

**Pennridge Regional Police Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 28, 2026**

The regular business meeting of the Pennridge Regional Police Commission was held at 5:00pm on January 28, 2026 in the meeting room at the Pennridge Regional Police Headquarters, 200 Ridge Road, Sellersville, PA 18960.

<b>Present:</b>	Gary Volovnik	Commissioner, East Rockhill Township Representative
	Jay Keyser	Commissioner, West Rockhill Township Representative
	Hal Schirmer	Commissioner, West Rockhill Township Representative
	Paul T. Dickinson Jr.	Chief of Police
	Marianne Morano	East Rockhill Township Manager
	Greg Lippincott	West Rockhill Township Manager
	Jim Nietupski	East Rockhill Supervisor
	Dave Nyman	East Rockhill Supervisor
	Will Oetinger, esq.	Grim Biehn and Thatcher

A member of the public was present.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by Mr. Volovnik with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Reorganization:**

Consensus of the Commission was for Chief Dickinson to serve as temporary chairperson.

**On motion** by Mr. Volovnik, seconded by Mr. Schirmer to nominate Jay Keyser as Chairperson. With no additional discussion, all present voted in favor.

Chief Dickinson turned the meeting over to Mr. Keyser.

**On motion** by Mr. Keyser, seconded by Mr. Volovnik to nominate Hal Schirmer as Vice-Chairperson. With no additional discussion, all present voted in favor.

**On motion** by Mr. Schirmer, seconded by Mr. Keyser to nominate Gary Volovnik as Secretary. With no additional discussion, all present voted in favor.

**On motion** by Mr. Schirmer, seconded by Mr. Volovnik, to adopt **Resolution 2026-01** Acknowledgement of Appointments, Reappointments and Status of Existing Appointments as presented. With no additional discussion, all present voted in favor.

**Citizen Comment #1:**

- Nathan Alcott, President of the Police Collective Bargaining Unit, read a statement to the commission in regards to providing adequate department staffing. The public statement and a Bucks County study regarding police staffing were provided to the Commission and are attached to these minutes.

**Announcements:**

- An executive session will be held following the meeting to discuss personnel.

**Presentation:**

There was none.

**Consent Agenda:**

- A. December 18, 2025, Meeting Minutes
- B. January 28, 2026, Financial Report
- C. January 28, 2026, Payment of Bills totaling \$103,802.64
- D. December 2025 Chief's Report

**On motion** by Mr. Schirmer, seconded by Mr. Volovnik, to approve January 28, 2026 Consent Agenda. With no additional discussion, all present voted in favor.

**Solicitors' Report: Will Oetinger, esq.**

There was none.

**Business: Chief Dickinson, Jr.**

**Accept Resignation of Ofc. Zachary Koerper:**

**On motion**, by Mr. Volovnik, seconded by Mr. Schirmer, to accept the resignation of Ofc. Zachary Koerper effective December 31, 2025. With no additional discussion, all present voted in favor.

**DCED LSA Grant Funding to purchase Body Worn/In Car Cameras:**

Chief Dickinson advised the commission that the department had received \$25,000.00 grant funding award to purchase new Motorola in car and body worn cameras stating he would research the overall cost of the purchase, including long term subscription costs and video cloud storage.

There was brief discussion regarding the new technology and the need to use cloud based storage, and possible associated cost. Chief Dickinson stated the funding is available to the department for 3 years and Mr. Schirmer should be appointed to sign the grant application due to his signature was on the prior submission.

**On motion** by Mr. Volovnik, seconded by Mr. Schirmer, to authorize Chief Dickinson and Mr. Schirmer to execute the DCED LSA Grant funding paperwork to accept the funding as presented. With no further discussion, all present voted in favor.

**Public Comment**

- Mr. Nietupski requested the commission to be aware of the potential need for additional signage on Ridge Road at the headquarter driveway stating the darkness conceals the driveway and signage may help advise motorists of the entrance.

**On motion** by Mr. Schirmer, seconded by Mr. Volovnik, to adjourn back into executive session. With no additional discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul T. Dickinson Jr. Chief of Police

January 20, 2026

Dear Members of the Police Commission,

We are writing to respectfully request the Commission's attention to the issue of safe and sustainable police staffing levels within our department. Adequate staffing is not only a workforce concern—it is a critical public safety issue that directly impacts officer safety, service delivery, response times, community trust, and the long-term health of the organization.

Current staffing levels have increasingly required officers to manage higher call volumes, extended shifts, mandatory overtime, and reduced opportunities for training and proactive policing. These conditions elevate fatigue, increase the risk of errors, and place unnecessary strain on both sworn personnel and the community we serve. Over time, understaffing also contributes to burnout, retention challenges, and diminished morale, further compounding the problem.

Safe staffing levels allow officers to respond effectively to emergencies, engage meaningfully with the community, and operate within the professional standards expected and deserved by the public and the Commission. It is also essential to meeting our values of accountability, integrity, and respect—ensuring that officers have the time, resources, and support necessary to make sound decisions under pressure.

We respectfully ask the Commission to prioritize a review of current staffing levels, workload demands, and future needs, with the goal of establishing and maintaining staffing standards that promote safety, effectiveness, and resilience. Investment in adequate staffing is an investment in officer wellness, community trust, and the long-term success of our police department.

