

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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E.O.W. 11-30-02

Quality of Life Ad Hoc Committee

Report and Recommendations
on Los Angeles County Sheriff's
Department Deputy Suicide
Prevention & Employee Wellness

Adopted by the Commission: June 26, 2025

Los Angeles County
Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission

Working for transparency with respect to the Sheriff's Department

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, several current and former Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) personnel died by suicide. The Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) aims to better understand and prevent law enforcement suicides. The Commission recommends that:

1. Board examine, through the Chief Executive Office and in collaboration with the LASD, the feasibility of providing \$8.7 million requested for Fiscal Year 2024-25 or a level of funding deemed fiscally appropriate for the LASD Employee Wellness Center for FY2024-25 to provide needed psychological services throughout LASD
2. LASD review and modify their psychological response to critical incident policies and procedures;
3. LASD identify a place on their public-facing website to post annual Psychological Services Bureau (PSB) reports;
4. LASD collaborate with Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Behavioral Science Services (BSS) and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to review the LAPD BSS Video Library, develop a LASD PSB Video Library similar to that of LAPD BSS, and make the LASD PSB Video Library available to the public on the LASD public website.

II. ACTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

On January 19, 2023, the Commission created the Quality-of-Life Ad Hoc Committee to identify potential channels of accountability and transparency involving the Sheriff's Department's presence and responsiveness in the community and with stakeholders that will improve the quality of life for Los Angeles County residents. The members of the committee consist of Commissioners Luis S. Garcia, Irma Cooper, and Hans Johnson, and they were supported by Commission staff member Tracy Jordan.

On December 7, 2023, Quality of Life Ad Hoc Commissioner Luis S. Garcia moderated a virtual conference titled, *Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness*, which included expert panelists highlighting mental health service availability, discussing suicide prevention services and hearing from community members.¹ After hearing from esteemed panelists and the public, Commissioner Garcia noted, "Law enforcement mental health is an issue that requires further discussion" that he would like to bring before the full Civilian Oversight Commission at a future meeting."² Commissioner Garcia went further by closing with, "The psychological health and wellbeing of Sheriff's Department personnel is fundamental to the safety of our communities."³ On May 27, 2024, the committee met again to discuss the community feedback and the documentation provided by LASD.^{4, 5}

¹ Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission. (2023). Virtual Conference: Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness. Retrieved from <https://coc.lacounty.gov/meetings/conferences>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ LASD. (2024). LASD Psychological Services Bureau Response to the Commission. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASDPSBResponsetoCOC04-15-24.pdf>

⁵ LASD. (2024). LASD Follow-up Psychological Services Bureau Response to the Commission. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASDPSBFollow-upResponsetoCOC05.13.24.pdf>

The members of the committee and its staff took the following actions:

1. Extensively researched law enforcement psychological services and related policies in surrounding jurisdictions, including reports authored by the Office of the Inspector General
2. Analyzed media reports of law enforcement suicides
3. Submitted a request to LASD regarding psychological services policies, procedures, and related data
4. Conferred with LASD regarding their suicide prevention policies, practices and procedures

III. BACKGROUND

In March 2024, ABC News reported that more than 1,200 of the nation's public safety personnel died by suicide over a seven-year period.⁶ Furthermore, the average number of suicides per year during the seven-year period was just shy of 184.⁷ Additionally, it was noted that 61 percent of the suicides occurred in departments with 100 or more full-time sworn officers.⁸

The New York Police Department (NYPD) has approximately 36,000 police officers and is ranked the largest police force in the United States.⁹ In 2019, NYPD, had 10 police officers die by suicide.¹⁰ The LASD has approximately 18,000 personnel of which 9,500 are sworn staff; and is the largest Sheriff's Department in the United States.¹¹ In 2023, seven LASD sworn personnel died by suicide.^{12, 13, 14, 15} In 2020, the Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection (LESDC) Act was signed into law requiring the Attorney General of the United States, through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to establish a national database to track the occurrence of suicides among law enforcement.¹⁶ The LESDC established that law enforcement agencies may submit

⁶ ABC News. (2024). About 184 law enforcement officers die by suicide each year: Report. Retrieved from <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/184-law-enforcement-officers-die-suicide-year-report/story?id=108260786>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ New York Police Department. (2024). About NYPD. Retrieved from <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/about/about-nypd/about-nypd-landing.page#:~:text=The%20New%20York%20City%20Police,officers%20and%2019%2C000%20civilian%20employees.>

¹⁰ Time. (2019). New York City Police Officer Dies By Suicide-the 10th NYPD Suicide in 2019. Retrieved from <https://time.com/5702036/10th-police-suicide-nypd-new-york-city/>

¹¹ Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. (2024). Staff Bios. Retrieved from <https://lasd.org/staffbios/>

¹² KTLA5. (2023). Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputy dies by suicide at Santa Clarita bar. Retrieved from <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/los-angeles-county-sheriffs-deputy-dies-by-suicide-at-santa-clarita-bar/>

¹³ KTLA5. (2023). L.A. Sheriff speaks out after 4 suspected deputy suicides in 24 hours. Retrieved from <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/l-a-sheriff-speaks-out-after-4-suspected-deputy-suicides-in-24-hours/>

¹⁴ ABC7. (2023). Widow of deputy who died by suicide files claim against LASD; blames mandatory overtime. Retrieved from <https://abc7.com/los-angeles-sheriffs-department-arturo-atilano-valadez-suicide-death/14155717/>

¹⁵ Gofundme. (2023). Deputy Nicole Oris Santos. Retrieved from https://www.gofundme.com/f/deputy-nicole-oris-santos?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer

¹⁶ United States Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2022). Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection. Retrieved from https://cde-prd-data.s3.us-gov-east-1.amazonaws.com/lesdc/all/LESDC_Flyer_508_Compliant.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Credential=ASIAQC732REK5TA2LEZR%2F20240520%2Fus-gov-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20240520T024704Z&X-Amz-Expires=900&X-Amz-Security-Token=FwoDYXdzECEaDKI%2F0exbitn%2FPZ6DiCKhAtifkO2UakBBIAKUWuK9N0CgHW4izNG5MJ03104a4ECbGHQm2A45V56psvgAAEFfUp%2FU5nLReEOU%2FvV7bAwcQ1LxnE%2Bts4r4lf5Rt%2ByKq32KwglljIWARWQA7dR8DMKNYsT1orT97Uk2u5U6A0UPuTrEbS9jKzXbvyp%2FvUKswHfMsZdsCMKs2mq9Ps83d6B6yq3KkQil0mouwnUB%2BCb5Qw1%2F1kv6ioQegr2i1aFI4yzl83TYfq1%2Bn0GpVCCQ1YhH6Hwb1pFzSmla4AxG22%2BG1h%2FP7TheOv6SjQolnF7%2BKqBM06cEjmGcMFUJdG0nKxZVSJGXhBwO1%2BrGeM8bVsx83skeX9tmqZUqfF%2FOgiJyVcZ45V6s0EKNfEm%2FgHyU2NCUiso%2Bu6qsgYyLXV1oBHK8qMGI1oMzrh6vU%2FWXxGo6T92LlivBISfzSJ0W2KbpEOsAj338wtvsQ%3D%3D&X-Amz-Signature=415232c2f4a5efdc6b33d5b321ae70ffbd5e8f0d3ba58f5a9532331a463e809&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&x-id=GetObject

information on suicides and attempted suicides within their law enforcement agencies that include:¹⁷

- The circumstances and events that occurred before each suicide or attempted suicide;
- The general location of each suicide or attempted suicide;
- The demographic information of each law enforcement officer who commits or attempts suicide;
- The occupational category, including criminal investigator, corrections officer, line of duty officer, 911 dispatch operator, of each law enforcement officer who commits or attempts suicide; and
- The method used in each suicide or attempted suicide

The LESDC has been collecting data since January 1, 2022, and currently reflects 81 suicides reported from 42 agencies.¹⁸ A quick glimpse of the LASD 7 sworn suicides in 2023 in comparison to the LESDC data (81 suicides since 2022) appears to show that LASD suicides account for almost 6 percent of the LESDC reported suicides.

