



# **REFORM AND REINVENTION**

## **In Accordance with**

### **NYS Executive Order 203**

On June 12, 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed Executive Order 203 entitled the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative. It required municipalities to work with local stakeholders to adopt a policing reform plan to improve trust between law enforcement members and the communities they serve. The purpose of the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative is “to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy” within communities throughout the State of New York and “to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.”

**SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE**  
**DR. ERROL D. TOULON, JR., SHERIFF**

# A NOTE ABOUT POLICE REFORMS AND THE COUNTYWIDE PROCESS

- Deputy Sheriffs and police officers operate under a common set of policies and acts governed by federal, state, and local law, but strategies and philosophies still differ by department.
- As the Reform and Reinvention process evolves, and changes are incorporated into Police Academy training, the county's Deputy Sheriffs will adopt the SCPD's reforms in areas where responsibilities overlap, such as in enforcement of vehicle and traffic laws, and penal laws.
- This process focuses on areas of work that are dissimilar to that of the Suffolk County Police Department.
- The Sheriff's Office responsibilities are multifaceted. For the purpose of the *Reform and Reinvention process*, we aim to improve trust with all constituencies through education, thoughtful discussion, collaboration, and transparency.



# *EXECUTIVE ORDER 203*

## EXAMINING SHERIFF'S OFFICE STRENGTHS, DEFICIENCIES, AND **AREAS FOR INNOVATION**

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### Focus Areas:

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Office has been conducting a review of its corrections and police divisions' policies and procedures.

- **Reforming & Reinventing Corrections**
- **Reforming & Reinventing Police**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Recruitment and Diversity**
- **Employee Training**
- **Employee Well-Being**
- **Internal Affairs Operations**



# TODAY'S FORMAT

- *First 30 Minutes:*
  - An Introduction to the Sheriff's Office, Recent Reforms, and Plans for the Future
  - The remainder will be reserved for discussion with the intent to:
    - incorporate community Input into the *Governor's Report*; and
    - continue to collaborate, share innovative ideas, and implement best practices to achieve operational excellence and advance public trust.



# FACTORS THAT ARE COMMON AMONG JUSTICE INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS

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- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, Anxiety
- Complex Trauma
- Homelessness or Inappropriate Housing (couch surfing)
- Educational Deficits
- Addiction and Substance Use
- Gang Involvement
- Untreated Mental Illness
- Close family members and friends who have also been incarcerated



# INCARCERATED RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION

- Racial and ethnic disparities have long plagued the criminal justice system.
- Black individuals make up nearly 33% of the nation's incarceration census (Gramlich, 2020) and are incarcerated in state or federal prison at a rate of more than 5.8 times their White counterparts (Carsen, 2020).
- In Suffolk County, Black individuals represent 8.8% of the population, yet they comprise 44% of the county jail population. Hispanics are also overly represented in the county jail. In Suffolk County, they account for 20% of the general population and 25% of the average county jail census. (U.S. Census, 2020)

Gramlich, J. (2020, May 6). *Fact Tank*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center:

Carsen, E. A. (2020). *Prisoners in 2018*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

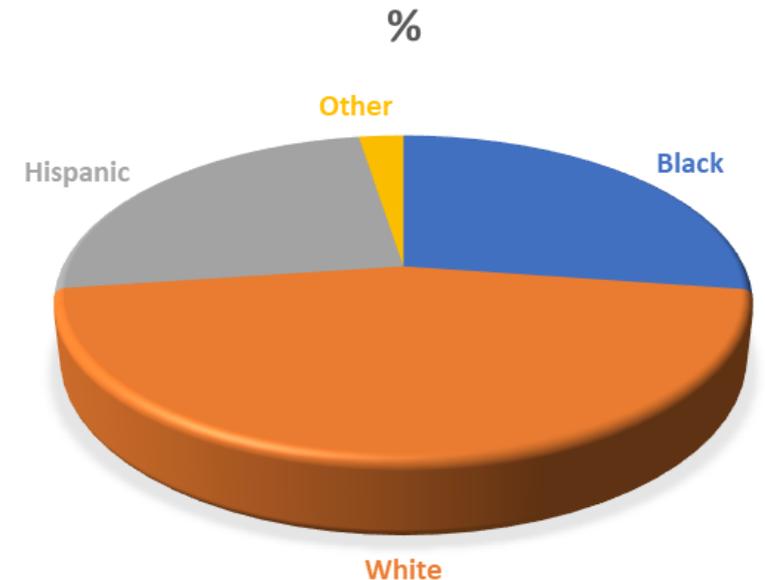
U.S. Census. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/suffolkcountynyork/HCN010212>