We appreciate your consideration of this important matter and stand ready to support any efforts to further evaluate and address staffing needs. We have provided a completed study which also address and show the existing staffing shortages based on studies completed by an outside agency. Based upon the provided we are requesting the Police Commission to approve the hiring necessary additional officers to bring our sworn officer staffing level to 15. We look forward to your continued oversight and commitment to public safety.

Respectfully,

Members of the Penridge Regional Police Officers Benevolent Association.

# Bucks County Police Services Report

Issued  
July 2024

Prepared By



Prepared For:

Bucks County Emergency Management/Services Division  
Bucks County Police Chiefs' Association—Strategic Planning Committee



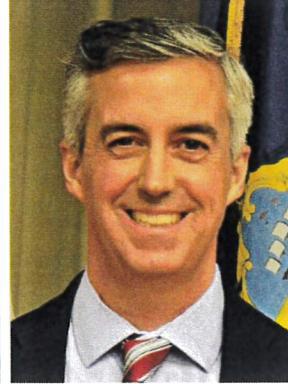
**Bucks County Police Services Study  
Acknowledgments**



Gene D. DiGirolamo  
*Secretary*



Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia  
*LCSW  
Chair*



Robert J. Harvie Jr.  
*Vice Chair*

Margaret McKeivitt  
*Chief Operating Officer*

Gail Humphrey  
*Deputy COO/Chief Clerk*

Audrey Kenny  
*Director, Emergency Services Division*

Bucks County Police Chiefs' Association  
*Strategic Planning Committee*



**Bucks County**

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## Executive Summary

The BCPC was retained to assist the Bucks County Emergency Services Division with assessing the state of police services in the county. Forty municipal police departments and the county's Park Rangers were included in the assessment. Given the number of agencies involved, this report provides a high-level assessment of certain key indicators. Most notable is the number of sworn personnel in the county to serve a population of over 645,000 residents living in 54 municipalities. Of those 54 municipalities, it is important to note that eight were not included in this assessment as they receive police services from the Pennsylvania State Police.

In the absence of federal, state or local standards, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, (DOJ) released a report in November of 2022, titled *Local Police Departments, Personnel 2020* that looked at the average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) sworn officers in local police departments per 1,000 residents by size of population served. This study was used as one benchmark to evaluate the number of full-time sworn personnel needed in the county. It is important to note that there are many factors and potentially other methods that can help evaluate staffing levels. For the purposes of this study, the DOJ averages were agreed upon by the Police Chief's Strategic Planning Committee as a reasonable benchmark.

After an analysis of each department and the municipalities served, it was determined that based on the DOJ averages, the county is **deficient by 364 full-time sworn personnel**. While this appears significant, there are numerous factors that affect this number, and it is important to acknowledge that this number is fluid and is subject to change but is representative of the magnitude of the deficiency at the time of this report based on the DOJ benchmarks.

Police services are an expected community service. The costs to hire, train, and equip officers are not insignificant. A single officer represents an approximate \$125,000 budget line item once hired. It is not surprising then that police budgets are, in some cases, as much as 60 percent of a municipality's operating budget. On average, police departments across the county are deficient by as many as 10 sworn personnel. Budgeting for police services will continue to be a challenge, especially for smaller municipalities and boroughs with historically smaller tax bases.

As noted by the Police Chief's Strategic Planning Committee, the recruitment of new police officers is heavily affected by the public perception of policing and a lack of viable candidates. Additionally it was noted that wage competition and work-life balance play major roles in retaining sworn personnel and the ability to meet suggested staffing averages.

Moving forward, each of the departments would benefit from individualized strategic planning initiatives. Opportunities for economies of scale, and further regionalization of staffing and equipment, may make sense for some departments. Ultimately the goal is to ensure adequate and responsive police services to the residents of the county.

## Introduction

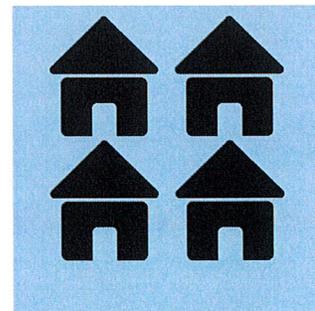
The Bucks County Planning Commission (BCPC) was retained by the Bucks County Emergency Services Division to assist with preparing a study of existing police services within the county. Working with Emergency Services staff and the Bucks County Police Chiefs' Strategic Planning Committee (PCSC), BCPC staff prepared the following report. The report outlines key indicators for the current state of police services within the county and provides an overview of police department demographics.

Police services in the county are provided by municipal specific or regional police departments. This report includes the county's Park Rangers but does not include those municipalities served by the Pennsylvania State Police. Furthermore, it does not include the services of the county's Detectives or Sheriff's Department. There are 41 departments that were included in the study. These 41 departments serve 46 of the 54 municipalities that comprise the county.

The study is based on information and data collected through meetings with the PCSC and on two, non-statistically valid surveys of the 41 departments. The survey instruments were developed and conducted utilizing SurveyMonkey. Both surveys received 100 percent response rates; however, not each question was answered by each responding department. Survey analysis was performed by staff at the BCPC and reviewed with the PCSC.

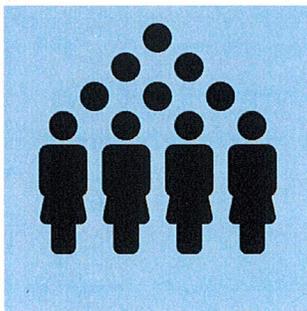
## County Demographics

Bucks County is geographically, topographically, and demographically diverse. According to the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) data, as published by United States Census Bureau, the county's population was estimated at 645,984 people living in 257,265 housing units. Exclusive of water bodies, the county contains 605.5 square miles of land area. With a population of 645,984, that equates to a population density of 1,067 persons per square mile.