Law enforcement agencies across the United States employ thousands of individuals with varying backgrounds to perform a wide variety of law enforcement functions, responsibilities and duties such as comprehensive knowledge of the law, being service-oriented, actively assisting community members in solving problems and maintaining the peace.¹⁹ Law enforcement, particularly patrol and in-custody supervision exposes sworn personnel to a variety of intense experiences of human suffering.²⁰ In 2020, Sheriff offices with 100 or more full-time sworn officers designated personnel to work in the following areas: school safety (89%), opioids (81%), gang crimes (69%), firearms (69%), domestic violence (74%), and mental health or crisis intervention (66%).²¹ As of December 31, 2020, there were an estimated 708,000 full-time sworn officers in the United States who were regularly scheduled to work 35 or more hours per week.^{22, 23} In 2024, CNA Corporation research revealed that a majority of public safety personnel deaths by suicide corresponded to agencies with 100 or more full-time sworn officers.²⁴

Examination of suicide data provided by the LESDC shows that the average age of death by suicide for law enforcement officers is 43. White officers experience the highest number of suicides, accounting for 64 out of 81 suicides and the second highest race is Hispanic with 11 out of 81 suicides.²⁵ Male law enforcement officers have the highest number of law enforcement suicides. The primary method used for death by suicide by law enforcement officers is a firearm

¹⁷ United States Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2020). Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-15718/pdf/COMPS-15718.pdf>

¹⁸ FBI Crime Data Explorer. (2024). Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection. Retrieved from <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/le/lesdc>

¹⁹ LASD. (2024). Manual of Policy and Procedures 2-02/090.00-Deputy Sheriffs. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/10052>

²⁰ Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). Police stressors and health: a state-of-the-art review. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6400077/pdf/nihms-1008968.pdf>

²¹ Ibid.

²² United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2022). Sheriff's Offices Personnel, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/sop20.pdf>

²³ Ibid. In 2020, about 87% of sheriff's were White, 6% were Hispanic, 4% were Black, and 3% were other races.

²⁴ CNA Corporation. (2024). Law Enforcement Deaths by Suicide. Retrieved from https://1sthelpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Law-Enforcement-Deaths-by-Suicide_DRAFT3-2.pdf

²⁵ FBI Crime Data Explorer. (2024). Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection. Retrieved from <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/le/lesdc>

(68) with the primary location for the suicide taking place at a residence (74).^{26,27} Those personnel who have served in law enforcement between 11 and 30 years saw the highest number of suicides. Agencies that reported suicides to the LESDC were also asked to report if their agency had wellness programs available. The agencies reporting the 81 law enforcement suicides responded in the following ways:

- Agency has a formal well-being or resiliency program (32-yes)
- Agency provides training on secondary trauma, burnout, and suicide risk (31-yes)
- Agency provides a peer-connection support program or platform (36-yes)
- Agency provides training and opportunities for critical incident processing after significant traumatic work events (40-yes)
- Agency provides mental health and counseling resources (41-yes)

As the incidents of law enforcement suicides continue year by year there is an increased need for awareness and prevention.^{28,29}

IV. CHALLENGES FACED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

Law enforcement work is one of the most stressful and dangerous professions.³⁰ The work environment for law enforcement officers can vary from working in the correctional setting, to courtrooms, police stations, a squad car, office or in the community on foot patrol. A 2017 study noted that law enforcement officers' sources of stress could be classified into two general categories:³¹

1. Job Content-work schedules, shift work, long-work hours, overtime and court work, and traumatic events and threats to physical and psychological health
2. Job Context, also known as organizational stressors- characteristics of the organization, bureaucracy, and co-worker relations

The LASD workplace has had a documented history of both Job Content and Context challenges over a period of years. These will be briefly discussed in the next sections.

A. Job Content Stress Challenges

One of the job content stress areas that LASD has grappled with for years is overtime and sworn staff work schedules. LASD defines overtime in Manual of Policy and Procedure (MPP) 3-02/280.00-Overtime, as time worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week or alternate work

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ First H.E.L.P. (2023). About First HELP. Retrieved from <https://1sthelp.org/about/>. In 2020, First H.E.L.P., an organization that works to reduce mental health stigma for First Responders through education, advocating for benefits for those suffering from post-traumatic stress and assisting officers in their search for healing created National Law Enforcement Suicide Awareness Day, which is acknowledged on September 26th. September 26th is a day to provide awareness information, but there is an on-going need to identify the challenges faced by law enforcement to prevent further loss of lives.

²⁹ National Day Archives. (2024). National Law Enforcement Suicide Awareness Day. Retrieved from <https://www.nationaldayarchives.com/day/national-law-enforcement-suicide-awareness-day/>

³⁰ National Institute of Justice. (2019). Protecting Against Stress & Trauma: Research Lessons for Law Enforcement-Defining the Problem. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26uNLpO0T3s&list=PLpIUxHJ-xbqgCxDwHoU6gtzMiMmAPbc8&t=12s>

³¹ Volanti et. al. (2017). Police stressors and health: a state-of-the-art review. Retrieved from <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6400077/pdf/nihms-1008968.pdf>

schedule.³² According to MPP 3-02/280.00, managers and approving supervisors shall ensure that overtime is within their budget and is not misused by employees.³³ According to MPP 3-02/010.16-Filling Vacancies with Overtime, overtime also includes circumstances within which staff are needed to fill vacancies based on critical staffing needs (e.g., unfilled posted overtime vacancies, sick call-ins, etc.).³⁴ In the event the position cannot be filled through voluntary hiring, employees may be involuntarily hired or drafted.³⁵ LASD MPP 3-02/010.16, goes further in noting that involuntary hiring of personnel on their regular-days-off (RDO's) shall be limited to circumstances where a critical operational staffing need exists and all other efforts to voluntarily fill the vacancies were adequately exhausted.³⁶ Furthermore, MPP 3-02/010.16, can be used as a last-minute involuntary hiring to "draft" by the watch commander. According to LASD MPP 3-02/010.15-Work Schedules, no employee should work more than 96 hours of overtime per calendar month (excluding on-call court time).³⁷ According to the LASD compressed work schedules are available for many deputies, which means they work the same number of hours each week but can have more consecutive days off by working longer days.³⁸ Los Angeles County Code Chapter 6.12.020(F)-Working Week, describes one of the compressed work week hours to consist of a 36-hour per week schedule, which the normal week shall be three (3) 12-hour shifts.³⁹

The LASD public safety and custody environments are 24/7/365 operating environments that require around the clock staffing.⁴⁰ The Sheriff's Department operates with various work schedules based on assignment areas such as Custody, Patrol, and Courts.⁴¹ Line personnel work in inmate supervision, field patrol, or courtroom duties, while administrative personnel handle unit operations like scheduling and training, typically assigned to the Day shift.⁴² LASD personnel work week generally consists of 40 hours, with strict rules limiting maximum hours worked per day to 19 hours.⁴³ LASD employees are capped at working a maximum overtime hours per month of 96 hours, though supervisors can make exceptions in special circumstances.⁴⁴ Flexible schedules are common, allowing personnel to adjust hours based on workload. Line personnel typically work five 8-hour shifts or four 10-hour shifts, with days off rotating every one to three months. Custody, Patrol, and Court personnel have mandatory overtime if duties extend beyond the end of their shifts or when covering for vacancies to meet

³² LASD. (2024). MPP3-02/280.00-Overtime. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/10658?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=overtime>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ LASD. (2024). MPP3-02/010.16-Filing Vacancies with Overtime. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/10478?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=overtime>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ LASD. (2024). MPP3-02/010.16-Filing Vacancies with Overtime. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/10478?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=overtime>

³⁷ LASD. (2024). MPP3-02/010.15-Work Schedules. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/10477?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=overtime>

³⁸ LASD. (2019). Career and Benefits. Retrieved from <https://lasd.org/careers/benefits/>

³⁹ Los Angeles County Code. (2024). Chapter 6.12.020(F)-Working Week. Retrieved from https://library.municode.com/ca/los_angeles_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT6SA_DIV1GEPR_CH6.12WOHOWOWEHO

⁴⁰ LASD. (2025). LASD 5th Month Budget Status Report. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/FY2024-255th-MonthBSR.pdf>

