

# Innovations Suite: Researcher-Practitioner Fellows Community of Practice



**Strategies for Policing Innovation**  
***Commerce City and Brighton Sexual Assault Task Force***  
***Lisa Ingarfield***  
***Kim Messina***

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## Introduction to the INV Suite

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Innovations Suite (INV Suite) refers to a series of BJA grant programs that follow a data-driven approach to support the effective implementation of evidence-based practices to reduce crime, enhance public safety, improve the delivery of justice, and support community revitalization. The INV Suite includes a training and technical assistance (TTA) component to support BJA grantees. A key element of the INV Suite TTA is the [Researcher-Practitioner Fellows Academy](#). The School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University leads this TTA program working with BJA and partners from the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence at George Mason University, Justice Research and Statistics Association, the Center for Public Safety Initiatives at the Rochester Institute of Technology, and subject matter experts drawn from both the community of practice and research.

### Michigan Justice Statistics Center

The School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University, through the Michigan Justice Statistics Center, serves as the Statistical Analysis Center (MI-SAC) for the State of Michigan. The mission of the Center is to advance knowledge about crime and justice issues in the state of Michigan while also informing policy and practice. The Center works in partnership with the Michigan State Police, Michigan's State Administering Agency (SAA), as well as with law enforcement and criminal justice agencies serving the citizens of Michigan. For further information see: <http://cj.msu.edu/programs/michigan-justice-statistics-center/>

This case study was developed by the researchers and practitioners working in one of the INV Suite grant programs. The case study is one of a series produced by the Michigan Justice Statistics Center.

## About the Authors

The following Authors are graduates of the Innovations Suite Researcher-Practitioner Fellows Academy. The one-page summary and case study were submitted through a selective mini-grant process offered to Fellows Academy graduates.

**Lisa Ingarfield** Lisa Ingarfield, PhD (she/her/hers) is the Owner and Founder of Defi Consulting, providing research, program evaluation, policy analysis, and organizational review using a representation, equity, and inclusion lens. This includes developing and evaluating outcomes, organizational analysis, and planning support. Dr. Ingarfield has worked in the non-profit and higher education sector in Colorado for 17 years, primarily in the area of violence against women, and currently provides consulting services to non-profit and governmental organizations full-time. She also teaches Intimate Partner Violence at the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work. Dr. Ingarfield was recently accepted into the Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network (JCOIN), a mentorship program for independent researchers and evaluators with an interest in supporting justice involved people who also use and misuse opioids and other drugs.

**Kim Messina** Kim Messina is the Victim Services Manager for the Brighton and Commerce City Police Departments Victim Services Unit, located in the 17th Judicial District in Colorado. Kim has served in the area of Victim Services for the past 30 years holding a variety of executive leadership positions. Kim is the Program Administrator for the "You Have Options Program" for Brighton and

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Commerce City Police Departments, this program provides uniformity and accountability with the highest standards of response to victims of sexual violence. Kim is the Project Director for the SPI grant for the Commerce City/Brighton Sexual Assault Task Force. Serves as a Victim's Services Mentor to other law enforcement agencies starting Victim Services Units and is a recent graduate of ELEVATE (Excellence in Law Enforcement- Based Victim Assistance Training and Enrichment) sponsored by the FBI Academy, Quantico VA. Also is a Lead Facilitator/IACP Consultant for LEV Network.

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**One-Page Summary:**

**Strategies for Policing Innovations**

***Commerce City and Brighton Sexual Assault Task Force***

**Innovations Suite Training and Technical Assistance  
Community of Practice Case Study Mini-Grant**

**Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Funded Program:** Strategies for Policing Innovation awarded to Commerce City Police Department

**Name of the Project/program:** The Commerce City and Brighton Sexual Assault Taskforce (SATF)

**Grant Period:** October 2017 – September 2020 (No cost extension granted through Sept. 2021)

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**Brief Description:** The Commerce City / Brighton Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF) was established in 2018 as an innovative policing strategy to improve sexual assault investigations at small to medium sized law enforcement agencies where there are insufficient resources for single agency sex crimes units. The SATF has several aims including increasing the efficacy of sexual assault investigations through training, specialization, community collaboration, integrated victim services, and adherence to best practice in sexual assault investigations.