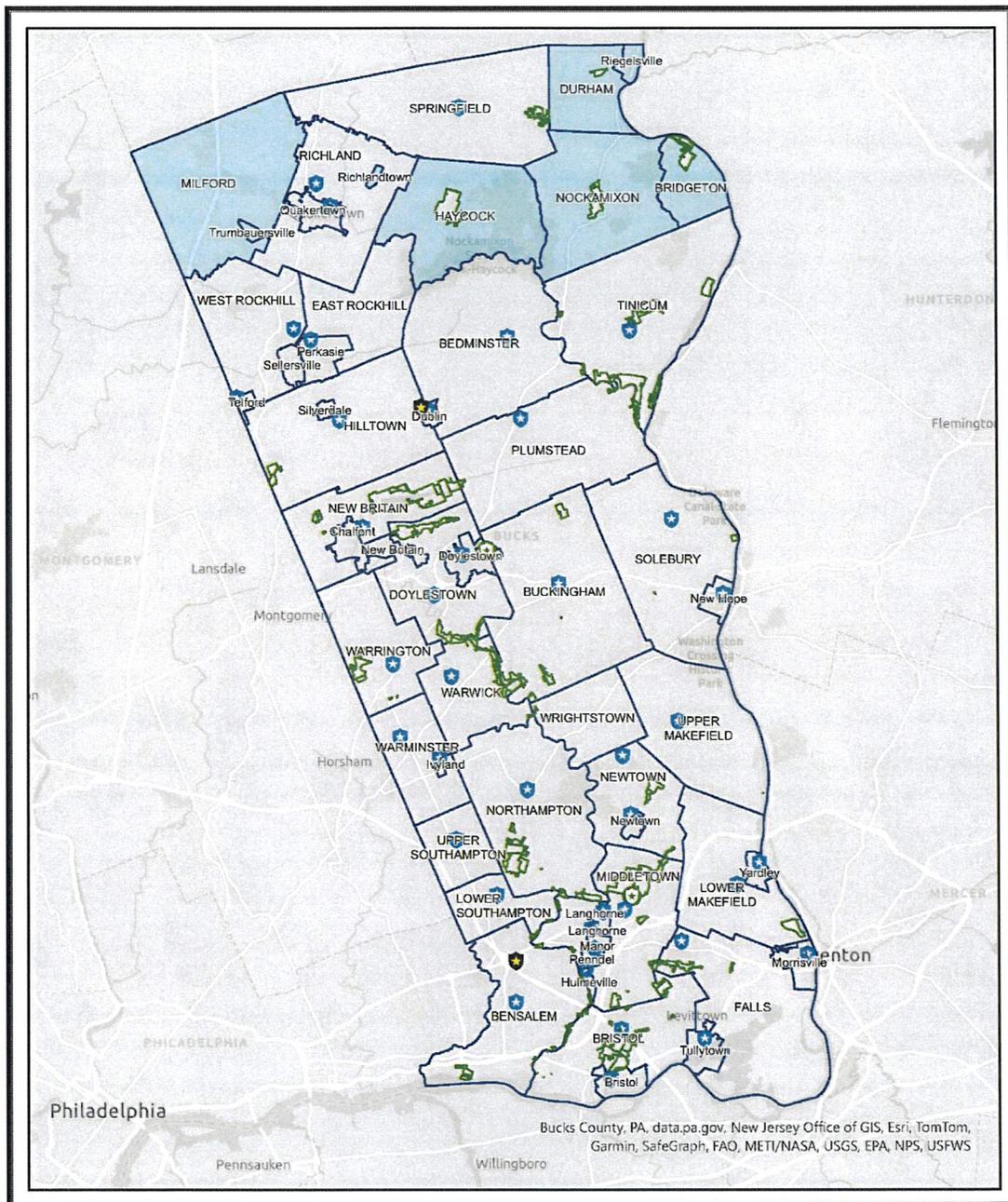
**6,000 Proposed Units**

Over the past five years, (2019-2023) the county has experienced continual growth in the number of proposed housing units. Since 2019 there have been



**645,984 People**

over 6,000 proposed units reviewed by planning commission staff. On average, the county is seeing approximately 1,300 new housing units proposed each year. While we cannot predict if all these units will be built, it suggests that the county's population and housing stock will continue to grow. In addition to residential development, the amount of non-residential development, especially in the warehouse and distribution center category, continues to increase every year. The number of dwellings and businesses requiring police protection is expected to increase.



			<p><b>Bucks County Police and Park Ranger Stations and Coverage Areas</b></p> <p>2024</p>

**FIGURE 1 • Police and Ranger Service Areas and Locations**

## Department Structure and Funding

Municipal police protection is fully supported by municipal taxes and budgeted for each year. Total budgets range based on the size of the department. In addition to the municipal contribution, many departments obtain further financial assistance in the form of grants from a variety of sources such as the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and other state, county, and federal agencies.

In most cases, police service budgets represent at least, if not more than, 50 percent of a municipality's operating budget on a yearly cycle. Budgets range from several hundred thousand dollars to upwards of 50 million dollars a year depending on the number of personnel and the size of the department.