# ARREST STATISTICS

- The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services' Suffolk County data shows arrests totaled 18,741 in 2019 and were comprised of 45.5% White, 27.3% Black, and 24.7% Hispanic individuals. (N.Y.S. DCJS, 2019).
- Sheriff's Office internal arrest statistics reveal a similar demographic pattern. The Sheriff's Office Police Division made 801 arrests in 2019. Of these arrests, 56% were White, 27% Black and 17% Hispanic.
- The total Sheriff's Office arrests dropped by 53% in 2020. Deputies made 372 arrests comprising 46% White, 29% Black and 25% Hispanic individuals.

## DCJS Suffolk County Arrests for 2019



# ARREST, RELEASE, REPEAT

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- A 2019 report by the Prison Policy Initiative entitled, *Arrest, Release, Repeat: How police and jails are misused to respond to social problems* (Jones & Sawyer, 2019) found that:
- Individuals with multiple arrests were disproportionately more likely to be Black, low-income, less educated, and unemployed.
- 49% of individuals with multiple arrests lived below the poverty line, 66% had a high school diploma at most, and individuals with multiple arrests were 4 times more likely to be unemployed.
- Individuals with numerous arrests were more likely to present with serious mental and medical health issues. Of the individuals with multiple arrests, 52% reported a substance use disorder, 25% were diagnosed with a severe mental illness, and individuals with multiple arrests were 3 times more likely to have experienced severe psychological distress.
- The report also indicated that those with multiple arrests were more likely to be “frequent utilizers” of emergency rooms and emergency shelters. Of these individuals, 36% reported they used an emergency room at least twice in the previous year.

- Source: Jones, A., & Sawyer, W. (2019, August). Retrieved from Prison Policy Initiative: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/repeatarrests.html>



