20.21%)</u>
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	<u>15 (15.96%)</u>
No, somewhat uncomfortable	<u>11 (11.7%)</u>
No, very uncomfortable	<u>6 (6.38%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**17. Do you feel that the Cheektowaga Police Department should share appropriate Use of Force data and Policies with the public?**

Yes	<u>48 (51.06%)</u>
Not Sure	<u>29 (30.85%)</u>
No	<u>17 (18.09%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**18. Are you aware that the Cheektowaga Police Department has trained all members in racial bias; in addition to building skills in problem-solving, conflict mediation, communication, and de-escalation tactics?**

Yes	<u>51 (54.26%)</u>
Not Sure	<u>21 (22.34%)</u>
No	<u>22 (23.4%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**19. Do you feel that the Cheektowaga Police Department should have training in implicit bias, mental health, juvenile diversion responses, problem-solving, and mediation?**

Strongly agree	<u>53 (56.38%)</u>
Agree	<u>24 (25.53%)</u>
Neither agree nor disagree	<u>16 (17.02%)</u>
Disagree	<u>0 (0%)</u>
Strongly Disagree	<u>1 (1.06%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**20. Which two of the following community relations and interaction training topics do you feel should receive the most emphasis? (Select any 2 topics)**

Conflict resolution/mediation	<u>50 (53.19%)</u>
Interpersonal communication skills	<u>21 (22.34%)</u>
Implicit Bias, Anti-Racism	<u>18 (19.15%)</u>
Cultural Awareness	<u>12 (12.77%)</u>
De-escalation	<u>36 (38.3%)</u>
Mental Health	<u>43 (45.74%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**21. Are you familiar with the hiring practices for the Cheektowaga Police Department?**

Yes	<u>32 (34.04%)</u>
No	<u>62 (65.96%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

**21 - a. If you answered “yes”, and are aware that the Cheektowaga Police Department must comply with all applicable Civil Service Laws, do you feel that the hiring practices are fair?**

Yes	<u>28 (39.44%)</u>
No	<u>8 (11.27%)</u>
N/A	<u>35 (49.3%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>71</u></b>

**22. Overall, how would you rate the Town of Cheektowaga Police Department?**

Extremely effective	<u>35 (37.23%)</u>
Effective	<u>43 (45.74%)</u>
Neither ineffective nor effective	<u>11 (11.7%)</u>
Ineffective	<u>2 (2.13%)</u>
Extremely Ineffective	<u>3 (3.19%)</u>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b><u>94</u></b>

## **GOALS**

### ***Community Involvement***

- The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department will conduct a yearly survey of the community. This survey will focus on resident's thoughts regarding the services and protection they receive from the Police Department. Additionally, surveys will include current and pertinent issues facing the residents and the Town as a whole. A process will be put in place to garner as much response as possible from the community. This may include utilizing our school systems as well as Town Homeowners Associations.
- The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department will assess the formation of a Family Crisis Service Unit. This unit will consist of members of the religious community and possibly other disciplines that will be available to citizens experiencing family problems within their life. The Family Crisis Service Unit will be staffed by volunteers with an expressed interest in problem solving and counseling. Potential recipients of this service will be on a voluntary basis and will be provided contact information if counseling is desired.
- Formation of a Chief of Police Advisory Board. An advisory board consisting of members of the community will meet every four months. The purpose of this advisory board is to maintain and improve delivery of police services. It will communicate with the community regarding current and relevant topics. It will assist the Department in accomplishing its mission along with its goals and objectives. The board will be briefed on disciplinary matters, as well as other current trends or topics.

### ***Training***

- The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department will continue training in the areas of Implicit Bias, Dealing with Emotionally Disturbed Persons, Verbal De-Escalation, Integrating Communications Assessment and Tactics, and Procedural Justice. The Department will seek training in the areas of Gender, Racial, and Religious Sensitivity.

### ***Recruitment and Retention***

- The Town of Cheektowaga Police Department will continue its efforts in hiring a diverse workforce. The Department will assess an outreach to high school age students interested in a career in law enforcement. The Police Department with anticipated cooperation of the school districts will agree on a career day style program where students will interact with officers regarding qualifications and requirements needed to attain a career in law enforcement.