Based on the survey data, the average starting salary for a sworn officer in Bucks County starts at \$64,000 per year. With benefits, training and equipment outfitting, the costs to onboard a new sworn officer are estimated at \$125,000 a year.

Nearly 87 percent of the departments cover one municipality while the remainder are covered as part of a multi-jurisdictional or regional coverage scenario. As an example, Hilltown Township provides policing for Silverdale Borough, Newtown Township covers Wrightstown Township and Perkasie Borough covers Sellersville Borough. The Central Bucks Regional Police Department provides policing for the Boroughs of Doylestown, Chalfont, and New Britain. Eight municipalities in Upper Bucks County rely on the Pennsylvania State Police for police services. Those eight municipalities were not included in this study.

Nearly 77 percent of the departments are staffed by sworn personnel 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Sixty-nine percent of the departments run with 12-hour shift assignments. The remainder utilize 8-hour, or 10-hour shifts to provide police coverage. Ninety-two percent of all departments utilize and follow a paramilitary command structure where the chief is the highest ranking official.

Just over half of the departments are accredited by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC). For those departments not accredited, the administrative maintenance and sustainability of the accreditation was cited as the number one reason the department was not accredited. The second most cited reasons for not seeking accreditation were the cost to obtain the accreditation and the staffing required to oversee the accreditation process.

In addition to regular police and law enforcement responsibilities, sworn personnel in 11 of the 41 departments also perform other municipal administrative roles such as municipal management, emergency management, animal control, and right-to-know administration.

Fifty-nine percent of all sworn personnel have earned a college degree. Thirty-five of the 41 departments surveyed do not require a college degree to become a sworn officer. Ninety-two percent of the departments reported that at least one or more sworn personnel have attained or will attain advanced command level training through FBI LEEDA, West Point Command and Leadership, Northwestern, Penn State POSIT, POLEX, or the John F. Kennedy School of Government. The county supports this training by administering pass-through funding from the federal government and other sources in the form of reimbursements to off-set costs of continuing education and training.

## Number of Sworn Personnel

Based on the survey responses, there are 930 sworn personnel serving the county. There are 852 full-time sworn personnel and 78 part-time sworn personnel distributed amongst the 41 departments surveyed. The survey did not differentiate if a full-time sworn officer also serves as a part-time officer in another jurisdiction. This also excludes the PA State Police and the county Sheriff's Deputies but includes the county Park Rangers.



The median age of sworn personnel is 41. Nineteen percent or approximately 177 sworn personnel are ranked as sergeants or above. Approximately 16 percent or 148 sworn personnel are expected to retire within the next five years.

## Call Volume/Utilization

In 2023 there were 479,604 calls to the county's 911 system pertaining to police and ranger services. These calls are separated among 281 individual call signs and broken down by the municipality involved. Regarding the county Park Rangers, their calls are through multiple municipalities and are therefore not accurately reflected in the call volume report (see Figure 2.) Traffic stops were the number one call, which accounted for 68,190 calls, or approximately 14 percent of the total call volume. On average, each call involving a response, in which an officer is dispatched, is estimated to take approximately 45 minutes to complete, from beginning to end.

In addition to the radio dispatch calls, all police departments document and report crimes to the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) utilizing the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR). Crimes are designated as Part 1 and Part 2 crimes. Part 1 crimes include murder, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, and human trafficking. Part 2 crimes involve reporting only the arrest data for things such as assaults, and attempted assaults where a weapon was not used and there was no serious or aggravated bodily harm to the victim. The UCR report for Bucks County in 2023 shows a total of 21,654 Part 1 and Part 2 crimes reported in Bucks County. Of those crimes reported, 99 percent were actual offenses. In 2024, year to date, there have been 6,955 crimes reported with 99 percent of those being actual offenses. UCR data is publicly available at [Home \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov) (see Figures 3 and 4).

Police departments in the county also participate in numerous special units and task force operations. These include Youth Aid, Co-responders, narcotics, School Resource Officers, K-9 Units, SWAT, Traffic Safety Unit and Fatal Crash Investigation, Major Incident Response Team (MIRT), Bucks County Special Emergency Response Teams, and FBI forensics.

Currently 12 departments in the county have K-9 units. Most K-9 officers (dogs) live with their respective handlers. A few departments have either on or off-site kennel facilities.

