

A Performance Audit of the

Salt Lake City Police Department

The Critical Role of Effective Leadership

Office of the Legislative
Auditor General

Report to the UTAH LEGISLATURE



LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL



1975 - 2025



THE MISSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL IS TO

AUDIT · LEAD · ACHIEVE

WE HELP ORGANIZATIONS IMPROVE.

Audit Subcommittee

President J. Stuart Adams, Co-Chair
President of the Senate

Senator Kirk Cullimore
Senate Majority Leader

Senator Luz Escamilla
Senate Minority Leader

Speaker Mike Schultz, Co-Chair
Speaker of the House

Representative Casey Snider
House Majority Leader

Representative Angela Romero
House Minority Leader

Audit Staff

Kade R. Minchey, Auditor General, CIA,
CFE

Brian Dean, Manager, CIA, CFE

Ryan Thelin, Audit Supervisor, CIA

Spencer Lindsay, Audit Staff, PhD, CIA

Office of the Legislative Auditor General

olag.utah.gov





Office of the Legislative Auditor General

Kade R. Minchey, Legislative Auditor General

W315 House Building State Capitol Complex | Salt Lake City, UT 84114 | Phone: 801.538.1033

Audit Subcommittee of the Legislative Management Committee

President J. Stuart Adams, Co-Chair | Speaker Mike Schultz, Co-Chair

Senator Kirk Cullimore | Representative Casey Snider

Senator Luz Escamilla | Representative Angela Romero

December 9, 2025

TO: THE UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

Transmitted herewith is our report:

“A Performance Audit of the Salt Lake City Police Department” [Report #2025-29].

An audit summary is found at the front of the report. The scope and objectives of the audit are included in the audit summary. In addition, each chapter has a corresponding chapter summary found at its beginning.

[Utah Code 36-12-15.3\(2\)](#) requires the Office of the Legislative Auditor General to designate an audited entity’s chief officer. Therefore, the designated chief officer for the Salt Lake City Police Department is Brian Redd. Chief Redd has been notified that they must comply with the audit response and reporting requirements as outlined in this section of **Utah Code**.

We will be happy to meet with appropriate legislative committees, individual legislators, and other state officials to discuss any item contained in the report in order to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations.

Sincerely,

Kade R. Minchey, CIA, CFE

Auditor General

kminchey@le.utah.gov



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Past Leadership Deficiencies Contributed to Organizational Instability and Low Morale	5
1.1 The Previous Administration’s Ineffective Leadership Led to Operational Inefficiencies	5
1.2 A Coordinated Approach Between the Mayor and Police Chief is Necessary for Effective Public Safety	15
Chapter 2 Strategic Vision and Use of Performance Metrics Can Further Public Safety Goals	19
2.1 Creating and Implementing a Strategic Plan Could Help Unify the Department Around Shared Public Safety Goals	19
Chapter 3 Weak Controls and Inadequate Management Practices Enabled Timecard Falsification	31
3.1 Weak Accountability Mechanisms and Poor Shift Oversight Contributed to Timecard Falsification	31
Complete List of Audit Recommendations	37
Appendix	41
A. Salt Lake City Police Department Culture Survey	43
Agency Response Plan	49





PERFORMANCE AUDIT

AUDIT REQUEST

The Legislative Audit Subcommittee requested an audit examining the effectiveness and efficiency of the Salt Lake City Police Department in November 2024.

BACKGROUND

The Salt Lake City Police Department has faced significant organizational challenges in recent years. Many of these challenges stem from the poor leadership of the previous administration who departed their roles during the audit. This report highlights some of the internal challenges the department has faced in meeting its responsibility for public safety and offers recommendations for its improvement.

SALT LAKE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT



KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ **1.1** The Previous Administration's Ineffective Leadership Led to Operational Inefficiencies
- ✓ **1.2** A Coordinated Approach Between the Mayor and Police Chief is Necessary for Effective Public Safety
- ✓ **2.1** Creating and Implementing a Strategic Plan Could Help Unify the Department Around Shared Public Safety Goals
- ✓ **3.1** Weak Accountability Mechanisms and Poor Shift Oversight Contributed to Timecard Falsification



RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Police executive leadership should limit use of administrative leave to circumstances listed in internal policy. Use of leave should be accompanied by consistent record keeping that includes the reasons leave was used in each case. These practices promote accountability and equitable treatment across all staff.
- ✓ Police executive leadership should follow the chain-of-command structure to be in line with its policy. Leadership should ensure that staff have clear and identifiable roles for command to promote effective communication, which should help rebuild trust within the department.
- ✓ Police executive leadership should take an active role in setting, managing, and revising department policy on a continual basis. This process should include ensuring policies are updated promptly and staff are held accountable for understanding them. An increased focus on department policy should help ensure leadership's expectations are effectively communicated and understood.
- ✓ The department should develop and implement a strategic plan that defines organizational objectives, sets a clear direction, and includes mechanisms to evaluate progress toward its goals. Senior leaders should ensure this process results in stronger department unity and greater alignment.