**Partners on SPI grant:** Commerce City Police Department, Brighton Police Department, Brighton and Commerce City Police Department Victim Services Unit, 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District DA's Office, Ralston House Child Advocacy Center, Adams County Department of Human Services, Reaching Hope (therapy provider).

**Evaluation/Outcome Measures:** The Commerce City SPI project developed a case quality rubric based on best practice in sexual assault investigations and leading research in the area. Fifty percent of 36 months pre-SATF case review scores will be compared against 50% of 36 months post-SATF case review scores using an Interrupted Time Series model. The analysis will determine if the intervention (the SATF) has had a statistically significant effect on the quality of sexual assault case investigations. Additional analyses will be done on individual detective case scores, responding officer scores, DA filing rates, case demographics, and case dispositions.

**The Fellows Academy attended and how the Academy supported your efforts (if applicable)**

The Commerce City SPI team attended the MSU Research-Practitioner Fellow Academy April 23-26, 2019 in Denver, CO. Attending this event was helpful to the SPI team in numerous ways:

1. It enabled the team to isolate and identify the continued need for officer wellness support through conversations with SPI representatives and other SPI sites.
2. It solidified the use of the Interrupted Time Series methodology for the SPI project, providing increased knowledge of the method for all team members.
3. It deepened researcher connections with other SPI sites, providing networking opportunities for the SPI team across sites and subjects.
4. It provided the SPI team with language and perspectives on the process of organizational change. This is useful in explaining how change is not linear and the steps organizations need to go through to create sustainable culture change, for the Commerce City team, specifically in the area of sexual assault response.

## **Case Study:**

### **Strategies for Policing Innovations**

#### ***Commerce City and Brighton Sexual Assault Task Force***

## **Innovations Suite Training and Technical Assistance**

### **Community of Practice Case Study Mini-Grant**

#### **Executive Summary:**

Sexual violence is a nationwide problem and while research has consistently illuminated high rates of sexual violence, reporting to law enforcement remains low (Black, et al., 2010; Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). There exists extensive research addressing the shortcomings of law enforcement sexual assault investigations and survivors' hesitation to report their experience (Spohn & Holleran, 2001; Koss, 2006; Rosay, Wood, River, Postle, & TePas, 2011; Lonsway & Archambault, 2012; Police Executive Research Forum, 2012; Spohn & Tellis, 2012; Wentz & Archbold, 2012; Spohn & Tellis, 2016; Bennett, Edwards, Murphy & Birk, 2016) and Commerce City's internal audit identified several deficiencies (Jimmerson, 2016).

One of the key areas of law enforcement investigations requiring improvement is the attitudes and behaviors exhibited toward survivors by police officers and the tendency to "unfound" or prematurely "exceptionally clear" sexual assault cases more frequently than is required (Police Executive Research Forum, 2012; Spohn & Tellis, 2012; Lonsway & Archambault, 2012; Spohn & Tellis, 2016). When survivors do not feel believed or understood, they are more likely to disengage from the process (Koss, 2006; Kelly & Campbell, 2013).

The Commerce City Strategies in Policing Innovation (SPI) project was designed to address these deficiencies by creating a dual jurisdictional Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF) with two adjacent jurisdictions. Commerce City and Brighton Police Departments were afforded the opportunity to develop detective specialization in sexual assault, integrate victim services, and build community collaborations as a means to improve their overall sexual assault investigations. By partnering in this way, both agencies collectively leveraged their limited resources to improve services for survivors and

hold offenders accountable. As individual agencies acting independently, they did not have the requisite resources to implement such a robust response to sexual assault.

To determine whether the task force model had an effect on the quality of investigations, the research-practitioner team developed a case quality rubric based on best practice in sexual assault investigations and leading research in the area. The team reviewed 50% of cases in the 36 months preceding the implementation of the SATF and 50% of cases in the 36 months post-SATF implementation. The primary mode of analysis was the Interrupted Time Series model to determine if the SATF intervention had an effect on case quality. While the analysis is still underway, preliminary results indicate an upward trend in case scores for both agencies from 2015 to 2019 but no significant change in filing rates at the District Attorney's (DA) office.

Survivors engaging with the SATF overwhelmingly report positive experiences. Additional analyses will be done on individual detective case scores, responding officer scores, DA filing rates, case demographics, and case dispositions.