# MENTAL ILLNESS IN JAILS AND PRISONS

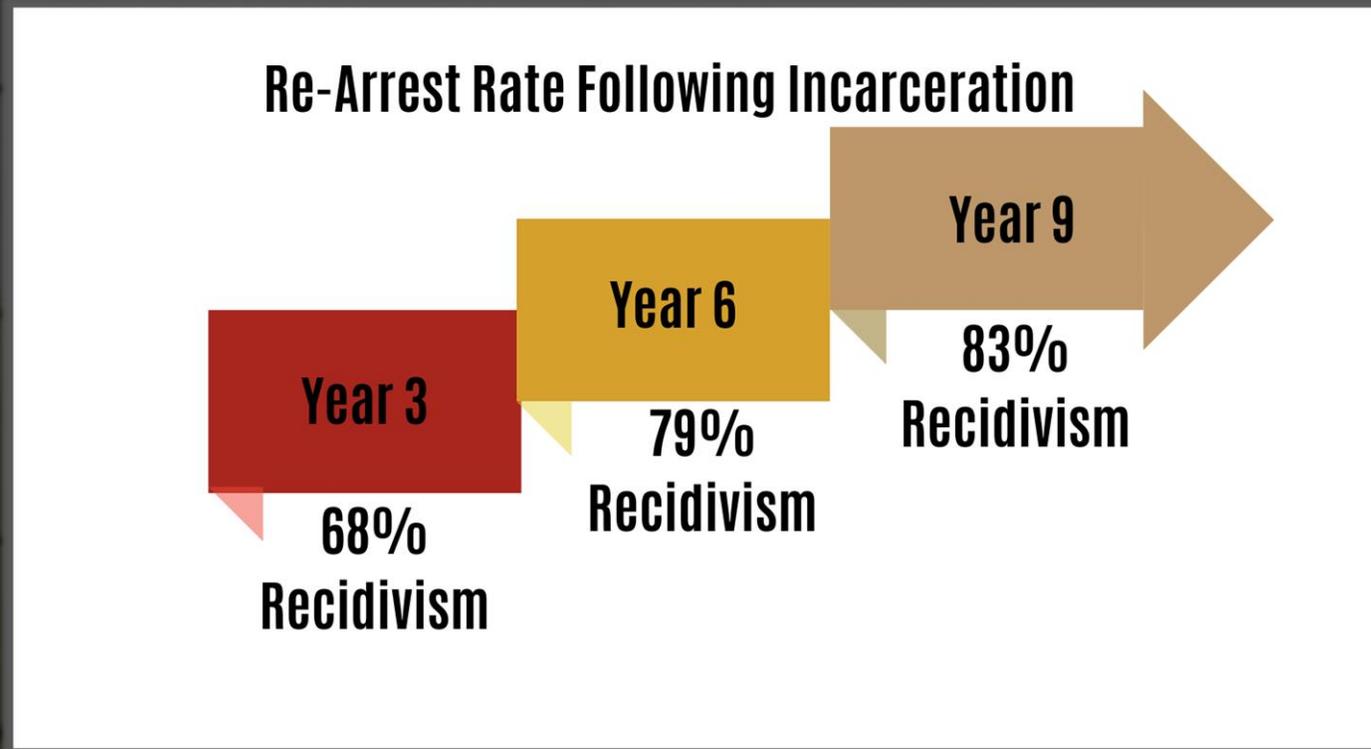
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- Approximately 5% of the non-institutionalized population suffers from serious psychological distress
- This number is much higher in jails and prisons across America.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 15% of state and federal prisoners and 26% of jail inmates reported experiences that met the threshold for serious psychological distress.



# THE CYCLE OF RECIDIVISM

According to a 2018 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics:



# PART I: REFORMING AND REINVENTING CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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# IN CUSTODY REHABILITATION PROGRAMMING