REPORT SUMMARY

Poor Leadership Practices by Previous Leadership had an Adverse Effect on the Department for Several Years

We highlight three leadership practices by previous leadership that contributed to the department's negative culture and operational inefficiencies: Administrative leave was misused, the previous chief appears to have struggled to make decisions and relied heavily on civilian staff for leadership, and internal oversight mechanisms were diminished under the previous administration.

These practices decreased trust in leadership, reduced morale, and affected officer retention.

Leadership Should Implement an Effective Strategic Plan and Measurable Goals

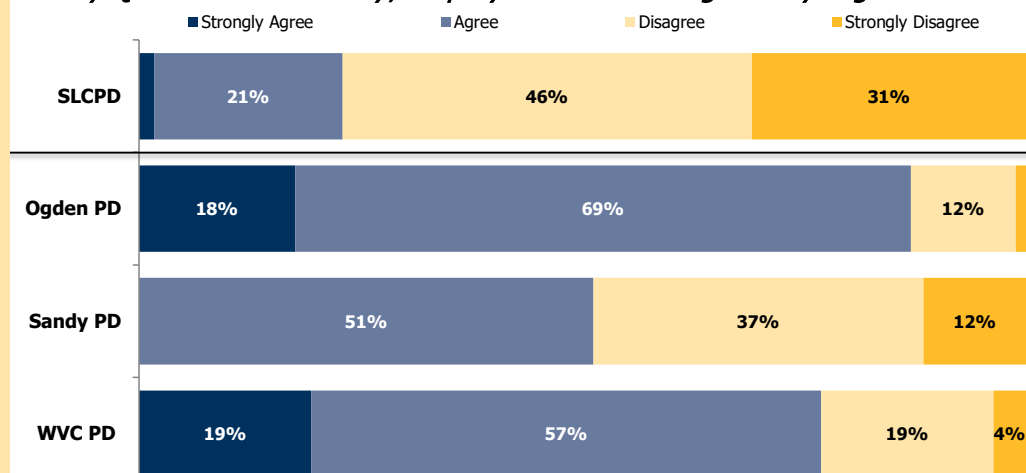
While the department collects a substantial amount of operational data, it lacks direction on how to use it. Without a strategic plan, the department is missing opportunities to establish meaningful goals to improve public safety. While Salt Lake City's new public safety plan highlights areas to improve public safety, the department needs its own strategic plan.

Strategic planning and the intentional use of performance measures enable leadership to improve practices, set clear expectations, and hold staff accountable for their performance.

Morale was Very Low in the Department at the Audit's Start

Interviews and survey responses from staff revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the department's culture and leadership. In fact, the SLCPD's results from our culture survey were the lowest our office has ever recorded. Approximately 77 percent of respondents disagreed that morale was high.

Survey Question: "Currently, employee morale is high in my organization."



Introduction

A Performance Audit of the Salt Lake City Police Department—The Critical Role of Effective Leadership, was conducted as part of a series of audits evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Salt Lake County. The audits released as part of this series are seen in blue in the following figure. In May 2025, the Legislative Audit Subcommittee further expanded our scope to include a performance audit of the Utah State Court system. This audit is ongoing and will be presented to the Legislative Audit Subcommittee at a future date upon completion.



In these audits, we evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of these organizations both individually and collectively, as each is an essential function of the criminal justice system. We also provide a comprehensive capstone report that focuses on the roles of each entity within the county's criminal justice system and how these entities can better coordinate to improve public safety goals.