### **Background Information:**

Brighton and Commerce City are located in Adams County, Colorado with a small portion of Brighton located in Weld County. Both cities are located in Colorado's 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. The combined population number for Brighton and Commerce City per US Census Bureau (2019) data is 101,890 (Brighton: 41,554 and Commerce City is 60,336). This represents about a 7,700 population increase since the 2016 Census. In Brighton, 36.4% of its population identify as Hispanic or Latino and in Commerce City, nearly half of its residents, 49.2%, identify as Hispanic or Latino. Both cities are experiencing significant population growth which is predicted to continue over the next several years and impact reporting and offender numbers. The Commerce City Police Department (CCPD) has 106 sworn officers, and the Brighton Police Department (BPD) has 76. Each agency has a general investigations unit, which prior to the SATF investigated all sex crimes.

Prior to the implementation of the SATF, both CCPD and BPD did not have specialized sex crimes units such as those often found in larger law enforcement agencies. All sex crime reports therefore were assigned to non-specialized investigators who lacked key skills to support and engage survivors, and thoroughly and effectively investigate sex crimes. Without specialized investigations and trauma informed training, sexual assault survivors were disengaging from the process, and cases were infrequently accepted for prosecution.

Neither department had a targeted strategy to effectively manage the increase in sex offenders in their communities leaving compliance management to inexperienced, unskilled, police officers. The landscape necessitated implementing a new and innovative approach to sexual assault investigations and sex offender registration and management to comprehensively and effectively improve response.

**Purpose Statement and Grant Goals:**

The innovative strategy utilized for the Commerce City SPI project focused heavily on collaboration between law enforcement agencies and community partners to address sexual violence. The project's primary goals were to pilot a joint agency taskforce for sex crimes and to improve sexual assault investigations at small to medium sized law enforcement agencies where there are insufficient resources for a single agency sex crimes unit.

As part of the project's development, the Commerce City SPI site borrowed from the concept and practice of community based sexual assault response teams (SARTs). One of the key components of successful SARTs, in addition to fostering a highly collaborative environment, is the implementation of case review. Rather than an isolated detective making decisions about a case, the investigation can be discussed from varying viewpoints to crystalize the best next steps. Since a victim advocate and DA are present for these conversations, both survivor-centered, trauma informed perspectives, along with prosecutorial questions can be asked before a case is ever presented to the

DA. This enables a more thorough and comprehensive process and one where implicit bias is less likely to affect decisions.

The SATF has several goals:

- (1) Increase the efficacy of sexual assault investigations through training and adherence to best practice in sexual assault investigations.
- (2) Develop a team of specialized detectives who demonstrate a strong understanding of sexual assault dynamics, offender behaviors, and the healing needs of survivors.
- (3) Better serve survivors of sexual assault through a strong integrated victim services model and increased training for all SATF members on the neurobiology of trauma.
- (4) Build strong community collaborations to ensure survivors
- (5) are receiving the support they need to maintain involvement in the investigation, if they so desire.
- (6) Improve the management of sex offenders in Commerce City and Brighton.

The overarching research question driving the project evaluation was:

R<sub>1</sub>: Will the implementation of the Sexual Assault Task Force as an innovative policing strategy increase the quality of sexual assault investigations?

**Strategies, Solutions or Changes Made:**

Membership: Given one of the goals of the project was to develop a specialized sex crime investigations unit, it was important to ensure the officers joining the team were passionate, engaged, and skilled investigators. CCPD and BPD conducted interviews including a Victim Services representative and the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District's Sexual Assault Response Team Coordinator to identify officers interested in joining the task force. Prospective task force members were asked about their experience, reasons for interest, knowledge about survivor behavior and effects of trauma, their understanding of sexual assault dynamics, and why they believe sex crimes are so underreported.

Task Force Location: To enhance productivity and connection among task force members, the SATF was provided its own office space in the Adams County Government Center. The space is centrally located between the two departments enabling the SATF to create its own identity. No other agencies involved with the SATF are housed in the Government Center. The Coordinator is a position that exists externally to the SATF and serves the entire county.

Case Review: The Commerce City SPI project developed a case quality rubric (see Appendix III) based on best practice in sexual assault investigations and leading research in the area. The SATF Sergeant and the Victim Services Unit Manager collaborated with the researcher to develop and test the rubric which has five elements: patrol response, detective investigation, victim advocate response, general case completeness, and a weighted section with items identified by the SATF sergeant to be most important across the four sections.