⁴¹ LASD. (2024). LASD Overtime Information and Data Response. Retrieved from https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASDResponse_RequestforLASDOTandPSBFollow-up6-27-2024.pdf

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

operational needs.⁴⁵ The LASD current minimum overtime per month requirement for Custody is 48-64 hours and Patrol 40 to 80 hours.⁴⁶ In 2023, the LASD overtime hours by operational area reflects that \$1.39 million was paid in overtime for LASD Custody Facilities Deputy Sheriff's and \$1.2 million was paid for Patrol Station Deputy Sheriff's overtime.⁴⁷ As of January 2025, according to the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, the LASD has 8,809 sworn staff⁴⁸ that are subject to working general hours and overtime, which could leave a deputy with 5 hours or less of sleep each day. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25, LASD noted that an increase in overtime estimates was primarily attributed in part to the 1,393 vacant sworn positions and 846 sworn staff with impairments or unable to work.⁴⁹ In 2024, LASD Custody's overtime expenditure was primarily due to vacancies and workload requirements to fulfill performance mandates associated with the Department of Justice (DOJ), Rosas, and Johnson/ADA settlements exceeding the available staffing.⁵⁰

In 2021, LASD advised the Chief Executive Office (CEO) that overtime mitigation efforts from Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 were not sustainable due to several reasons that included, but were not limited to: LASD reinstituting mandated training, the increase in violent crime/homicides and the related casework; narcotics enforcement; and a reduction in the number of budgeted academy classes from twelve to four resulting in a slowdown in LASD's ability to fill vacancies and therefore requiring the use of overtime to address vacancies.⁵¹

In recent years some of the job content challenges faced by LASD have been made public by news media and department personnel. The LASD newsroom even consists of press releases related to overtime impacting sworn staff work schedules that includes:

- March 2022, press conference held by former Sheriff Villanueva speaking about defunding has consequences mentions that 70% of deputy personnel need to work overtime to cover the 100%.⁵²
- May 2023, news reports reflect Sheriff Luna requesting funding to recruit for 1,100 deputies and noting that the vacancies are taking a toll on the department's deputies.⁵³

One of the primary sources of stress for law enforcement personnel is response to critical incidents. According to LASD policy in MPP3-10/460.00-Department Psychologist Response to Critical Incidents,⁵⁴ incidents that can result in trauma include the use of firearms and deadly

⁴⁵ LASD. (2024). LASD Overtime Information and Data Response. Retrieved from https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASDResponse_RequestforLASDOTandPSBFollow-up6-27-2024.pdf

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. (2025). Total Employment. Retrieved from <https://post.ca.gov/Agency-Statistics>

⁴⁹ LASD. (2025). LASD 5th Month Budget Status Report. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/FY2024-255th-MonthBSR.pdf>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ CEO. (2021). Sheriff's Department Budget Status Report (Item No. 2D-8, Agenda of June 26, 2017). Retrieved from https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/1115977_11.30.21SheriffBudgetStatusReport.bm.final.pdf

⁵² LASD. (2022). Defunding Has Consequences. Retrieved from <https://lasd.org/defunding-has-consequences/>

⁵³ Police1. (2023). LASD sheriff asks for 1,100 deputies, more academy classes from county's \$43B budget. Retrieved from <https://www.police1.com/chiefs-sheriffs/articles/lasd-sheriff-asks-for-1100-deputies-more-academy-classes-from-countys-43b-budget-wIA1C0ZbW5Gyt1gX/>

⁵⁴ LASD. (2024). MPP3-10/460.00-Department Psychologist Response to Critical Incidents. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/11269?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=psychological%20services>

force incidents such as wounding or fatally shooting, firing, or attempting to fire, and being fired upon. The LASD maintains data related to deputy-involved shootings, which they describe as being traumatic for all involved. According to the LASD website, deputies were involved in 13 shootings in 2023 and 19 in 2022.⁵⁵ The Los Angeles Police Department 34 officer-involved shootings in 2023 and 31 in 2022.⁵⁶

B. Job Context Stress Challenges

One of the challenges that the LASD has been dealing with since 1973 is Deputy Gangs and Deputy Cliques.⁵⁷ LASD Deputy Gangs are described as active groups of deputies that engage in harmful, dangerous, and often illegal, behavior.⁵⁸ Some deputies that are involved in Deputy Gangs have engaged in acts of violence, threatened acts of violence, placed fellow deputies at risk of physical harm, and created a climate of physical fear and professional retribution to colleagues that would speak out against the misconduct of Deputy Gangs.⁵⁹ This type of behavior has the potential to place an immense amount of stress on any individual. Deputy gang behaviors have been detrimental to the morale of other deputies and staff.⁶⁰ During the 2021, RAND Corporation study, while surveying interviewees about investigations and discipline respondents referenced concerns with unequal treatment, which lead to RAND noting, unequal treatment is a common issue in law enforcement agencies, but perceptions matter nonetheless because they can affect morale and treatment of others.⁶¹ The RAND report went on to account one interviewee that spoke about abuse of power among training officers (TO) by noting, “that the TO would tell other people that if they made TO, they shouldn’t put on their two stripes until everyone else agrees they are part of the group, so that was problematic...once that was done the TO transferred, morale went up immediately”.⁶²

There are also other types of organizational bureaucracy and stressors that exist within and adjacent to the LASD. In 2022-2023, while the Commission was conducting Special Hearings related to Deputy Gangs subpoenas had been issued when LASD leadership and the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriff’s (ALADS) created obstacles to Special Counsel’s Investigation⁶³, which may have also been stressors to staff. During the Commission Special

⁵⁵ LASD. (2024). LASD Deputy-Involved Shootings-Previous Years. Retrieved from <https://lasd.org/transparency/deputyinvolvedshootingprevious/>

⁵⁶ Daily Breeze. (2024). LAPD reports 34 officer shootings in 2023, up from 31 in 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.dailybreeze.com/2024/04/23/lapd-reports-34-officer-shootings-in-2023-up-from-31-in-2022/>

⁵⁷ Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission. (2023). Report and Recommendations of the Special Counsel to Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission Regarding Deputy Gangs and Deputy Cliques in the LASD. Retrieved from https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/commissionpublications/report/1138014_DeputyGangsSpecialCounselReporttoCOC3.2.2023.PDF.PDF

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ RAND Corporation. (2021). Understanding Subgroups Within the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. Retrieved from C:\Users\tjordan\Downloads\RAND_RRA616-1.pdf

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

Hearing held on May 24, 2022, one witness was concerned enough to want to appear anonymously for testimony.⁶⁴

In 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services referred to law enforcement workplace stressors by noting in part that, "...high job demand, low job control, and lack of social support, were associated with poor physical health, poor mental health, and physician-diagnosed morbidity".⁶⁵ According to the National Institute of Justice, "law enforcement officers commonly work extended hours in ever-changing environments that can cause great mental and physical stress".⁶⁶ Law enforcement officers enduring fatigue for long periods of time may lead to health problems, can create a cycle of fatigue, limit job performance and damage an officer's health.⁶⁷ Work-related factors such as working excessive amounts of overtime, frequently rotating shifts and regularly changing duties can cause stress and fatigue for law enforcement officers.⁶⁸

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) serves as the investigative arm of the Commission and will provide additional information about challenges that the OIG operation reviews and investigations identified in the below section.

C. Impact of Job Content & Context Stress Challenges on LASD Sworn Staff

More law enforcement officers across the United States are beginning to be impacted by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).⁶⁹ The Mayo Clinic describes PTSD as a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event – either experiencing it or witnessing it.⁷⁰ PTSD symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.^{71, 72} Some of the additional signs that an officer can exhibit from trauma include, but are not limited to those listed in the figure below (Figure 1-details several of the potential signs one can exhibit from trauma):⁷³

⁶⁴ Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission. (2022). Special Hearing Transcript May 24, 2022. Retrieved from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/73e66fdf-b680-4bfc-9bdb-04f34b1c0f32/1127218_SpecialHearingonDeputyGangsTranscript5-24-22.pdf

⁶⁵ Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). Police stressors and health: a state-of-the-art review. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6400077/pdf/nihms-1008968.pdf>

⁶⁶ National Institute of Justice. (2012). Officer Work Hours, Stress and Fatigue. Retrieved from <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/officer-work-hours-stress-and-fatigue>

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ NAMI. (2021). Documenting the Traumas of First Responders. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/frontline-wellness/documenting-the-traumas-of-first-responders/>





⁷⁰ Mayo Clinic. (2024). PTSD. Retrieved from [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967#:~:text=Post%2Dtraumatic%20stress%20disorder%20\(PTSD\)%20is%20a%20mental%20health,uncontrollable%20thoughts%20about%20the%20event.](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967#:~:text=Post%2Dtraumatic%20stress%20disorder%20(PTSD)%20is%20a%20mental%20health,uncontrollable%20thoughts%20about%20the%20event.)