Audit Recommendations Informed by Current and Past Practices Are Designed to Help the Salt Lake City Police Department Improve

The mission of the Office of the Legislative Auditor General is to help organizations improve. Our work strives to fulfill this mission:



THE MISSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL IS TO
AUDIT · LEAD · ACHIEVE
WE HELP ORGANIZATIONS IMPROVE

We have designed the recommendations for this audit to fulfill our mission and help improve the performance of the Salt Lake City Police Department. After the start of the audit, the department's Chief of Police Mike Brown announced his resignation on February 12, 2025. Brian Redd was appointed as the new chief effective March 5, 2025. We recognize that much of this report focuses on the leadership of the previous police chief. All references to "*executive leadership*" in this report refer to the chief and deputy chiefs of police within the SLCPD unless otherwise indicated. We have found that organizations improve most effectively when they evaluate previous actions, policies, and decisions, and use those insights to guide future growth. Our recommendations draw from that analysis and provide steps for the department's improvement and achievement.



BACKGROUND

The Salt Lake City Police Department has faced significant organizational challenges in recent years. Many of these challenges stem from the poor leadership of the previous administration who departed their roles during the audit. This chapter highlights some of the internal challenges the department has faced in meeting its responsibility for public safety.

FINDING 1.1

The Previous Administration's Ineffective Leadership Led to Operational Inefficiencies

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

Executive leadership of the SLCPD should limit use of administrative leave to circumstances listed in internal policy. Use of leave should be accompanied by consistent record keeping that includes the reasons leave was used in each case. These practices promote accountability and equitable treatment across all staff.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

Executive leadership of the SLCPD should follow the chain-of-command structure to be in line with its policy. Leadership should ensure that staff have clear and identifiable roles for command to promote effective communication, which should help rebuild trust within the department.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

Executive leadership of the SLCPD should consider the merits of an internal audit function. The inclusion of an audit function could identify inefficiencies, ensure compliance, and improve the department's performance.

RECOMMENDATION 1.4

Executive leadership of the SLCPD should take an active role in setting, managing, and revising department policy on a continual basis. This process should include ensuring policies are updated promptly and staff are held accountable for understanding them. An increased focus on department policy should help ensure leadership's expectations are effectively communicated and understood.

FINDING 1.2

A Coordinated Approach Between the Mayor and Police Chief Is Necessary for Effective Public Safety

No Recommendations



CONCLUSION

Overall, the previous administration's leadership weakened the department's organizational stability and effectiveness. These challenges created public safety issues and negatively impacted the department's culture.





Chapter 1

Past Leadership Deficiencies Contributed to Organizational Instability and Low Morale

The Salt Lake City Police Department (SLCPD or department) has faced significant organizational challenges in recent years. Many of these challenges stem from the poor leadership of the previous administration who departed their roles during this audit. This poor leadership led to department inefficiencies and significantly low morale. As part of our audit procedures, we conducted officer interviews, reviewed internal documentation and policy, assessed specific areas of concern, and observed officers on patrol with different divisions. We found that the officers in the SLCPD work hard to maintain public safety and care deeply about the department's success. We are also encouraged by changes being made by the newly appointed chief of police. However, this chapter highlights some of the internal challenges the department has faced in meeting its responsibility for public safety. These challenges negatively impacted the department's culture. We also discuss the critical role of Salt Lake City's mayor in overseeing the department and supervising the chief.

1.1 The Previous Administration's Ineffective Leadership Led to Operational Inefficiencies

Poor leadership practices by the previous administration had an adverse effect on the department for several years. This section highlights three leadership practices by previous leadership that contributed to the department's negative culture and operational inefficiencies: Administrative leave was misused, the previous chief appears to have struggled to make decisions and relied heavily on civilian staff for leadership, and internal oversight mechanisms were diminished under the previous administration. These practices decreased trust in leadership, reduced morale, and affected officer retention.

The Misuse of Administrative Leave Was Widely Perceived as Punitive and Harmed Morale

The previous chief used administrative leave more than other agencies¹, kept minimal records, and appeared to use it outside of the department's policy

¹ We reviewed the police departments of Ogden, Provo, Sandy, and West Valley City.



guidelines.² Both department leadership and staff believe that the previous chief used administrative leave inconsistently and as a punitive knee-jerk reaction rather than in accordance with departmental policy. This perception damaged morale and eroded trust in the previous chief and senior leadership.

The chief of police can decide whether to place or remove an officer from administrative leave in accordance with city and department policy. However, at times, the reasons for placing or not placing officers on leave appeared arbitrary.

Figure 1.1 The Reasons for Placing an Officer on Leave Sometimes Appeared Arbitrary. The following two examples, which occurred at similar times, demonstrate how the previous chief inconsistently applied administrative leave.