Municipality	Total Calls
BENSALEM TOWNSHIP	69,393
BRISTOL TOWNSHIP	50,227
MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP	32,772
WARMINSTER TOWNSHIP	27,276
FALLS TOWNSHIP	26,786
NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP	19,493
WARRINGTON TOWNSHIP	16,954
LOWER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP	15,249
LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP	15,222
NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP	13,783
DOYLESTOWN BOROUGH	13,697
DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP	13,212
BRISTOL BOROUGH	11,752
BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP	10,288
HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP	10,236
UPPER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP	10,231
QUAKERTOWN BOROUGH	9,869
RICHLAND TOWNSHIP	9,568
MORRISVILLE BOROUGH	9,121
WARWICK TOWNSHIP	7,795
PLUMSTEAD TOWNSHIP	7,651
NEW BRITAIN TOWNSHIP	6,002
WEST ROCKHILL TOWNSHIP	5,871
UPPER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP	5,658
SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP	5,469
TULLYTOWN BOROUGH	5,298
PERKASIE BOROUGH	5,015
MILFORD TOWNSHIP	4,122
NEW HOPE BOROUGH	3,759
BEDMINSTER TOWNSHIP	3,381
WRIGHTSTOWN TOWNSHIP	3,069
EAST ROCKHILL TOWNSHIP	2,865
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	2,750
PENDEL BOROUGH	2,723
YARDLEY BOROUGH	2,631
SELLERSVILLE BOROUGH	2,483
NEWTOWN BOROUGH	2,420
TINICUM TOWNSHIP	2,121
NEW BRITAIN BOROUGH	1,979
CHALFONT BOROUGH	1,799
NOCKAMIXON TOWNSHIP	1,420
DUBLIN BOROUGH	1,271
HAYCOCK TOWNSHIP	1,060
LANGHORNE MANOR BOROUGH	1,001
LANGHORNE BOROUGH	997
IVYLAND BOROUGH	599
HULMEVILLE BOROUGH	596
RICHLANDTOWN BOROUGH	586
TELFORD BOROUGH	477
SILVERDALE BOROUGH	447
BRIDGETON TOWNSHIP	368
TRUMBAUERSVILLE BOROUGH	309
DURHAM TOWNSHIP	273
RIEGELSVILLE BOROUGH	200
BUCKS COUNTY PARK RANGERS	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>479,604</b>

**FIGURE 2 · Total Police Calls Ranked Highest to Lowest**



# SRS Summary Report

Printed On:  
06/10/2024

Beginning Date: 01/01/2023

Ending Date: 12/31/2023

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## Return A

County: Bucks County

Classification of Offenses	Offenses Reported	Unfounded	Actual Offenses	Tot. Offenses Cleared	Clearances Involving Persons Under 18 Yr. of Age
<b>Murder/NonNegligent Homicide(Total)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Manslaughter by Negligence(Total)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Rape(Total)</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>
Rape	76	6	70	31	8
Attempted Rape	1	0	1	0	0
<b>Robbery(Total)</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>9</b>
Robbery - Firearm	30	0	30	9	1
Robbery - Knife or Cutting Instrument	6	0	6	5	0
Robbery - Other Dangerous Weapon	8	0	8	4	3
Robbery - StrongArm(Hands,Fists,Feet,etc)	67	0	67	31	5
<b>Assault(Total)</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>32</b>
Assault - Firearm	26	0	26	16	0
Assault - Knife or Cutting Instrument	34	0	34	27	5
Assault - Other Dangerous Weapon	64	0	64	48	11
Assault - StrongArm(Hands,Fists,Feet,etc)	161	4	157	137	16
<b>Burglary(Total)</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>8</b>
Burglary - Forcible Entry	248	2	246	52	3
Burglary - Unlawful Entry(No Force)	168	0	168	47	5
Burglary - Attempted Forcible Entry	65	1	64	9	0
<b>Larceny(Total) - Theft(Excluding Motor Vehicles)</b>	<b>5874</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5843</b>	<b>1798</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Motor Vehicle Theft(Total)</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>13</b>
Motor Vehicle Theft - Autos	511	5	506	64	11
Motor Vehicle Theft - Trucks and Buses	79	0	79	7	1
Motor Vehicle Theft - Other Vehicles	93	1	92	3	1
<b>Human Trafficking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Arson</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total Part I Offenses</b>	<b>7541</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>7491</b>	<b>2306</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>Assault - Other(Simple, Not Aggravated)</b>	<b>1262</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1255</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>Forgery and Counterfeiting</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Fraud</b>	<b>3039</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3027</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Embezzlement</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Stolen Property; Buying, Receiving, Possessing</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Vandalism</b>	<b>1422</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1415</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Weapons; Carrying, Possessing, etc.</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Prostitution and Commercialized Vice</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>

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FIGURE 3 · County UCR Report 2023



# SRS Summary Report

Printed On:  
06/10/2024

Beginning Date: 01/01/2023

Ending Date: 12/31/2023

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Classification of Offenses	Offenses Reported	Unfounded	Actual Offenses	Tot. Offenses Cleared	Clearances Involving Persons Under 18 Yr. of Age
Sex Offenses (Except Line 2 and 16)	399	27	372	140	18
Drug Abuse Violations(Total)	1454	6	1448	1238	143
Sale/Manufacturing SubTotal	131	1	130	92	1
Opium - Cocaine	45	0	45	36	0
Marijuana	35	0	35	23	1
Synthetic	17	0	17	16	0
Other	34	1	33	17	0
Possession SubTotal	1323	5	1318	1146	142
Opium - Cocaine	298	0	298	272	2
Marijuana	574	5	569	481	137
Synthetic	199	0	199	187	0
Other	252	0	252	206	3
Gambling(Total)	4	0	4	3	0
Book Making	0	0	0	0	0
Numbers, Etc	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	0	1	0	0
Offenses Against The Family and Children	186	5	181	77	1
Driving Under The Influence	1498	4	1494	1412	12
Liquor Laws	121	0	120	94	51
Drunkenness	553	3	550	496	5
Disorderly Conduct	1433	41	1386	821	149
Vagrancy	70	0	70	28	0
All Other Offenses (Except Traffic)	1966	32	1927	1281	112
Total Part II	14113	151	13962	7598	706