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² International Association of Chiefs of Police. (2022). Supporting Law Enforcement Families in Understanding Trauma. Retrieved from https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/256944_IACP_21_SupportingFamilies_508c_0.pdf

⁷³ Ibid.

Figure-1: Details several of the potential signs one can exhibit from trauma.

 Physical Symptoms	 Cognitive Symptoms	 Emotional Symptoms	 Behavioral Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fatigue/exhaustion ■ Insomnia ■ Sleep disturbances ■ Nightmares ■ Change in appetite ■ Digestive problems ■ Changes in sexual health ■ Physical problems ■ Headaches ■ Nausea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of concentration ■ Flashbacks of the event ■ Difficulty making decisions ■ Memory lapses ■ Forgetfulness ■ Confusion ■ Poor problem-solving ■ Altered thinking ■ Change in alertness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fear ■ Guilt ■ Emotional numbing ■ Over sensitivity ■ Anxiety ■ Depression ■ Feeling helpless ■ Anger ■ Irritability ■ Frustration ■ Hopelessness ■ Burnout ■ Compassion Fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change in activity ■ Communication changes ■ Withdrawal from peers/family ■ Detached ■ Lack of trust ■ Hyper-alertness ■ Increase in being easily startled ■ Change in sexual behavior ■ Emotional outbursts ■ Difficulty sitting still

Shift work is a necessity in police work and may be considered one of the most difficult job requirements as it is associated with adverse health outcomes in police officers.⁷⁴ A study that looked at work history for a month, and 15 years, night and evening work schedules were consistently associated with elevated prevalence of poor sleep quality.⁷⁵ Individuals with undiagnosed sleep disorders may pose health and safety risk.⁷⁶ One study even reported several health conditions in groups of United States officers that included sleep disorders, diabetes, depression, and cardiovascular disease.⁷⁷

According to the Mayo Clinic general guidelines for the amount of sleep you need, adults are recommended to sleep 7 or more hours a night for good health.⁷⁸ Deputies that are routinely scheduled to work overtime could be exposed to a number of circumstances such as lack of sleep. Officers with sleep disorders have been reported as making serious administrative errors, falling asleep while driving, making errors or safety violations due to fatigue, showing uncontrolled anger toward suspects, having higher rates of absenteeism, and falling asleep during meetings more frequently than police officers without a sleep disorder.⁷⁹ Furthermore, officers that worked in the night shift and work overtime have a four-time greater amount of stress associated with metabolic syndrome components than officers working in the day shift.⁸⁰ Law enforcement shifts and drafting of officers to work hours can take a toll on staff over a period of time. One study reflects that suicide ideation was more prevalent among urban policewomen with increased depressive symptoms with an increasing percentage of hours worked on the day

⁷⁴ Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). Police stressors and health: a state-of-the-art review. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6400077/pdf/nihms-1008968.pdf>

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Mayo Clinic. (2023). How many hours of sleep are enough for good health? Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/how-many-hours-of-sleep-are-enough/faq-20057898>

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). Police stressors and health: a state-of-the-art review. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6400077/pdf/nihms-1008968.pdf>

shift, and among urban policemen with higher PTSD symptoms and an increasing percentage of afternoon shift hours.⁸¹

Organizational bureaucracy and co-worker relations have hampered the LASD for years. In 2018, former Sheriff Alex Villanueva began his term by telling nearly 500 supervisors on his staff that their jobs were being reevaluated and he then went on to tell all supervisors to temporarily remove the gold pins indicating rank, which is a part of their uniforms.⁸² After hearing about Sheriff Villanueva's actions president of the Major County Sheriffs of America Grady Judd noted, "everyone in a department, including someone at his level, needs to have an all hands on the oars mentality" and "...the way to build that camaraderie and win reelection is to make your employees feel trusted, not off balance".⁸³ In 2023, seven sworn members of the LASD committed suicide. In November 2023 alone four deputies committed suicide within a 24-hour period.⁸⁴ Soon after media reports suggested that at least one of the deputy suicides was attributable to overtime work.⁸⁵ The loved ones of former Deputy Atilano-Valadez described him as a 21 year veteran of the department that worked the last 12 years in the county jail and often working 12-hour shifts.⁸⁶ Deputy Atilano-Valdez was described as frequently working double shifts, followed by a single, then another double, then another single.⁸⁷ Retired LASD Chief Eli Vera and his wife former LASD detective Eliza Vera refer to the big hole in the family left by their daughter deputy Nicole Otis Santos who died by suicide on June 2, 2023, at 31 years of age.⁸⁸ The Vera's while devastated by their own loss are calling for urgent reform in the LASD beginning with an end to mandatory back-to-back shifts and that the LASD strengthen support systems for staff by requiring annual one-on-one check-ins between each LASD member and a department psychologist.^{89, 90}

Between FY2018-19 through FY2021-22, the annual number of new vacant LASD Deputy and Sergeant positions had steadily increased from 631 to 864.⁹¹ The primary drivers for LASD vacant positions are retirement and promotions.⁹² However, during the course of exit interviews the LASD has been able to ascertain that sworn staff have been leaving the department due to pay and benefits, promotional opportunity, morale and change of occupation.⁹³ In 2021, the RAND Corporation studied deputy subgroups within the LASD to help the LASD and the County learn more about how these subgroups are formed, why they exist, and what actions might be

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Los Angeles Times. (2018). Must Reads: L.A. County Sheriff Alex Villanueva tells hundreds of top staff to hand in resumes and temporarily remove rank insignia. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-sheriff-rank-reassessment-pins-20181207-story.html>

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Eyewitness News 7. (2023). LA Sheriff's Department in mourning after 4 current, former employees die by suicide in 24-hour span. Retrieved from <https://abc7.com/los-angeles-county-sheriffs-department-suicide-deaths-lasd-employees/14036429/>

⁸⁵ Los Angeles Times. (2023). Family of L.A. sheriff's deputy claims forced overtime drove him to suicide. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-12-09/family-of-l-a-sheriffs-deputy-says-excessive-overtime-drove-him-to-suicide>

⁸⁶ MSN. (2023). Understaffed Los Angeles Sheriff's Department driving deputies to suicide: lawyer. Retrieved from <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/understaffed-los-angeles-sheriff-s-department-driving-deputies-to-suicide-lawyer/ar-AA1mXNY?ocid=BingNewsSearch>

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Fox11 Los Angeles. (2025). Retired LASD Chief, wife speak out after losing daughter to suicide: "When is enough, enough?". Retrieved from [Retired LASD Chief, wife speak out after losing daughter to suicide: 'When is enough, enough?' | FOX 11 Los Angeles](https://www.fox11.com/story/2025-01-09/retired-lasd-chief-wife-speak-out-after-losing-daughter-to-suicide-when-is-enough-enough-fox-11-los-angeles)

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ YouTube Fox11LA. (2025). Family calls on LA County Sheriff to address deputy suicides. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPazOos0EhA>

⁹¹ CEO. (2022). Analysis of the Sheriff's Academy's Training Needs (Item No. 13. Agenda of December 7, 2021). Retrieved from https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/1134179_12.07.22AnalysisofLASDAcademyTrainingNeeds.bm.pdf

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

taken if it is determined that these subgroups have a significant impact on LASD's mission.⁹⁴ During the RAND study, among sworn officers surveyed, about a quarter felt that deputy subgroups can help motivate others within a station or unit, while a similar number believed they can hurt morale and alienate nonmembers.⁹⁵