Example A	Example B
An employee inadvertently misused the city's tax-exempt status when making a personal purchase. This resulted in an approximate \$150 benefit, which was repaid when it was brought to the employee's attention. Even so, this employee was placed on leave for over six months and, two of his subordinates were on leave for one month. The department also referred this case to the Utah Attorney General's Office for potential criminal charges. Ultimately, the employee and his subordinates were exonerated, and the state declined to pursue any charges. Multiple officers expressed to us that they believe these officers were placed on leave vindictively.	The department investigated and sustained allegations of timecard discrepancies against several officers (detailed in Chapter 3). Despite the seriousness of these violations, none of the employees involved were placed on administrative leave.* We also found no indication that leadership referred these cases for screening of criminal charges—even though the violations in some instances appeared intentional and resulted in a significantly greater financial loss than the tax-exemption case. There is also no indication that these officers repaid this income. *Five officers were later placed on leave by the new chief. This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Source: Auditor generated from SLCPD internal affairs data.

The previous administration did not keep consistent records of why individuals were placed or remained on administrative leave.³ In one case, an officer appeared to remain on leave continuously for 17 months. The only documented reason given when leave began was a letter stating the department was conducting an investigation. The investigation found that the allegations against the officer were unfounded. Yet, according to data provided by the department, the officer appeared to remain on leave for 12 additional months following this



The previous administration did not maintain consistent records detailing the reasons staff were placed on leave.

² Administrative leave is a personnel status where the department temporarily relieves an officer from duty while an investigation of serious misconduct is underway. During this period, the officer continues to receive a full salary but is generally prohibited from performing any police duties.

³ Despite the lack of documentation, we attempted to partially assess the previous leadership's use of administrative leave by interviewing both leadership and those placed on leave. We also consulted with the department's internal affairs unit, which is responsible for investigating potential wrongdoing by officers.



determination. This is concerning, as other officers reported they believed this case was overtly punitive and intended more to avoid embarrassment than to address substantiated misconduct. It is difficult to verify these claims without adequate records for the use of leave.

Compared to other Utah police departments, the SLCPD used administrative leave for unusually lengthy periods. Between 2022 and 2024, the average length of the SLCPD's administrative leave was 89.45 days. During the same period, the Ogden Police Department's average time on leave was 32.51 days, and the Provo Police Department's average was 14.94 days.

Other police departments report trying to minimize the length of time administrative leave is used. This allows them to return officers to active duty quickly or separate employment, if necessary. Other departments also keep records of how long staff are on leave and why leave was used. This practice promotes transparency and enables departments to make an account of its use.

We also discovered multiple Utah agencies that investigated timecard discrepancies (similar to Example B mentioned previously). These departments placed the employees at fault on administrative leave and ultimately separated employment. The SLCPD did not place any employees on leave for timecard discrepancies and the discipline they issued was less severe.

The fear of being indiscriminately placed on leave can be demoralizing and stressful for officers. During this audit, multiple SLCPD officers shared concerns about how the inappropriate use of administrative leave negatively impacted morale. One officer summarized the impact as follows:



SLCPD Officer:

"Officers...are afraid to take police action because they know they will end up on administrative (punitive) leave for doing nothing wrong. It is having a [significant] negative impact on officer safety since officers are hesitating or not acting at all... [The previous chief] fails to understand the mental toll this has on the involved officers and their families, as well as the sinking morale among all other officers."

Police best practice organizations recommend that administrative leave should always have a reasonable justification, specifically to ensure that it is not used as a "knee-jerk reaction to embarrassing or politically frightening events."⁴

⁴ United States Department of Justice—Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



Administrative leave serves a legitimate purpose in law enforcement. But it should always have a reasonable justification to ensure it is not used as a knee-jerk reaction to embarrassing or politically frightening events.

Administrative leave serves a legitimate purpose in law enforcement. When reserved for serious events or allegations, it supports internal investigations while protecting both the officer's rights and the department's integrity. However, it should be used in accordance with policy because placing an employee on leave incurs both direct and indirect costs. The department must continue paying the employee's full salary, even though officers on leave are generally not permitted to perform police work. We encourage the SLCPD to implement best practices so that administrative leave is applied in accordance with policy, and matters are

investigated quickly. This can assist in both reducing departmental costs and ensuring officer well-being.