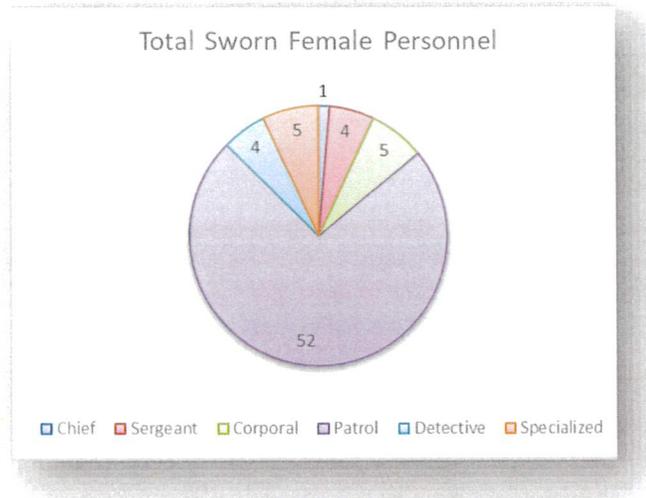
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FIGURE 4 · County UCR Report 2023

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Among the 930 sworn personnel, approximately 71 are female. This represents approximately 8 percent of the total sworn personnel in the county. This includes two chiefs<sup>1</sup>, one lieutenant, four sergeants, five corporals, four detectives and 52 patrol officers.

When examining the racial diversity of the departments nearly 95 percent of all sworn personnel are White. Two percent identify as Black/African American, 2 percent are Hispanic or Latino, 1 percent identified as Asian, and 1 percent identified as Native American or "Other."



It is important to note that all departments are actively recruiting and support diversity, equity, and inclusion recruitment practices. Furthermore, the departments rely heavily on the Bucks County Consortium police testing program to identify potential candidates for hiring. The Consortium application process does not include race as part of the application. This is done to encourage an unbiased and open application process. As reported by the Police Chiefs' Strategic Planning Committee, the number of applicants for the consortium testing has steadily declined. As the pool of candidates declines the opportunity for diversity also potentially declines.

Linguistically, departments across the county predominantly speak English; however, at least seven departments report that at least one or more officers speak another language. These languages include Russian, Hindi, Spanish, Portuguese, Ukrainian, Armenian, Italian, and German.

Race	Number	%
White	879	95%
Black/African American	21	2%
Hispanic/Latino	19	2%
Asian	5	1%
Native American or Other Pacific Islander	1	0%
Other	5	1%
	930	100%

<sup>1</sup> On June 18, 2024, Solebury Township hired a female chief which was not reflected at the time of the survey.

## Recruitment

Recognizing that the county is potentially deficient in the number of FTE sworn personnel, the survey asked two questions regarding both recruitment and retention of officers. The top four answers indicated barriers to recruitment are: consortium test pool candidates (lack thereof), hiring process issues, such as failed polygraphs, not being Act 120 certified and wage competition. It is also important to note that several agencies indicated that negative media portrayal of policing is also playing a role in decreasing the number of people interested in pursuing careers in law enforcement.

Candidates looking for employment in the county can take the consortium test which provides regionalized testing for all interested departments. Candidates pay one fee to take the test, complete one physical assessment, and take one written examination. Scores are valid for a period of one year, and all interested departments can opt to interview and screen applicants from the list of candidates who have successfully passed both sections of the examination and meet the minimum score requirements established by the hiring department. Details on the consortium test can be found here:

<https://www.policeapp.com/Police-Associations/Police-Chiefs-Association-of-Buck-County-PA/>

The Municipal Police Officer's Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) oversees and regulates the Act 120 Basic Training Programs. To become Act 120 certified in the state of Pennsylvania, candidates must enroll in and successfully complete the Act 120 Basic Training Program offered through a state certified program/institution.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Consortium Test candidate pool	72.73%	24
Hiring process issues (failed polygraphs, background checks etc	60.61%	20
Candidates who are Act 120 certified	57.58%	19
Wage competition	54.55%	18
Budget constraints preventing hiring	33.33%	11
Education requirements	6.06%	2
Residency requirement - available/affordable housing	3.03%	1
Other (please specify)		7

Nearly all departments reported that they utilize both traditional written and digital forms of advertising, including social media, to advertise open positions and promote their respective departments.

## Retention

In addition to recruitment, the survey also sought input into the challenges being faced with retaining sworn personnel within the departments. The top four barriers to retaining officers were wage competition, schedule/work hours, retirements of existing officers, and career advancement opportunities. Other factors included overtime (too much, too little), injuries on duty, disciplinary actions and, in some cases, failure to complete required field training.

In the "Other" category, several departments cited that there were more specific challenges related to part-time officers. These ranged from budgetary restraints that prevented part-time officers from becoming full-time officers and perhaps more importantly, part-time officers leaving to fill full-time positions available in another department.

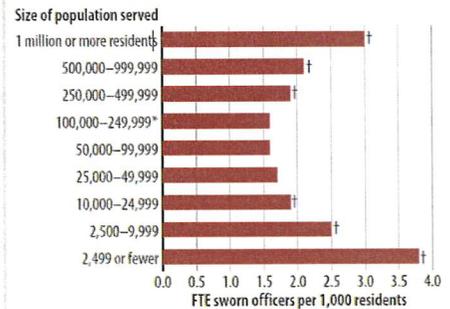
Answer Choices	Responses	
Wage competition	59.09%	13
The schedule	31.82%	7
Staff retirements	27.27%	6
Training and career advancement	22.73%	5
Overtime - too much, too little, being held over/forced overtime	18.18%	4
Injuries on duty/medical leave	18.18%	4
Disciplinary action and/or termination of employment	13.64%	3
Failure to complete Field Training Program	4.55%	1
Other (please specify)		12

## Benchmarking

In compiling this report with the committee, it was confirmed that there are no national, federal, state, or local regulations that stipulate the minimum required number of full-time sworn personnel a community should have.