V. LASD STAFF WELLNESS & PREVENTION INITIATIVES

Historically, the LASD has employed psychologists dating back to the 1970's to provide services to its sworn and civilian employees and their families.⁹⁶ Currently, the LASD PSB operation has 33 budgeted positions⁹⁷ and offers counseling and crisis intervention services at four different office locations – downtown Los Angeles, Whittier, Santa Clarita, and Palmdale.⁹⁸ The LASD PSB also offers other services that include:

- Organizational Consultant Program, on-site training, and consultation to first-line supervisors and command staff at designated facilities to identify early warning signs of stress/burnout in their employees.⁹⁹
- Unit Chaplains Program, provides for the spiritual and personal needs of Sheriff's personnel and their families. Volunteer chaplains provide spiritual support and guidance to personnel as well as comfort and support to members of the community during times of emotional distress.¹⁰⁰
- Peer Support and Addiction Recovery Program, those recruited attend mandatory training to learn how to better assist their co-workers with personal and work-related concerns, having already "been there" themselves.¹⁰¹ The trained department staff assist their co-workers address problems involving various everyday issues as well as addictions, including, alcohol abuse, drug misuse, and gambling problems.¹⁰²

LASD Policy in MPP3-10/460.00-Department Psychologist Response to Critical Incidents¹⁰³ notes that personnel involved in critical incidents such as shootings and other life-threatening or non-life-threatening events often experience significant trauma. LASD MPP3-10/460.00, further notes that unit commanders shall encourage and/or at times require personnel involved in any

⁹⁴ RAND Corporation. (2021). Stronger Leadership Action in L.A. Sheriff's Department Needed to Curb Influence of Problematic Subgroups, Address Community Concerns. Retrieved from <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2021/09/10/index1.html>

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ LASD. (2023). PSB. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASD-PresentationMH.pdf>

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ LASD. (2024). MPP2-07/130.00-PSB. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/10163?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=psychological%20services%20>

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² LASD. (2024). MPP2-07/130.00-PSB. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/10163?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=psychological%20services%20>

¹⁰³ LASD. (2024). MPP3-10/460.00-Department Psychologist Response to Critical Incidents. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/11269?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=psychological%20services>

event that has the potential to overwhelm their normal coping skills to attend a debriefing with the Department psychologist.¹⁰⁴

The PSB provides management consultation, topical wellness-based training, and 24-hour/7-days a week emergency availability.¹⁰⁵ The LASD PSB lists signs to call them for an appointment include, but are not limited as:¹⁰⁶

- No longer feeling in control
- Being unable to cope; overwhelmed
- Generalized &/or frequent negative thoughts
- Long periods of intense anger or blaming everyone else
- Binge drinking on a daily or weekly basis, even if social

The LASD PSB provides free, confidential counseling to all Department employees, their spouses, and significant others.¹⁰⁷ All personal counseling sessions between LASD licensed law enforcement psychologists and employees are privileged communications except for admissions of child or elder abuse or danger to self or others.¹⁰⁸ In 2023, the PSB operation conducted more than 3,800 individual clinical appointments and more than 170 deputy involved shooting debriefings and follow-ups.¹⁰⁹ In 2023, the PSB operation also conducted over 400 wellness, intervention, and prevention consultations.¹¹⁰ In 2023, the PSB data also reflects that they conducted 55 crisis interventions.¹¹¹ The American Psychological Association (APA) defines crisis intervention as psychological intervention provided on a short-term, emergency basis for individuals experiencing mental health crisis, such as an acute psychotic episode or attempted suicide.¹¹²

The top five reasons members of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department seek services from the Psychological Services Bureau (PSB) highlight the unique stressors law enforcement personnel face. These reasons are:¹¹³

1. Relationship Dynamics: High-stress work environments often strain romantic relationships. Therapy supports communication, conflict resolution, and intimacy maintenance.
2. Interpersonal Style: Developing effective communication and social interaction skills is essential. Therapy helps improve assertiveness, conflict resolution, and overall interpersonal strategies.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Forensic Mental Health Association of California. (2022). PSB An Information Guide. Retrieved from <http://fmhac.org/uploads/1/2/3/9/123913996/psychological-services-bureau.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ LASD. (2024). MPP2-07/130.00-PSB. Retrieved from <https://pars.lasd.org/Viewer/Manuals/10008/Content/10163?Source=TextSearch&searchQuery=psychological%20services%20>

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ LASD. (2023). PSB Programs and Services. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/PSBStats2023-ClinicalandInstructional.pdf>

¹¹⁰ LASD. (2023). PSB Consultations. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/PSBStats2023-Consultation.pdf>

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² American Psychological Association. (2024). Crisis Intervention. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.apa.org/crisis-intervention>

¹¹³ LASD. (2024). LASD Overtime Information and Data Response. Retrieved from https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASDResponse_RequestforLASDOTandPSBFollow-up6-27-2024.pdf

3. **Family Dynamics:** Balancing work with family responsibilities can be challenging. Therapy assists with parenting concerns, improving family relationships, and fostering a harmonious home life.
4. **Personal Growth:** Many personnel seek self-development. Therapy encourages self-exploration, goal setting, and the development of resilience and emotional intelligence.
5. **Anxiety:** The high-risk nature of law enforcement can cause anxiety. Therapy helps manage stress and anxiety by providing coping mechanisms and addressing symptoms directly.

In 2024, the LASD requested funding for the fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025 Budget for the development of an Employee Wellness Center (EWC) at a cost of \$8.7 million.¹¹⁴ The LASD EWC cost included additional staffing needs of 13 positions, which included: 5-Law Enforcement Psychologists, 5-Industrial/Org Consultants, 1-Assistant Director Bureau Operations, 1-Operations Assistant and 1-Senior Secretary III.¹¹⁵ The LASD EWC was to have psychologist assist the department in piloting annual wellness visits by all personnel, a nationally recognized practice that promotes the early self-identification of mental health or wellness needs through psychoeducation, normalizing meetings with a mental health professional, and eliminating the stigma often associated with psychotherapy.¹¹⁶ As of June 3, 2024, the LASD EWC has yet to receive funding approval by the Board of Supervisors.

VI. OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES' POLICIES ON OFFICER SUICIDE PREVENTION

The nature of law enforcement work involves duties that put them at risk of exposure to stress and trauma. As a result, many law enforcement agencies have psychological services or access to psychologists for their personnel.

A. Los Angeles Police Department

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is an organization of approximately 12,000 personnel and has just over 8,900 sworn staff.¹¹⁷ LAPD has a psychological services operation that provides the following types of services to all active LAPD employees sworn or civilian:¹¹⁸

- Individual psychotherapy
- Relationship counseling
- Single-Session appointment

LAPD Behavioral Science Services (BSS) psychological services staff respond to critical incidents involving officers, such as mass casualty events or line of duty deaths and injuries; and provide 24/7 on-call rotations to assist employees with any on- or off duty related crises,

¹¹⁴ LASD. (2024). LASD FY2024-25 Budget Priorities. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/FY24-25BudgetPrioritiesandUnmetNeeds.pdf>

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Los Angeles Police Department. (2024). Office of the Chief of Police. Retrieved from <https://www.lapdonline.org/office-of-the-chief-of-police/>

¹¹⁸ LAPD Behavioral Science Services. (2024). Police Psychology. Retrieved from <https://www.lapdbss.online/psychology>

which can include suicide and safety threat assessments.¹¹⁹ LAPD BSS provides specialized interventions that include, but are not limited to:¹²⁰

- Critical incident stress defusing and debriefings (e.g.-after unusual occurrences or major use of force)
- Traffic and Juvenile division wellness program (e.g.-related to trauma exposure)
- Psychoeducational groups
- Military return
- Readjustment visits
- Behavioral sleep medicine
- Pain management services

LAPD has been developing a suicide prevention campaign since 2007 using a public health model with an e-Learning Course, Supervisory Training, Roll Call Training, internal Website & Electronic Communications, suicide prevention wallet cards and dashboard stickers, among other things.¹²¹ LAPD BSS also operates a Peer Support Program, organizational training, and organizational consultation, similar to the LASD. The LAPD BSS operation has a video library for LAPD staff and public viewing on topics that include:¹²²

- LAPD Suicide Awareness & Prevention
- Sleep and Shift Work in Law Enforcement (reference to body freaking out with shift work)
- Responsible Drinking & Off-Duty Tactics
- The Crisis in Policing: Navigating the Challenges with Resilience and Growth

LAPD BSS provides a local viewing of an agencies perspective of providing psychological services for a large law enforcement department.