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should limit use of administrative leave to circumstances outlined in internal policy. Use of leave should be accompanied by consistent record keeping that includes the reasons leave was used in each case. This promotes accountability and equitable treatment across all staff.

The Previous Chief Lacked Strong Leadership, Which Enabled Key Civilian Advisors to Direct Core Functions

Most police agencies operate under a clear chain-of-command structure that provides clear and identifiable roles for each officer.⁵ Police leaders rely on the chain-of-command framework to uphold policies and procedures and maintain accountability. However, the previous chief bypassed the chain of command and empowered key civilian advisors instead of senior sworn leadership for decision making and operational direction. This practice undermined established reporting structures, caused frustration among leaders and officers, and eroded

⁵ The SLCPD's policy states, "The Salt Lake City Department will implement and maintain an organizational structure that provides clear and identifiable roles for command, control, and guidance...each position and assignment should have clearly identified responsibilities and a defined chain of command."

trust in the Office of the Chief. Department leadership at every level — from deputy chiefs and commanders to lieutenants and sergeants - consistently reported that the previous chief struggled to make critical decisions.

Several of the department's senior leaders reported the chief was overly risk-averse, which resulted in him delegating outsized authority to a small group of nonsworn, civilian advisors in areas such as human resources, legal counsel, and public relations. Over time, these advisors exercised powerful influence in department operations, often exerting more influence than many sworn

senior leaders. Staff reported instances where the chief issued directives through these civilian advisors to lower-level personnel, bypassing the formal chain of command. For example, some officers reported that the prior civilian public relations director gave them orders to take certain actions during patrol shifts. The prior public relations director stated that he was delegated significant authority from the previous chief and would reach outside the chain of command when the chief needed something done.

This communication strategy resulted in situations where supervisors were unaware of assignments given to their subordinates, which is problematic for several reasons: First, without knowing who assigned a task or why, supervisors cannot provide oversight or feedback, weakening accountability structures. Second, bypassing supervisors undermines their authority and creates confusion regarding reporting lines and decision-making responsibilities.

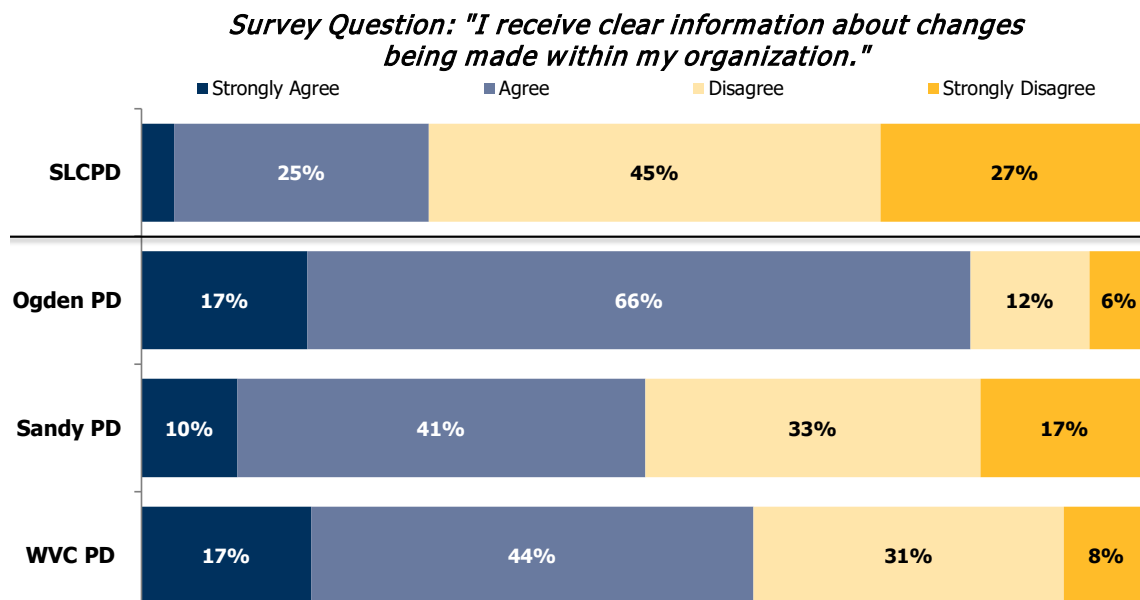
For example, high-ranking department members reported being entirely excluded from critical leadership discussions, including those pertaining to the city's newly created public safety plan. These leaders were reportedly excluded despite having direct responsibility for implementing key components of the plan. These types of situations decreased trust in leadership and led to a perception of poor communication. This was reflected in the results of a survey question about receiving clear information.