The primary mode of analysis was the *Interrupted Time Series* model to determine if the SATF intervention had an effect on case quality. To implement this analysis, the team reviewed 50% of cases in the 36 months preceding SATF implementation and 50% of cases in the 36 months post-SATF implementation. An Interrupted Time Series analysis enables the research team to identify if there is any change in case quality over time, particularly after the intervention (the SATF). Additional analyses will be conducted on individual detective case scores, patrol officer scores, DA filing rates, case demographics, and case dispositions.

Victim Services: As part of the task force strategy CCPD and BPD integrated victim services into the SATF by assigning 1.5 FTE victim advocates specifically to the SATF. SATF victim advocates

## ANALYSIS PROCESS

- Two reviewers for each case.
- Each case quality rubric item scored on a scale of 0 (not completed at all) to 3 (fully completed).
- Case scores from each month averaged to provide a single monthly score.
- Compare 36 data points before SATF implementation with 36 data points post-SATF implementation.
- Determine if there is any change in case quality scores over time due to SATF implementation.

are called out on every sexual assault. Research has consistently shown that including a well-trained victim advocate in sexual assault cases can greatly assist detectives in their investigations and also helps survivors feel heard.

Community Partners: CCPD and BPD partnered with the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial DA's Office and a number of community organizations to implement the SATF. Community partners included the local children's advocacy center, a local therapy provider, Adams County Human Services Sex Abuse Intake Team, and the district's Sexual Assault Response Team.

Weekly Meetings: The SATF meets weekly with community partners and agency leadership to share resources, updates, and discuss current cases. This presents a unique opportunity to obtain feedback from a variety of professionals who view cases from different angles. Engaging with multiple perspectives assists in making investigations stronger. Each week, a detective also presents a more in-depth case that is then discussed by the team. This practice will continue beyond the SPI grant period.

Training: Each detective and victim advocate was required to attend a week-long training on the Neurobiology of Trauma and [Forensic Experiential Trauma Interviewing](#) (FETI), The [You Have Options Program](#), and when available, sexual assault investigation training and other relevant crime victim training and conferences.

### **Challenges and Solutions:**

Co-Location: On the whole, co-locating the SATF detectives and advocates, built cohesion and enhanced communication. However, some SATF members found the location isolating. Since they are physically separated from their peers at their home agency, some members felt "out of the loop," like they were losing their connection to the larger team of officers at the central agency building.

Blending Two Cultures: Minimal attention was given in the planning stages to blending two agency cultures. Since Victim Services and SWAT were already joint ventures between the two agencies, the SATF's difference to both of these collaborations was partially overlooked. Each agency has a different

work culture, different expectations, and different IT requirements. These discrepancies caused some challenges during the SATF's formation. This is a continuing problem; especially as new detectives rotate into the task force. However, the longer the SATF has maintained a stable group of detectives and advocates, the more able it is to manage these cultural differences effectively.

Infrastructure: In hindsight, more time and attention should have been devoted to infrastructure issues such as IT, evidence uploading, and report writing. It was incredibly challenging to work with three IT systems each with their own security protocols (CCPD, BPD, and Adams County Government Center). This inconsistency created delays in granting CCPD detectives' access to BPD's system and vice versa. Given Colorado state law, evidence has to be stored by the agency in which the crime occurred. Thus, there was no way to combine SATF evidence into one location, with one storage protocol. Since there were delays in granting detectives access to each agency's systems, this meant CCPD Detectives had to upload evidence for a CCPD case investigated by a BPD Detective and the same was true for CCPD Detectives working BPD cases. IT continues to be a concern although the larger issues encountered initially have been mostly resolved.

Intra-Agency Wide Buy-In: One of the concerns arising in the SATF's first year was the rumor mill at each agency about its success. In some cases, agency staff members were undermining the SATF from afar. Also, SATF Detectives who were taken by surprise at the level of work required or the number of cases they were working, contributed to building a growing misunderstanding about the SATF's purpose. For some CCPD and BPD Detectives in general investigations, it felt as though the SATF had taken staff away from their teams, leaving them short-handed.

A specifically crafted message from agency leadership about the SATF may have helped to reduce some of the chatter, as well as involving more agency leaders in the planning stages for the SATF. This issue did dissipate after the first year and a more positive narrative emerged from both agencies about the SATF.