B. Orange County Sheriff's Department

The Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) has nearly 4,000 sworn and professional staff with six organizational Commands comprised of 23 Divisions.¹²³ The OCSD has a Peer Support Team (PST) for Department Members and their families.¹²⁴ The OCSD PST has boundaries between and within operations that must be acknowledged while providing support to personnel.¹²⁵ Interactions with the PST team members and employees shall not supplant a counseling session with a licensed mental health professional in response to the employees suffering the effects of a traumatic critical event.¹²⁶ OCSD PST services are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to all employees and information can be found on the Department's Intranet

¹¹⁹ LAPD Behavioral Science Services. (2024). Police Psychology. Retrieved from <https://www.lapdbss.online/psychology>

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ International Association of Chiefs of Police. (2018). The Los Angeles Police Department's Suicide Prevention Campaign. Retrieved from <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/LAPD%20KNOW%20Suicide.pdf>

¹²² LAPD BSS. (2024). BSS Video Library. Retrieved from <https://www.lapdbss.online/videos>

¹²³ Orange County Sheriff's Department. (2024). Annual Report FY2022-2023. Retrieved from <https://ocsheriff.gov/about-ocsheriff>

¹²⁴ OCSD. (2021). Peer Support and Assistance Program. Retrieved from <https://ocsheriff.gov/sites/ocsd/files/2021-03/Policy%201033%20Peer%20Support%20and%20Assistance%20Program.pdf>

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

page.¹²⁷ OCSD PST has policy 1033, which details the purpose and scope, critical incident, training and various other areas.

The OCSD PST provides a different look at what a law enforcement psychological services program can look like.

C. Riverside Police Department

The Riverside Police Department (RPD) has close to 350 sworn staff and over 50 full-time dispatchers.¹²⁸ The RPD has policy manual section 307-Investigations of Officer Involved Shootings and Incidents Where Death or Serious Likelihood of Death Results, which notes that their Centralized Investigations Bureau Supervision shall, “Ensure the involved employee(s) meet with Psychological Services provider”.¹²⁹ The RPD policy 307 goes on to note that, “The principal employee(s) shall not be returned to full duty until such time as the Personnel Services Bureau has received a clearance for return to full duty from the department’s contracted psychological services provider”.¹³⁰ RPD policy 307 also provides that, “At the discretion of the Chief of Police or his/her designee, those employees who witnessed the traumatic incident or otherwise assisted the principal employee(s) may also be placed on paid Administrative Leave status”.¹³¹

The RPD policy reflects that in the State of California law enforcement agencies can take measures to be more inclusive in their policies to require all involved employees to meet with psychological services providers to aid in the recovery of exposure to traumatic incidents.

D. General Law Enforcement Best Practices

In 2021, the National Consortium on Preventing Law Enforcement Suicide (the Consortium) issued a report with a Comprehensive Framework for Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention intended to support the health and well-being of sworn staff.¹³² The Consortium set out to provide a best practices framework for law enforcement agencies that are intended to be implemented over time and are important. The framework developed for law enforcement agencies was organized into three categories: Lead, Assist, and Support.¹³³ Each of the categories in the framework are for organizational purposes and include sections listed in the below figure that serve to assist those who might be at risk for suicide (Figure 2- Depicts a

¹²⁷ OCSD. (2021). Peer Support and Assistance Program. Retrieved from <https://ocsheriff.gov/sites/ocsd/files/2021-03/Policy%201033%20Peer%20Support%20and%20Assistance%20Program.pdf>

¹²⁸ California Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST). (2024). Full-Time Sworn, Reserve, Full-Time Dispatcher, and Full-Time Records Supervisor Personnel (All POST Participating Agencies). Retrieved from <https://post.ca.gov/Agency-Statistics>

¹²⁹ Police Executive Research Forum. (2020). Riverside Police Department Policy 307-Investigations of Officer Involved Shootings and Incidents Where Death or Serious Likelihood of Death Results. Retrieved from https://www.policeforum.org/assets/FLS-CRT/Riverside_PD_Policy_Manual.pdf

¹³⁰ Ibid.

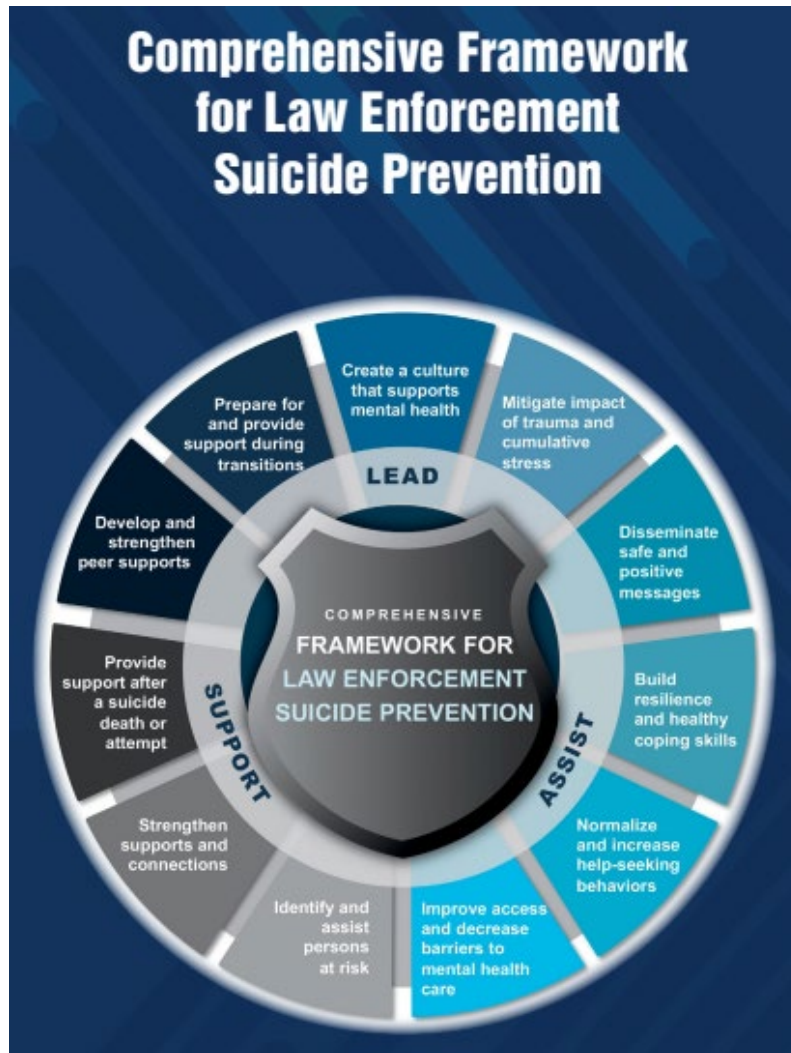
¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² International Association of Chiefs of Police. (2021). Comprehensive Framework for Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention. Retrieved from https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/NOSI_Framework_Final%20Copy%2001.pdf

¹³³ Ibid.

detailed breakdown of the Comprehensive Framework for Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention):¹³⁴

Figure-2: Depicts a detailed breakdown of the Comprehensive Framework for Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention.



Many law enforcement agencies throughout the United States are implementing various components of the comprehensive framework into their agencies to actively prevent suicides and attempted suicides within the ranks of their organizations.