Officers are typically accountable to a direct supervisor, who receives instructions from their supervisor in a well-defined chain-of-command structure.



Figure 1.2 The Previous Chief's Practice of Bypassing the Chain of Command Led Most Staff to Feel that Internal Communication Is Poor. While communication appears to be a challenge for many police departments, over 70 percent of SLCPD survey participants said they do not receive clear information from department leadership.



**Note: Our office also conducted a survey of the Provo City Police Department. However, this data is omitted due to a low response rate.*

Source: Auditor generated from OLAG culture surveys of Utah law enforcement agencies.

To be clear, we are not suggesting that civilian positions in police departments should be discouraged. The other Utah police departments we reviewed described a more balanced approach. Their civilian advisors serve in supportive, compliance-focused roles, helping leadership implement decisions rather than make them. Leadership decisions in these departments are made in collaboration with sworn senior staff, with civilian advisors present only in an advisory capacity. Best practices also urge police leadership to retain control of their own communications to ensure effectiveness and authenticity.⁶ The new chief's transition team echoed these concerns, and we are encouraged by steps already taken to address them.

⁶ Police Executive Research Forum. *The First Six Months: A Police Chief's Guide to Starting Off on the Right Foot*, 2025.



RECOMMENDATION 1.2

Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should follow the chain-of-command structure to be in line with its policy. Leadership should ensure that staff have clear and identifiable roles for command to promote effective communication, which should help rebuild trust within the department.

Internal Oversight and Strategic Planning Were Not Prioritized by the Previous Administration

The department previously maintained a dedicated internal audit function responsible for reviewing internal improvements and high-risk processes. This unit was disbanded in 2024. The audit function was composed of sworn officers trained in police-specific audit procedures. These officers were responsible for conducting inspections in key areas such as use-of-force analysis, body-worn camera audits, and the security of department-held evidence. They were also responsible for the department's compliance with statutory reporting requirements.⁷



The previous administration disbanded the department's internal audit function in 2024.

The previous administration's priority toward this work seems to have diminished in recent years, and it is unclear how closely they followed audit recommendations. Our review of past internal audit reports revealed multiple unimplemented recommendations, including simple improvements. For example, one recommendation advised removing a policy reference that included a now-defunct position. However, the outdated language remains in policy. Another recommendation suggested that senior leadership clarify through a formal department memo when officers should book drug paraphernalia into evidence and when they should dispose of it. This memo does not appear to have been issued.

The previous administration also appeared to place a low priority on ensuring that officers understood internal policy. We identified multiple instances of outdated or inaccurate policy language.⁸ Staff are expected to read and

⁷ Internal audit functions are often found in large metropolitan departments and serve as a proactive tool to ensure compliance, identify inefficiencies, and highlight organizational risks.

⁸ These include instances where nonexistent positions are referenced, duties are assigned to previously disbanded units, and outdated terminology is used.



acknowledge each policy, yet compliance with this requirement has remained consistently low. Since 2020, fewer than 50 percent of staff have acknowledged reading all departmental policies in any given year. This suggests a lack of emphasis on policy management and accountability at the highest levels of leadership.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should consider the merits of an internal audit function. The inclusion of an audit function could identify inefficiencies, ensure compliance, and improve the department's performance.

RECOMMENDATION 1.4

Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should take an active role in setting, managing, and revising department policy on a continual basis. This process should include ensuring policies are updated promptly and staff are held accountable for understanding them. An increased focus on department policy should help ensure leadership's expectations are effectively communicated and understood.

In addition to the loss of internal audit oversight, the department also ceased updating its strategic plan after 2022. This left the department without a strategic direction to meet public safety goals. This is discussed further in Chapter 2.