Staff Turnover: One key goal of the SATF that has not been met is staffing sustainability. The intended goal was to have detectives remain in their roles long-term. This would enable detectives to build experience and skill and the SATF would not have to constantly train detectives, which has a resource and financial impact. Unfortunately, the team saw a much higher turnover rate than anticipated. In some cases, this was due to retirement, promotion, and in others it was due to burnout. In 2019, three SATF sergeants were reassigned as well as losing two detectives and an advocate. These changes undoubtedly affected team morale by creating an extra burden on the remaining detectives who were responsible for training new team members. In some cases, new team members had little to no sex crimes investigation experience. While the SATF hasn't found "the" solution to this problem, a stronger focus on officer wellness may have assisted those detectives who burned out. In addition, a stronger on-boarding process and communicating with detectives about the goals of the program and the desire for detectives to stay for at least three years, may have also assisted.

Training Delays: One effect of high staff turnover, has been an inability to train new detectives and advocates quickly. The Neurobiology of Trauma and FETI trainings were not available on-demand (although COVID-19 has changed some of that), and sexual assault investigation training, especially for newer detectives is often only offered once a year. Another identified problem is a lack of an on-boarding or "orientation" process for new detectives joining the team. It was unclear whether expectations about the inclusion of victim advocates as collaborators in the investigation were clearly explained, as well as some of the logistical problems investigating cases from two different agencies. Since this problem has been identified, the SATF is working to establish a more formal and robust orientation for any new detective or advocates joining the team.

Case Load: From the SATF's inception through today, the number of cases the four detectives (a fifth is responsible for sex offender management) and sergeant have managed far exceeded expectations. From 2017 to 2018, the agencies saw a combined 46% increase in cases, and while 2019 was fairly consistent with 2018, 2020 saw another increase of 18% (see Appendix II for details). This increase emphasized the

need for a clearly defined wellness program, the absence of which in some cases accelerated the departure of detectives from the SATF. This has been a primary concern for CCPD's Deputy Chief, every SATF Sergeant, and the Victim Services Manager.

A possible solution is to add additional detectives or an investigative technician who could take the lead on forensic interviews, a time intensive task, and other tasks that do not require a sworn officer to perform. However, until city budgets rebound from the effects of COVID-19, additional staffing is unlikely. Strong and supportive leadership, as well as mentorship to detectives and advocates, can assist with increasing morale and reducing turnover.

*Sex Offender Management:* Inclusion of sex offender management in the SATF has been controversial from the outset. Initially, one detective from each agency was responsible for managing that city's sex offenders half the time and investigating cases the remainder of the time. This structure led to neither task being completed at a high level. The SATF course corrected and assigned one detective to manage sex offenders from both cities. Apart from the infrastructure struggles identified above, and learning two ways of managing the process, this system worked well for a time. However, it eventually became unsustainable and sex offender management returned to both home agencies. CCPD's sex offender management detective remained at the SATF whereas BPD hired a new civilian staff person located at BPD. There still exists unresolved disagreement about the legitimacy of housing sex offender management at the SATF.

*Community Partners Inclusion:* Including community partners and mirroring a multidisciplinary team approach seen in other fields and in sexual assault response (i.e., SARTs), was central to the SATF's conceptual development. Community partners are regular attendees at weekly meetings and communication between CCPD, BPD, and community partners have increased exponentially. COVID-19 affected the efficacy of weekly meetings and given varying pressures experienced at different agencies for COVID-19 related concerns, community partner attendance became less consistent. In-person meetings were more effective at building connections than video calls.

In addition to the effects of COVID-19 on the broader team, while community partners were almost exclusively effusive about the SATF, this was not always shared by the SATF detectives. For many detectives, adapting to sharing information with community partners was challenging. While detectives acknowledged the skill and expertise community partners had in their individual areas, a “stay in your lane” mentality began to surface in 2019. Detectives didn’t always feel it was appropriate for community partners to offer perspectives on their cases, much like they felt it would be inappropriate for them to offer thoughts on how the community partners conducted their work. This disconnect has not completely been resolved and is in part affected by staff turnover. Community partners now attend meetings every two weeks because the SATF leadership wants to ensure the meetings are meaningful, relevant, and impactful for all members who attend. Strong messaging about the purpose and value of community partner involvement has been diminished.

**Summary of Findings:**

Case Review: Fifty percent of cases from both agencies from 2015-2019 have been reviewed at the time of this case study. 2020 case review is underway. Preliminary t-test results indicate a significant change in case scores means (on a scale of 0-3) across the years for Commerce City, but not for Brighton. Overall, the trend of case scores has increased when viewed together (see Appendix I for run chart).