VII. OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL FEEDBACK

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) was created by Los Angeles County ordinance 6.44.190 in 2014, as a part of the Board of Supervisor's (Board's) duty to supervise the official conduct of County officers under Government Code section 25303.¹³⁵ The purpose of the OIG is to promote constitutional policing and the fair and impartial administration of justice, and to facilitate the

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ OIG. (2024). About the OIG. Retrieved from <https://oig.lacounty.gov/about/>

Board's responsibility.¹³⁶ The OIG provides independent and comprehensive oversight, monitoring of, and reporting about the Sheriff's Department and serves as the investigative arm of the Commission. Since the creation of the OIG, the Inspector General has reported on LASD in a number of areas that relate to the current issue that includes, but is not limited to:

- April 11, 2019 (Job Content-Overtime),¹³⁷ Report-Back on LASD Internal Administrative Investigations and Dispositions of Disciplinary Actions. This report involved an investigation related to training issues associated with the same deputy who was caught sleeping on duty twice. The matter was written by OIG to suggest that the deputy worked in the custody setting, which is one of the work locations where 12-hour compressed work schedules are available.¹³⁸
- July 2019 (Job Context-Co-Worker Relations/Bureaucracy),¹³⁹ Initial Implementation by the LASD of the Truth and Reconciliation Process. This report involved the review of the Truth and Reconciliation process as implemented in the Mandoyan case and former Sheriff Villanueva's criticisms of the administrative investigation and Civil Service process. Deputy Caren Mandoyan was discharged from the LASD on September 14, 2016, after an administrative process that investigated and reached an evidence-based conclusion that allegations that Mandoyan had engaged in domestic violence against the victim. The victim stated that Mandoyan would call her names like "bitch", "whore" and "slut" because she had previously dated other Department members before dating him. The victim said Mandoyan threatened to affect her father's job and her job, so there was no chance for there to be a clean break. The victim said she felt "trapped" because Mandoyan told her he was a "Reaper" (Deputy Gang Member) and had influence with people in high places in the Department. The victim reported that on September 1, 2014, Mandoyan verbally and physically abused her and that he was in a "blackout rage".
- October 2020 (Job Context-Co-Worker Relations/Bureaucracy),¹⁴⁰ Analysis of the Criminal Investigation of Alleged Assault by Banditos. This report involved the review of the Kennedy Hall Incident investigation, which uncovered evidence that a group of veteran Sheriff's Department deputies had undue influence over the daily activities and assignments at the East Los Angeles (East LA) station. Several of the witnesses interviewed identified older deputies in the group as having ties to the "Banditos" (Deputy Gang). Some younger deputies at East LA alleged that the secret group they identified as Banditos used their influence, and sometimes force and violence, to push deputies out of the station for failing to live up to the Banditos' work ethic. The younger deputies also stated that they were assaulted by Banditos members after an East LA station party at Kennedy Hall.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ OIG. (2019). Report-Back on LASD Internal Administrative Investigation and Disposition of Disciplinary Actions. Retrieved from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/ecfd760c-e2f1-4158-b2c7-7746143f8699/4-11-19ReportBack_1.pdf

¹³⁸ LASD. (2019). Career and Benefits. Retrieved from <https://lasd.org/careers/benefits/>

¹³⁹ OIG. (2019). Initial Implementation by the LASD of the Truth and Reconciliation Process. Retrieved from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/18cb2e75-5159-42fc-900f-b5be0508069d/TruthandReconciliation_4.pdf

¹⁴⁰ OIG. (2020). Analysis of the Criminal Investigation of Alleged Assault by Banditos. Retrieved by https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/da9e85fc-9584-4a74-a2a4-0c4970f4efcb/Review_Banditos_Investigation.pdf

- February 2021 (Job Context-Co-Worker Relations/Bureaucracy),¹⁴¹ LASD: Review and Analysis of Misconduct Investigations and Disciplinary Process. This report involves the observation of significant pressure on unit and commanders to not initiate internal investigations of employee misconduct. Initiating an internal investigation into allegations of misconduct by an employee is referred to within the Department as “putting a case on” the employee. It was reported by multiple persons to the OIG that in a pre-inaugural briefing in 2018 at the LASD Century Station Sheriff Villanueva explicitly stated that there would be no career path in his administration for unit commanders who “put cases on” department employees.

These are some of the many instances that the OIG conducted investigation and review into the LASD and identified job content and context stressors.

VIII. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

On December 7, 2023, the Commission hosted the *Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness* virtual conference¹⁴² moderated by Commissioner Luis S. Garcia that discussed law enforcement mental health challenges and services available to deputies and their families. Expert panelists included:

- Joe Willis, Chief Learning Officer, First H.E.L.P.¹⁴³
- Rajeev Ramchand, RAND’s¹⁴⁴ Co-Director of the Epstein Family Veterans Policy Research Institute
- Miriam Brown, Emergency Outreach and Triage Division¹⁴⁵ Deputy Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
- And Dr. Stephen Seetal, Psychological Services Bureau¹⁴⁶ Director, Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

The panelists highlighted free and confidential mental health services and discussed suicide prevention services. Community members offered views on the issue of law enforcement suicide prevention and wanted to ensure that the Commission understood their concerns, some of which follows:

- “I’m retired and I’m hearing that the incredible amount of overtime is affecting every aspect of their lives.”

¹⁴¹ OIG. (2021). LASD: Review and Analysis of Misconduct Investigations and Disciplinary Process. Retrieved from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/dddb2ccf-34af-4e30-b6a8-7e9d610265d0/IIIPublicReport_Body2.pdf

¹⁴² Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission. (2023). Virtual Conference: Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness. Retrieved from <https://coc.lacounty.gov/meetings/conferences>

¹⁴³ First H.E.L.P. (2023). About First HELP. Retrieved from <https://1sthelp.org/about/>

¹⁴⁴ RAND Corporation. (2015). Suicide Prevention Strategies in Law Enforcement Agencies in the United States. Retrieved from https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/RAND-LACounty_2023.pdf

¹⁴⁵ Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. (2023). Mental Health and Wellness. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/DMH-MENTALHEALTHANDWELLNESS.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. (2023). Psychological Services Bureau. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASD-PresentationMH.pdf>

- “How long does it take to be licensed to provide psychological services and are there openings?”
- “What training and policies are being developed to address the stigma of mental health asking for help and a culture of toxic individualism in law enforcement?”

Several speakers voiced concerns about overtime and the impact it has on deputies’ lives and wellbeing. The public, which included sworn staff members, had a general concern about this topic.

IX. ANALYSIS

The availability of psychological services has existed for several decades in many law enforcement agencies. As with most things, the mere existence does not mean that it is functioning at optimal capacity. Areas for improvement associated with LASD PSB are reflected based on evidence include:

A. Increase in Level of PSB Service Provisions Department-Wide

The evidence in this report reflects that PSB currently has 33 Budgeted Positions in a Department with 18,000 employees with 4 different office locations providing services that include, but are not limited to training, emergency response and clinical services.¹⁴⁷ The LASD PSB can benefit from increasing their service provisions to adequately address changes needed to Department policies, procedures and processes. An officer told his personal story of struggling, being overwhelmed with work, not wanting to live anymore and ultimately recommended people pick up the phone and get help.¹⁴⁸ Ensuring that service provisions are readily available may save more lives. According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, supporting officers requires being there with support and resources.¹⁴⁹

B. Change in MPP3-10/460.00 Psychological Response to Critical Incident Policy to reach more sworn staff

The LASD policy in MPP 3-10/460.00-Department Psychological Response to Critical Incidents currently provides that “Unit commanders shall encourage and/or at times require those personnel involved in any event that has the potential to overwhelm their normal coping skills to attend a debriefing with a Department psychologist. According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, “discussing their experiences and feelings and having judgment-free support is an essential factor in helping officers maintain their well-being, especially after a traumatic incident”.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, evidence in this report reflects that RPD,

¹⁴⁷ LASD. (2023). PSB. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASD-PresentationMH.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ NAMI. (2024). Police Officers Need Help Too. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/personal-stories/police-officers-need-help-too/>

¹⁴⁹ International Association of Chiefs of Police. (2022). Supporting Law Enforcement Families in Understanding Trauma. Retrieved from https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/256944_IACP_21_SupportingFamilies_508c_0.pdf

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

a local law enforcement agency lists in their policy #307 a requirement that all involved employee(s) meet with the Psychological Services provider and that they not be returned to full duty a clearance is provided from the contracted psychological services provider.¹⁵¹ Based on available evidence, the LASD can benefit from modifying this policy to remove the “and/or” option and simply make it a “requirement” that those personnel involved in any traumatic event attend a debriefing to ensure that all staff benefit from standard service provisions.