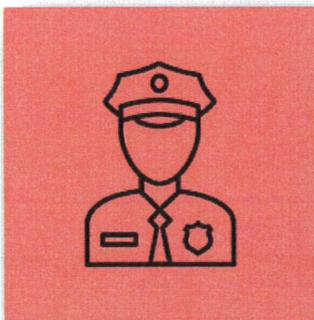
The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, (DOJ) released a report in November of 2022, titled *Local Police Departments, Personnel 2020* that looked at the average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) sworn officers in local police departments per 1,000 residents by size of population served. The report was compiled for the year 2020. For the purposes of this study, the DOJ averages were agreed upon by the Police Chief's Strategic Planning Committee as a reasonable benchmark.

**FIGURE 2**  
Average number of full-time-equivalent sworn officers in local police departments per 1,000 residents, by size of population served, 2020



To provide a relative comparison of the county's total sworn personnel in relation to the DOJ study, we examined the county as a whole and on an individual municipal basis. Each municipality's population (based on 2022 ACS Data) was multiplied against the DOJ's multiplier for average number of full-time equivalent sworn officers in local police departments per 1,000 residents, by size of population served.<sup>2</sup> This analysis yielded both a countywide and a local department level estimate of the number of full-time sworn personnel by which a department was either deficient in or met the DOJ's figures. According to the DOJ report ***Bucks County's total number of full-time sworn personnel should be approximately 1,202.*** *This number excludes the Park Rangers.*

Exclusive of the county Park Rangers, there are only two departments out of 40 that met or exceeded the DOJ's figures for having the average number of full-time sworn personnel based on population. The remaining 38 departments were lacking in full-time sworn personnel and the number ranged from a low of two sworn officers to a high of 31. The average deficiency was 10 sworn personnel per department. In the case of the regional or multi-municipal joint departments, the average deficiency was 16 sworn personnel. Based on those 38 departments, their total populations and the DOJ averages, ***Bucks County is estimated to be lacking approximately 364 full-time sworn personnel*** (see Figure 5).



**Lacking 364 Sworn Personnel**

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Local Police Departments Personnel, 2020, Appendix Table 5

**APPENDIX TABLE 5**

**Estimates and standard errors for figure 2: Average number of full-time-equivalent sworn officers in local police departments per 1,000 residents, by size of population served, 2020**

Size of population served	Estimate	Standard error
All sizes	2.1	0.07
1 million or more residents	3.0†	0.46
500,000-999,999	2.1†	0.14
250,000-499,999	1.9†	0.10
100,000-249,999*	1.6	0.04
50,000-99,999	1.6	0.08
25,000-49,999	1.7	0.09
10,000-24,999	1.9†	0.09
2,500-9,999	2.5†	0.08
2,499 or fewer	3.8†	0.14

\*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics survey, 2020.

This number does not include part-time sworn personnel, the Park Rangers, or reflect pending retirements or new hires, and is representative of the numbers at the time the survey and this report were produced. There are 14 departments, covering 14 of the boroughs, utilizing part-time sworn personnel to provide coverage. As a generalized example, if we presume that two part-time sworn personnel equal one full-time sworn personnel position, then the total deficiency county wide is reduced to **325**. (78 part-time/2 = 39; 364-39 = 325). Whether counted or not, it does not change the overall result, which suggests that based on nationwide averages, nearly all departments are short staffed in terms of full-time sworn personnel.

Furthermore, this analysis does not include those municipalities covered by the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP). If those municipalities receiving coverage under the PSP were to institute local police departments, an additional 37 full-time sworn personnel would be needed to serve the populations represented.

*It is important to note that there are numerous factors that will influence the total number of sworn personnel needed by a municipality. Basing need on the DOJ national averages provides only one measure of benchmarking.*

Municipality/Department	Total Population (2022 ACS Estimates)	Fulltime Sworn Personnel	Avg. # FTE Based on DOJ	Shortage or Surplus
Bedminster Township	7,491	8	19	(11)
Bensalem Township	62,619	107	100	7
Bristol Borough	9,899	12	25	(13)
Bristol Township	53,973	55	86	(31)
Buckingham Township	20,808	22	40	(18)
<b>CENTRAL BUCKS REGIONAL</b>				
Chalfont Borough	4,352	26	11	
Doylestown Borough	8,352		13	
New Britain Borough	2,836		11	(9)
Doylestown Township	17,941	21	34	(13)
Dublin Borough	2,185	2	8	(6)
<b>PENNRIDGE REGIONAL</b>				
East Rockhill Township	5,787	12	14	
West Rockhill Township	5,439		14	(16)
Falls Township	34,419	53	59	(6)
Hilltown Township	16,284	18	31	
Silverdale Borough	805		3	(16)
Hulmeville Borough	982	0	4	(4)
Ivylnd Borough	955	1	4	(3)
Langhorne Borough	1,643	1	6	(5)
Langhorne Manor Borough	1,496		6	(6)
Lower Makefield Township	33,180	42	56	(14)
Lower Southampton Township	20,599	32	39	(7)
Middletown Township	46,040	60	78	(18)
Morrisville Borough	9,809	8	25	(17)
New Britain Township	12,327	15	23	(8)
New Hope Borough	2,612	9	7	2
Newtown Borough	2,268	6	9	(3)
Newtown Township	19,895	33	38	
Wrightstown Township	3,286		8	(13)
Northampton Township	39,915	43	68	(25)
Pennel Borough	2,515	1	6	(5)
Perkasie Borough	9,120	19	23	
Sellersville Borough	4,567		11	(15)
Plumstead Township	14,021	16	27	(11)
Quakertown Borough	9,359	21	23	(2)
Richland Township	13,837	17	26	(9)
Solebury Township	8,709	17	22	(5)
Springfield Township	5,175	4	13	(9)
Telford Borough	2,199	6	8	(2)
Tinicum Township	3,818	4	10	(6)
Tullytown Borough	2,282	4	9	(5)
Upper Makefield Township	8,857	18	22	(4)
Upper Southampton Township	15,269	21	29	(8)
Warminster Township	33,603	43	57	(14)
Warrington Township	25,639	38	44	(6)
Warwick Township	14,851	18	28	(10)
Yardley Borough	2,605	5	7	(2)
Park Rangers		14		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>645,862</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>1,202</b>	<b>(364)</b>
	<b>Total FTE Sworn without Park Rangers</b>	<b>838</b>		
	<b>Total Shortage based on DOJ #s</b>		<b>(364)</b>	
	<b>Average shortage per department</b>			<b>(10)</b>