	<b>CCPD 2015</b>	<b>CCPD 2016</b>	<b>CCPD 2017</b>	<b>CCPD 2018</b>	<b>CCPD 2019</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	1.78	2.15	2.16	2.47	2.13
<b>Range:</b>	1.02	0.96	0.78	0.54	0.46
<b>Median:</b>	1.85	2.1	2.14	2.46	2.18
<b>SD:</b>	0.28	0.31	0.26	0.17	0.26
<b>Variance:</b>	0.08	0.10	0.07	0.03	0.07

	<b>BPD 2015</b>	<b>BPD 2016</b>	<b>BPD 2017</b>	<b>BPD 2018</b>	<b>BPD 2019</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	2.06	2.14	2.08	2.10	2.33
<b>Range:</b>	1.04	0.36	1.09	0.95	1.02
<b>Median:</b>	2.05	2.14	2.14	2.11	2.37
<b>SD:</b>	0.63	0.11	0.30	0.29	0.34
<b>Variance:</b>	0.08	0.01	0.09	0.08	0.11

Victim Surveys: As part of a regular effort to improve victim services, the Victim Services Unit sends service evaluations to any victim of crime to whom they provide services. For the purposes of the SATF, the program evaluation was amended to relate to the goals of the SATF. Evaluations are emailed or texted depending on survivor's preference and consent. Overall, those survivors who worked with the SATF and responded to the survey, expressed high levels of satisfaction with their experience and 100% of respondents said they felt believed.

*“The Commerce City Police Department and the Commerce City/Brighton Sexual Assaults Task Force members we dealt with made us feel comfortable from the beginning to the end. Everyone we spoke to [was] very kind and supportive through the whole process. We can't thank them enough”*

*“The task force was very helpful and caring. They made [us] feel like we were taking the right path and supported throughout the whole process.”*

Implementation Interviews: As part of a process evaluation, the researcher conducted regular interviews with SATF detectives, advocates, and agency leadership. The interviews focused on their experience with SATF implementation, what they learned, and what recommendations they had for other agencies choosing to implement a similar model. Key themes included: teamwork, process/infrastructure struggles, benefit of embedded victim services, officer wellness, co-location pluses and minuses, conflicting communication, strengthened community partner relationships and value (although this decreased over time), increased knowledge of sex crimes and survivor responses, and a mixed belief in the appropriateness of housing sex offender management at the SATF.

**Sustainment:**

At this time, the SATF is operating effectively, and sexual assault reports continue to increase. Community partners now only attend the SATF meeting every two weeks, and on the off weeks, the core

SATF team has been able to use the time to offer other Colorado law enforcement agencies investigative assistance on their cases. Due to staffing changes and promotions, the SATF has a new Commander eager to support the SATF's continued growth and success.

Each year the SATF has produced an annual report to showcase its work to agency staff members and community stakeholders. In addition, prior to COVID-19, the SPI project leads met with agency leadership to provide updates on the SATF's work and successes every six months. In the previous three years, the then Commander conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis with SATF detectives and advocates annually to develop the strategic plan and future goals for the SATF. Including SATF team members in the process of defining the team and the SATF's direction is critical. Lastly, as referenced earlier, there has been a realignment of sex offender management roles by removing BPD's management from the SATF. The leadership team continues to consider the viability of extra staffing for the SATF.

**Conclusion:**

Receiving the BJA award undoubtedly resulted in increased capacity for sex crimes investigations at both CCPD and BPD. Testing a dual-jurisdictional sexual assault response initiative to learn and understand if the framework is effective, was not achievable without BJA support. As with other small to medium sized law enforcement agencies across the country, it is hard to dedicate staff and resources to a particular crime, leading to generalists investigating crimes that require specialization. Partnering with an adjacent jurisdiction stretches each agency's limited resources further and ultimately provides better services to survivors and holds offenders more accountable.

Lessons Learned: As noted previously, one of the most important lessons learned was the need to invest more time and thought into the "how framework" required to combine two agencies, with two different cultures, and two different ways of doing things. Developing a cohesively crafted message about why an SATF is important, ensuring staff across the agency are aware of the initiative and understand its goals will further value to CCPD and BPD. The infrastructure struggles, in particular the continued problems

associated with IT, created unnecessary barriers for detectives to perform their work. This is an area of need that was underestimated.