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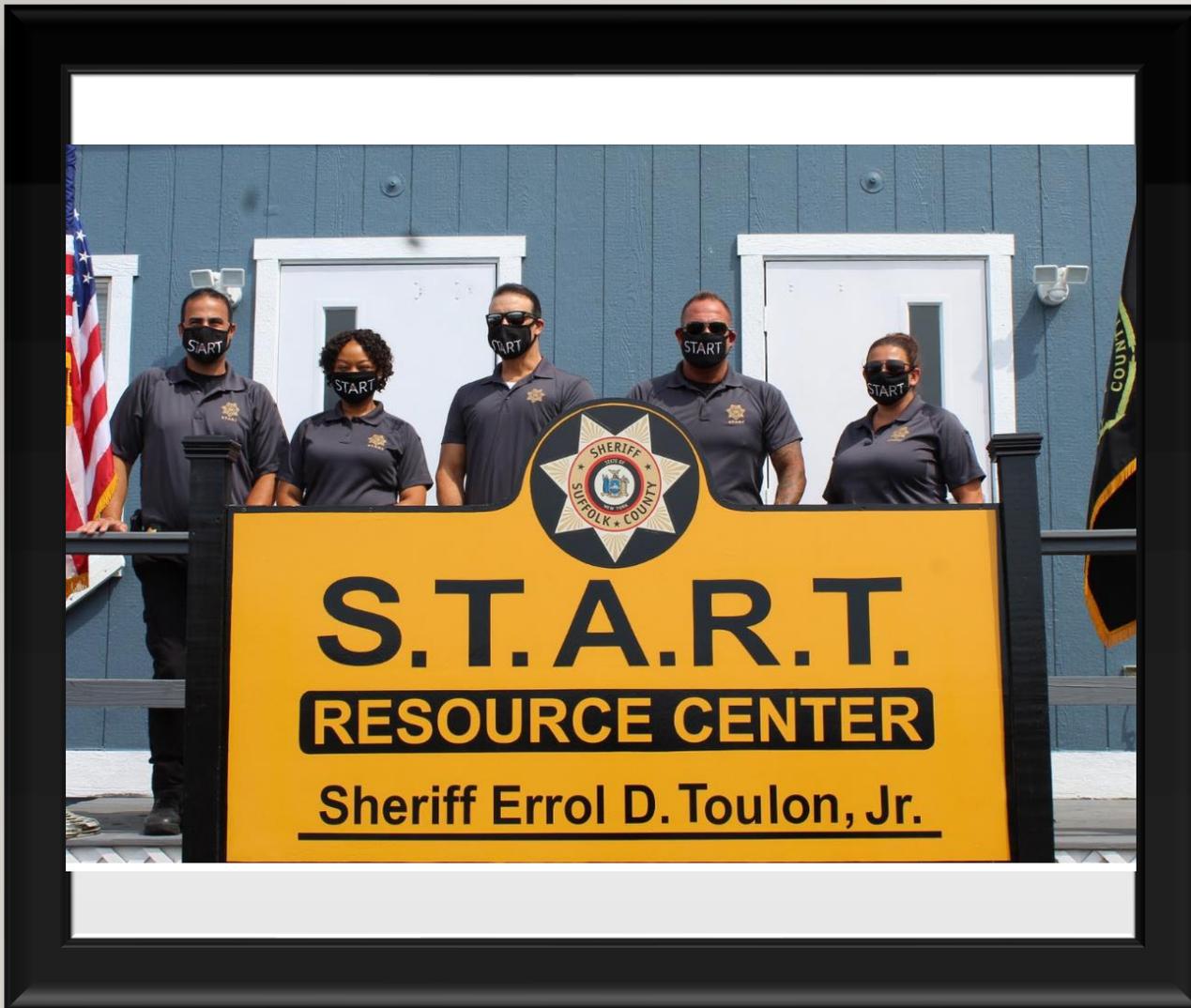
- Specialized Housing Units with Programming
  - Choose Your Path
  - Choose to Thrive
  - Senior and Veterans (combined)
  - Sheriff's Addiction Treatment Program
- Human Trafficking Unit
- Correctional Counselors



## REENTRY AND POST-RELEASE SERVICES

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- Reentry starts on day one.
- Correctional Counselors and Community Correction Officers
- The S.T.A.R.T. Resource Center



# PLANS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

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- Stakeholders must work together to reduce barriers to housing and employment.
  - Improve access to safe and stable housing for those formerly incarcerated by rehabilitating county-owned property for transitional housing.
  - Lack of stable housing is also potential barrier to utilizing Department of Labor vocational training programs.
- Inmates with severe mental illness have more intensive needs and more frequently recidivate upon release. Create a working group in 2021 to address the continuum of support for high-risk populations.
- In 2021, the Sheriff's Office will expand on its current FAMILY REUNIFICATION pilot project with Stony Brook University's School of Social Welfare to improve support for children and family members of justice-involved individuals.

# PART I: REFORMING AND REINVENTING POLICE SERVICES

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# 240 SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFFS



- Serve Warrants and Summonses
- Domestic Violence/ERPO
- Make Arrests/Fugitives
- Courts – Writs of Assistance/ Family Court
- Transport Inmates
- Investigate Crimes
- Patrol Roads/ DWI Unit/ Marine Patrol
- Civil Court Orders



# RECENT REFORMS

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- **Use of Force Reforms.** In 2020, the Sheriff's Office revised and lengthened its Use of Force (UOF) Training. On June 9, 2020, the Sheriff's Office revised its policy to ban the use of chokeholds.
- **Body and In-Car Cameras.** The Sheriff's Office is currently in the process of deploying this equipment to Deputy Sheriffs in phases. Multiple camera systems were tested during the procurement process.
- **Language Assistance Service.** All Deputy Sheriffs have access to Language Assistance Services to assist in interactions with the public.