**FIGURE 5 · DOJ Averages per Department**

## Challenges

Police departments in the county are facing many of the same challenges that regular business owners in the county face as well, particularly with recruitment and retention of workers. Finding and keeping a qualified workforce is perhaps the largest long-term challenge facing our departments. Quality of life issues, such as maintaining a positive work-life balance, were noted as a strong factor affecting the availability of sworn personnel to fill open shifts. The lure of overtime pay is no longer the primary influencer it once was. Spending time with family or simply having time to decompress from the stress of the job are intangible benefits that must be considered as they look to fill open positions, creating even more pressure to fill these positions and further exacerbating the potential shortage.

Although not ranked highly as a challenge to recruitment, anecdotal evidence suggests that housing affordability may also be affecting the pool of candidates looking to become police officers in the county. Only half of the departments surveyed reporting having a residency requirement for sworn personnel. Where used, the residency requirement most often utilized a specified mileage distance from the municipal border or the police station. This mileage distance ranged from 10 miles to 30 miles. Unless the department is close to the border of Montgomery County or New Jersey, this suggests that new officers may be limited to securing housing within Bucks County. As of the writing of this report, the median sales price of a home in the county was \$430,000.

One department noted that they provide a one-time incentive (10% of top salary) assistance program towards the purchase of a home within the department's municipality.

## Costs

Policing is expensive. Unlike volunteer fire departments which operate on donations and minimal municipal financial support, police departments are wholly supported through municipal tax dollars and can account for as much as 50 to 60 percent of a municipality's budget. Municipal millage rates to generate revenue are capped by state law and many municipalities rely on earned income taxes for a significant portion of their budgets.



### **\$65,000 Starting Salary**

Based on the survey the average starting salary for a new police officer is \$65,000. In addition to the base salary, the associated benefits generally add approximately another \$20,000. After salary and benefits, sworn personnel must be outfitted with uniforms, vests, tasers, service weapons, and must be trained. Based on the survey and input from the committee, it was determined that the average cost to outfit and train a new patrol officer was approximately \$40,000.

At a total cost of approximately \$125,000 per sworn officer, it becomes clear that meeting the benchmarks as suggested by the DOJ study will prove costly for many departments and are likely to be cost prohibitive for smaller departments. With an average deficit of 10 sworn personnel per department, that translates into an additional \$1,250,000 dollars for each department, if all 10 positions were filled at one time.

Beyond the salaries, benefits, training and outfitting that are required, technology has emerged as a key driver of increased police budgets. Police budgets as noted earlier in this report are generally more than

50 percent of a municipality's budget. Critical equipment such as service weapons, bullet proof vests, tactical gear, body cameras, radios and vehicles continue to evolve and become more expensive with each year. As an example, there are 605 police vehicles in the county. The average number of vehicles per department is 16 and the average age of those vehicles is four years old. Exclusive of specialty response vehicles, percent of all reported vehicles are SUVs. The average cost of a new, fully outfitted police SUV is approximately \$75,000.

## **Moving Forward**

In the absence of federal, state or local standards, each police department must ultimately determine the adequate number of sworn personnel needed to serve and cover their respective jurisdiction. The DOJ study provides a reasonable benchmark for determining this staffing and that is best weighed against crime statistics, response times and geographic area covered. If the DOJ averages are taken at face value, then it suggests that each of the 40 municipal police departments surveyed are deficient in the number of sworn personnel needed to serve their jurisdictions. Seventy-two percent, or 29 departments surveyed, reported that they were operating at their minimum staffing levels.

When asked about the future in three to five years, recruitment, retention and the ability to be financially viable were the most often noted challenges. The idea of regionalization or combining with another department was noted especially for smaller boroughs. Lastly, accreditation, and maintaining and improving professional standards was seen as both an opportunity and challenge.

This report provides a high-level assessment of the state of police services in Bucks County. Given the specifics and unique characteristics of each department, it would be beneficial to conduct separate, individual studies of each department to fully understand and comprehend the long-term challenges and opportunities that will affect the delivery of police services in the county.