Additionally, it has become clear that a formal, structured “on-boarding” or orientation process for new detectives joining the SATF is necessary. This will establish expectations, share cultural norms, and explain systems since they will be learning at least one new way of conducting business. Early and regular training should be prioritized, especially for detectives new to sex crimes, or new detectives overall. The SATF did suffer, when it rotated through three sergeants in 2019 (the SATF has had four sergeants in total). Continuity of leadership is very important in a new program because strong leadership can support stability and team efficacy. Who an agency decides to place at the SATF, or a similar new assignment, matters. Ideally, officers should be engaged, innovative thinkers, willing to try new things, and open to feedback (especially if an agency employs case review as a continuous improvement method to enhance success).

Embedding victim advocates in the SATF has been central to its success. Detectives have articulated this time and again, and the advocates have provided invaluable services to survivors and to detectives. This cannot be overstated. Having a team built with like-minded professionals can allow it to be flexible and change direction if need be. This extends to involving community partners and stressing all voices are valued at the table, and each partner in the SATF has something useful to offer because of their different vantage points. The hard work of reducing the siloed nature of criminal justice work, leads to stronger investigations and more supported survivors.

Lastly, is the need to build in a wellness program for officers and advocates working on sex crimes or crimes of violence every day. This negatively impacts detective and advocate performance, and implementation of a wellness program demonstrates to them their mental health matters to the department. SATF work is emotionally challenging and acknowledging it verbally isn't always enough. Agencies cannot underestimate the toll this can take on their staff. Involving SATF personnel in-defining what

wellness activities or training feels right for them and trying to individualize those activities when resources permit customization.

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**Appendices:**

**Strategies for Policing Innovations**

***Commerce City and Brighton Sexual Assault Task Force***

**Appendix I**

CCPD and BPD Average Monthly Case Scores 2015-2019



Measure Names  
○ BPD  
\* CCPD

Appendix II

Year Over Year SATF Case Load 2017-2020

	1Q 2017	2Q 2017	3Q 2017	4Q 2017	2017 Total
CCPD	19	17	22	25	83
BPD	13	22	12	24	71
	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>154</b>

	1Q 2018	2Q 2018	3Q 2018	4Q 2018	2018 Total	% +/- over 2017
CCPD	26	30	35	28	119	43%
BPD	22	33	25	25	105	49%
	<b>48</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>46%</b>
% +/- over 2017	<b>50%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>12%</b>		

	1Q 2019	2Q 2019	3Q 2019	4Q 2019	2019 Total	% +/- over 2018
CCPD	40	28	35	39	142	19%
BPD	30*	19	17	14	80	-25%
	<b>70</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>&lt; -1%</b>
% +/- over 2018	<b>46%</b>	<b>-27%</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>		

\*One case was a 2017 case reopened in 2019

	1Q 2020	2Q 2020	3Q 2020	4Q 2020	2020 Total	% +/- over 2019
CCPD	34*	34	56	36	160	13%
BPD	27	26	24	25	102	28%
	<b>61</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>18%</b>
% +/- over 2019	<b>-13%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>15%</b>		

\* One SAC case from 2018 cleared Jan 2020

Section	% Weight	Section raw Score	Avg Sec. Score	Weighted Score
Patrol	20	0.00	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Investigations	25	0.00	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
VA-General	10	0.00	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Case-General	10	0.00	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Weighted	35	0.00	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>

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**NOTE: All items listed in this rubric were determined bench marks for best practice based on emergent, local and national best practice research as well as YHOP LE practice. Sources utilized for determining rubric elements include:**

- IACP Investigative Strategies
- IACP SA Response Policy and Training Guidelines, 2015
- IACP National LE Policy Center: Investigating Sexual Assaults, 2005
- NJ National Best Practices for SA Kits, August 2017
- Jimmerson 2017 CCPD Audit
- Improving Police Response to Sexual Assault, Police Executive Research Forum, 2012
- Ending Violence Against Women International
- You Have Options Program