# POLICE REFORM PLANS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

- Civilian staff in the Enforcement Bureau field frequent phone calls from members of the public facing eviction and landlords who are frustrated with the eviction process. The Sheriff's Office will implement customer service training for all frontline staff in 2021 to improve these interactions.
- Trauma Training for Deputy Sheriffs. The training will help them utilize trauma-informed practices in their interactions with children and adults.
- Deputy Sheriffs are charged with executing Family Court orders to remove children from their homes for reasons such as abuse and neglect. In addition to implementing trauma informed training for Deputy Sheriffs, the Sheriff's Office will work with community partners to develop a care package of items the officers could give to the children to ease the transition.
- Utilize the S.T.A.R.T. Resource Center staff to aid families in crisis.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



# ESTABLISHED TASK FORCES

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- The Sheriff's Office is committed to collaborative criminal justice policymaking. Numerous task forces comprised of community stakeholders meet regularly to provide input into Sheriff's Office initiatives.

- Interfaith Council
- Community Advisory Board
- Student Advisory Board
- The Reentry Task Force
- The Veterans Reentry Task Force
- Deconstructing the Prison Pipeline Task Force

- **Certain task force groups did not meet in 2020 due to COVID-19-related disruptions.**



## THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE RUNS MANY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

**IN FOCUS –  
“GETTING TO  
THE KIDS  
BEFORE THEY  
GET TO ME”**

**Sandy Hook Promise.** The Sheriff's Office offers two programs: Say Something and Start with Hello.

**The Say Something / grades 6-12.** Teaches the recognizable signs and signals of a potential threat, especially over social media, and how to Say Something to a trusted adult. It also teaches students to be alert to signs that a peer may be in distress, and how to get them help.

• **Start with Hello/ grades K-6.** Teaches students how to be more socially inclusive in order to prevent feelings of social isolation, further preventing the risk of school violence.

- Students are taught that peers who are isolated may also be a victim of bullying, violence, and/or suffering from depression, and may need help.
- Students are also taught how to engage with vulnerable peers and to be alert to the sign of a peer's intent on hurting themselves or others.
- Officers have trained 23,631 Suffolk County students, school faculty members, and parents.

# ADVOCACY AND MENTORING ROLE

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Recognition that in order to end the prison pipeline we need to take a more holistic approach to addressing behavioral problems and vulnerabilities before kids reach the justice system.

- Assessment & Intervention over Suspensions
- Case Management
- More Social Workers and Mental Health Professionals
- Mentoring – Currently in 3 School Districts



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# RECRUITMENT AND DIVERSITY & EMPLOYEE TRAINING

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# LACK OF DIVERSITY

Personnel Characteristics	RACE										ETHNICITY							
	Full Time						Part Time				Full Time				Part Time			
	White		Black		Other		White		Black		Hispanic		Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		Non-Hispanic	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Civilian Subtotal	43	75	1	2	1	3	1	1	0	0	1	2	44	78	0	0	1	2
Deputy Subtotal	185	36	2	0	9	4	0	0	0	0	9	4	187	36	0	0	0	0
Correction Subtotal	631	111	23	13	35	6	0	0	0	0	28	6	661	124	0	0	0	0
Total	859	222	26	15	45	13	1	1	0	0	38	12	892	238	0	0	1	2

Workforce diversity is, and must be viewed, as a resource for those in public service because different life experiences can help shape policies and practices to improve the provision of government services.

Creating a more diverse workforce is, and will continue to be, a priority in 2021 and beyond.