C. Annual Reporting of PSB Data will monitor employee concerns, service efforts and needs

The evidence tends to reflect that the LASD may collect, maintain and submit data to the LESDC FBI as a part of the information on suicides and attempted suicides within their law enforcement agency. Outside of the data published to the LESDC FBI it does not appear that the LASD publishes data sources that can be instrumental to the success of the LASD, the PSB operation, personnel, and the public. When the Commission initiated requests for various forms of data from the PSB operation some information was made available, but other items such as annual or quarterly reports were not available.¹⁵² The LASD PSB has the ability to track, monitor and report service utilization statistics.¹⁵³ The LASD PSB service utilization data is category and service based with no direct reference to confidential information and it's publication is important to the Departments' prevention efforts. The LASD can also benefit from creating, maintaining and publicly posting a dashboard with the LASD data that is submitted to the LESDC FBI and LASD PSB service utilization data by category, which can aid in determining where resources should be allocated for intervention purposes; and is of public concern including current, retired and former LASD personnel.^{154, 155}

D. Development of PSB Video Library will provide 24/7 access to information

The evidence tends to indicate that educational resources on suicide prevention can help people understand and become more receptive to suicide prevention. Development of a video library can aid in providing resources for officers and individuals to learn about warning signs of suicide, be proactive, and much more.^{156, 157} In December 2023, when the Commission hosted its virtual conference on *Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness*, more than 125 people logged in to hear from the panelists about mental health services, suicide prevention and related services.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ Police Executive Research Forum. (2020). Riverside Police Department Policy 307-Investigations of Officer Involved Shootings and Incidents Where Death or Serious Likelihood of Death Results. Retrieved from https://www.policeforum.org/assets/FLS-CRT/Riverside_PD_Policy_Manual.pdf

¹⁵² LASD. (2024). LASD Follow-up Psychological Services Bureau Response to the Commission. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/LASDPSBFollow-upResponsetoCOC05.13.24.pdf>

¹⁵³ LASD. (2023). PSB Consultations. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/PSBStats2023-Consultation.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ Western Michigan University. (2024). Understanding Suicide Data. Retrieved from <https://wmich.edu/suicideprevention/basics/understanding-data>

¹⁵⁵ Fox11 Los Angeles. (2025). Retired LASD Chief, wife speak out after losing daughter to suicide: “When is enough, enough?”. Retrieved from [Retired LASD Chief, wife speak out after losing daughter to suicide: 'When is enough, enough?' | FOX 11 Los Angeles](https://www.fox11.com/story/news/2025/01/15/retired-lasd-chief-wife-speak-out-after-losing-daughter-to-suicide-when-is-enough-enough-fox-11-los-angeles/)

¹⁵⁶ National Institute of Mental Health. (2024). Warning Signs of Suicide. Retrieved from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/warning-signs-of-suicide>

¹⁵⁷ LAPD BSS. (2024). BSS Video Library. Retrieved from <https://www.lapdbss.online/videos>

¹⁵⁸ Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission. (2023). Virtual Conference: Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness. Retrieved from <https://coc.lacounty.gov/meetings/conferences>

This reflects evidence that individuals will log in for a live virtual display of suicide prevention information and if given access to recorded information to review at their leisure would increase individuals knowledge and understanding of efforts to save lives.

E. Report back in Writing to the Commission and Office of Inspector General

The evidence tends to indicate that suicide prevention is highly important for law enforcement agencies and their personnel. The LASD has taken the initiative to implement measures such as Peer Support and providing support after suicides, attempt suicides and deaths. However, in 2021, the Consortium research reflects that there is a Comprehensive Framework for Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention that LASD may be able to use to further its efforts to prevent suicides within the department.¹⁵⁹

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing and analyzing data and documents to develop this report, the Quality-of-Life Ad Hoc Committee recommends that the Commission adopt the following:

A. Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors:

1. Examine through the CEO in collaboration with the LASD the overall departmental benefits and feasibility of approving \$5.54 million or a level of funding deemed fiscally appropriate for the LASD Employee Wellness Center to provide needed psychological services throughout the Department and submit a written progress report of the examination to the Commission on letterhead by July 31, 2025. This recommendation is based on the LASD FY2025-26 official budget request submitted to the CEO on January 5, 2025.¹⁶⁰

B. Recommendations to the LASD:

2. Review and revise LASD MPP3-10/460.00-Department Psychologist Response to Critical Incidents policy to increase efforts to reach more employees after exposure to critical incidents and submit a written progress report to the Commission on letterhead by September 30, 2025 with a status of the policy revision as follows:
 - A. "Unit commanders should strongly encourage those personnel involved in any event that has the potential to overwhelm their normal coping skills to attend a debriefing with a Department psychologist".
3. Identify a place on the LASD public-facing transparency website and effective beginning the last week in December 2025 and each January moving forward, publicly post and maintain a dashboard the data consistent with the level that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection (LESDC) allows law enforcement agencies such as LASD to submit data. In addition, include LASD PSB data

¹⁵⁹ International Association of Chief's of Police. (2021). Comprehensive Framework for Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention. Retrieved from https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/NOSI_Framework_Final%20Copy%2001.pdf

¹⁶⁰ LASD. (2025). Fiscal Year (FY) 25-26 Official Budget Request-Wellness Center. Retrieved from <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/FY25-26OfficialBudgetRequest-WellnessCenter.pdf>

on suicide prevention services provided by PSB service category. The data that LASD should public post and maintain on the dashboard includes, but is not limited to:

- A. The data that LASD should publicly post on the LASD transparency website that is consistent with the LESDC Act includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. The circumstances and events that occurred before each suicide or attempted suicide;
 - ii. The general location of each suicide or attempted suicide;
 - iii. The demographic information of each law enforcement officer who commits or attempts suicide;
 - iv. The occupational category, including criminal investigator, corrections officer, line of duty officer, 911 dispatch operator, of each law enforcement officer who commits or attempts suicide; and
 - v. The method used in each suicide or attempted suicide
 - B. LASD PSB service utilization data on suicide prevention services by service category such as but not limited to (not all inclusive, LASD may add additional information deemed non-confidential and important):
 - i. Outreach services
 - ii. Related prevention services data
4. Collaborate with LAPD BSS and the OIG in the review of the LAPD BSS Video Library and develop an LASD PSB Video Library with materials for viewing at the standard of or better than that of the LAPD BSS materials, and make the LASD PSB Video Library available to the LASD personnel including the public on the LASD public website by no later than October 2025, and submit a written progress report to the Commission on letterhead by July 31, 2025.
5. Provide the Commission and Office of Inspector General (OIG) with a report back in writing by September 5, 2025, with mechanisms for enhancing LASD suicide prevention efforts. The report back should include:
- A. An analysis of policies requiring mandated shift work and assessment of the ability to end back-to-back shifts;
 - B. A description of the existing framework for LASD suicide prevention and an explanation of areas for improvement with the reason for such recommendation;
 - C. A review, analysis and develop an explanation of the ability to require annual one-on-one check-ins between each LASD sworn staff member and a department psychologist
 - D. An analysis and confirmation of the departments' ability to have the Sheriff or his or her designee to include a monthly status report on the "LASD Sworn Staff Wellness & Personnel Strength" in his/her regular agendized report at the Commission meeting(s), which should include, but not be limited to:
 - i. Sworn Staff Wellness, information to consist of (not all inclusive, LASD may add additional information deemed important):
 1. Update on the circumstances and events that occurred related to each suicide or attempted suicide involving LASD personnel that occurred since the last Commission meeting;
 - ii. Personnel Strength, information to consist of (not all inclusive, LASD may add additional information deemed important):
 1. Update on the number of sworn staff:
 - a. Budgeted positions

- b. Vacancies
 - c. Impairments
- 2. General overview of overtime hours for Custody and Patrol Operations
- 3. Overview of departmental efforts to address identified personnel weaknesses

After the Commission accepts these recommendations, staff will continue to monitor this matter and report back when necessary to the full Commission.