Weighted Items

	Rubric Item	Score	Notes
P1 (W)	Report has been treated as valid from the outset		
P2 (W)	VA is called		
P3 (W)	Responding Officer offers victim medical care, including on MFE (if SA occurred within 7-day time frame), if injury is visible or victim complains of pain		
P4 (W)	Was crime scene visited and documented?		
I1 (W)	Victim has been interviewed and interview recorded (audio or video)		
I2 (W)	Crime scene evidence collected and documented (bedding, clothing, environmental elements etc.)		
I3 (W)	Suspect has been interviewed and interview recorded (audio or video)		
I4 (W)	If case is deemed "unfounded-false," is there concrete evidence (not opinion, speculation) that an assault <b>did not</b> occur after a thorough investigation has been conducted? <u>Perceptions of victim credibility or reporting timeline is not evidence a crime did not occur.</u>		
I5 (W)	Investigator contacted victim within 3 business days from assignment		
A1 (W)	VA has explained the YHOP (when applicable) to victim		
	<b>Section Score (Max: 30)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	
	<b>Section Average</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	

Patrol-Initial Investigation

	Rubric Item	Score	Notes
P1	Responding Officer established elements of a crime existed		
P2	Responding Officer has documented victim demeanor as observed – free of assumption and judgment		
P3	SATF/Investigator called		
P4	Signs and/or symptoms of strangulation – responding officer asked and documented in report		
P5	Initial report and interview focuses on suspect behavior vs victim behavior		
P6	Initial interview is limited to questions establishing only the basic facts of the incident that occurred		
P7	If victim is apprehensive to continue report, process and options are explained		
P8	If victim agrees to medical care and/or an MFE, VA accompanies victim to the medical facility. If VA does not accompany victim, explanation provided in report.		
P9	Any injuries, no matter how slight, are documented thoroughly		
P10	Did the responding officer go to the crime scene?		
P11	Are any witnesses (outcry/other) identified in the report?		
P12	If a statement was obtained, is it clear from the report, the statement was given voluntarily and in the survivor's own words.		
	<b>Section Score (Max: 36)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	
	<b>Section Average</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	

	Rubric Item	Score	Notes
I1	Origin of victim report is documented in file (medical report, anonymous report, LE report)		
I2	If case is a conversion from a medical or anonymous reporting case, timelines are documented in case file		
I3	If MFE performed, and victim reporting to LE, evidence was sent for testing within 21 days (with victim consent) (state law)		
I4	If case is a conversion from a medical or anonymous reporting case, evidence is sent for testing within 21 days of victim's conversion (with victim consent) (state law)		
I5	Investigator has documented in case file attempts to keep victim up to date with investigation		
I6	All witnesses have been interviewed and all leads followed and documented clearly		
I7	If crime scene was not photographed or videoed, and/or crime scene evidence not collected, a comprehensive reason why not is documented by investigator in case file		
I8	Suspect's prior behavior is investigated, including speaking to witnesses who may be able to shed light on serial behavior/pattern of offending, and consideration of co-occurring crimes. A comprehensive background investigation on the suspect's criminal history and previous behavior.		
I9	Forensic evidence is collected from the suspect (e.g.: buccal swabs at PD, or MFE at hospital)		
I10	Investigative reports include information on how victim is/was feeling, thoughts, emotional responses, as well as any information they share related to the senses.		
I11	Investigator has documented victim demeanor as observed, free of assumption and judgment		
I12	Document and confirm what "no" looked like for the victim (the absence of a spoken no, for example, is not the determinant of lack of consent)		
I13	A variety of investigative practices utilized (pre-text phone call, social media, text msg etc., per department policies/state law).		
I14	The investigative reports showed clear strategy and logic flow		
I15	Case disposition is not based upon perceptions of victim credibility		
I16	Investigator does not utilize "he said/she said" language or thought process in investigation and case documentation		
I17	If case investigated against victim's wishes, reasons for decision to do so documented in case file		
	<b>Section Score (Max: 51)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	
	<b>Section Average</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	

Advocacy – General (review VA files)

	Rubric Item	Score	Notes
A1	Victim is kept abreast of investigation progress		
A2	Victim is in regular contact with VA		
	<b>Section Score (Max: 6)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	
	<b>Section Average</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	

Case – General

	Rubric Item	Score	Notes
G1	All language in summaries, reports, and other notated elements of case file use neutral, unbiased language		
G2	Case file includes all information related to the crime – times, dates, clear timelines, SA/SAC checklist, supplemental report, evidence, forensics etc.		
	<b>Section Score (Max: 6)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	
	<b>Section Average</b>	<b>#DIV/0!</b>	