# TRAINING & SUPERVISION

- As of 2018, every sworn officer attends **annual in-service training refreshers and mandatory supervisor's school**. In 2020, the Sheriff's Office also produced its first comprehensive catalog of class descriptions.
- **Fair and Impartial Policing**. In 2020, all Deputy Sheriffs received an 8-hour in-service training in Fair and Impartial Policing, and as part of their academy training.
- **Three-Day Training Blocks and Supervisor's Training**.
- **New Coursework**. Mental Health First Aid, Fair and Impartial Policing, Crisis Intervention Training, PREA Coursework
- **New Employee Mentoring Initiative**



# PLANS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

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- 2021, the Sheriff's Office will seek out and implement trauma-informed training for its sworn members and customer service training for all civilians who engage frequently with the public.
- All sworn staff will receive on-going special needs inmate training.
- The Sheriff's Office will implement Realistic De-Escalation training in 2021 for all sworn staff.
- De-escalation training will be used within the Professional Communication block of annual training.
- The Sheriff's Office will implement a Line-up Training for the Corrections Division in 2021, providing officers with quick overviews of relevant incidents that occurred inside the facility or nationally.



# PLANS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

## CONTINUED

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- The Academy Bureau is working to facilitate the creation of Peer Support Teams within the Sheriff's Office. These groups will work closely with Office Chaplains and mental health professionals to provide support to Sheriff's Office personnel in need.
- Sheriff's Electronic Training System (SETS) is being transformed to a new and updated media platform. This platform will make it easier to train and track the training of all Sheriff's Office employees.



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# EMPLOYEE WELLNESS & INTERNAL AFFAIRS

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# Reforms and Reinvention must include an emphasis on officer wellness.

- A 2018 study published by the Ruderman Family Foundation found that first responders were at greater risk for depression and PTSD than the general population because they are regularly exposed to traumatic incidents and situations throughout their careers.
- It also found that first responders are at much greater risk for suicide than the general population. (Heyman, Dill, & Douglas, 2018)
- In another study published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 31% of Correction Officers were found to suffer from psychological distress factors that correlated with high rates of depression. (Obidoa, Reeves, Nicholas, Reisine, & Martin, 2011)
- These findings were attributed to Correction Officers' high rate of exposure to human tragedy and psychological distress.

Sources: Heyman, M., Dill, J., & Douglas, R. (2018). *The Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and First Responders*.

Obidoa, C., Reeves, D., Nicholas, W., Reisine, S., & Martin, C. (2011). Depression and Work, Family Conflict Among Corrections Officers. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 1294–1301.

# PLANS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND CONTINUED

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- In 2021, the Sheriff's Office will implement officer wellness "check-ins" with supervisory staff.
- All staff at the Sheriff's Office will be encouraged to be alert to "red flags" with a coworker, or immediately following a Use of Force incident, sick time abuse, or other issues. Staff will then be referred for counseling or treatment.
- The Sheriff's Office will launch an internal education campaign to alert staff about the higher rates of depression among law enforcement and the signs and symptoms of depression.
- New Sheriff's Academy training and continuing education will focus on officer mental wellness education.
- As part of the reinvention and reform process, the Sheriff's Office will raise awareness of the difficult facets of law enforcement work, and its effect on employee mental health.



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## INTERNAL AFFAIRS

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The Sheriff's Office investigates all anonymous complaints. Statements are strongly encouraged but are not necessary to identify and correct misconduct.

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The Sheriff's Office Internal Affairs Bureau does provide the outcome of an investigation to the complainant. The Sheriff's Office is in compliance with all legislation concerning the Freedom of Information Act.

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The Suffolk County Sheriff's Office follows a progressive discipline system for all founded violations of agency policies and procedures.

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# PLANS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND CONTINUED

- The Sheriff's Office is already using a variety of methods associated with Early Intervention Systems (EIS) that engage supervisors in detecting and remedying problematic behavior that occurs under their commands before there are issues that can lead to more serious consequences.
- The Sheriff's Office will be exploring database programs used to assist in tracking performance and complaints that occur over the course of an officer's career.
- In 2021, the Sheriff's Office plans to utilize the Employee Mentorship Program as a non-punitive measure for officers with minor disciplinary sanctions and/or issues.
- By addressing these behaviors early on, the need for more formal disciplinary measures, as well as the consequences to which these behaviors may lead, will be mitigated before they ever become a major problem for the individual and for the agency.





QUESTIONS?