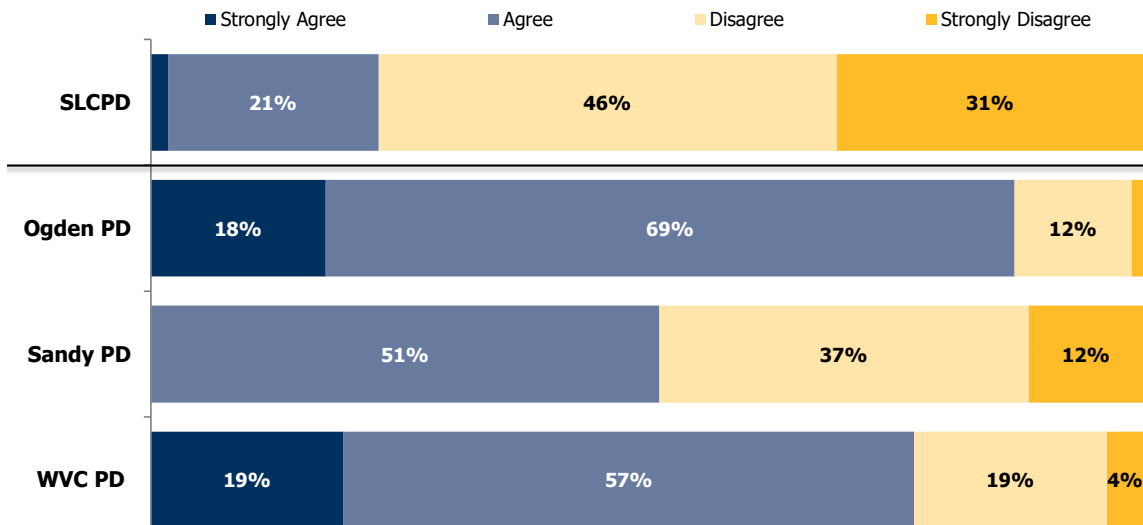
Poor Leadership Decisions Fostered Low Morale and High Turnover

The leadership weaknesses described above led to significantly poor morale within the department. Interviews and survey responses revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the department's culture and leadership. In fact, the SLCPD's results from our culture survey were the lowest our office has ever recorded. To better understand the extent of these concerns, we distributed the same survey to other large law enforcement agencies in Utah to establish a comparative baseline. The full results of the SLCPD survey are presented in Appendix A, with key findings summarized below.



Figure 1.3 Morale Was Very Low in the SLCPD at the Audit's Start. Approximately 77 percent of respondents from the SLCPD disagreed that morale was high. A separate question found that a similar percentage also believed morale had not improved in the previous year.

Survey Question: "Currently, employee morale is high in my organization."



Source: Auditor generated from OLAG culture surveys of Utah law enforcement agencies.

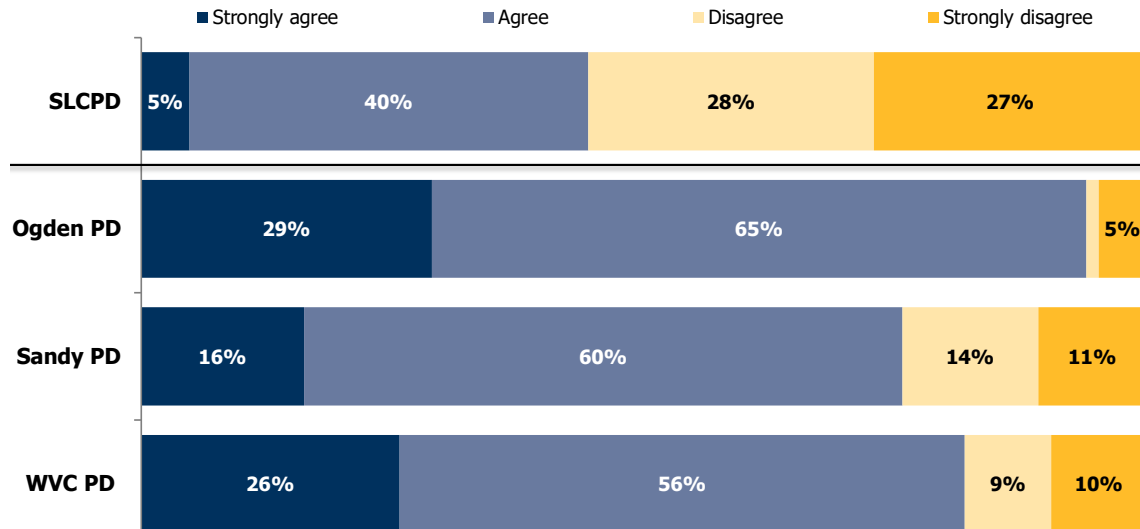
Survey responses pointed to deep concerns about morale, organizational culture, and trust in senior leadership. Approximately 77 percent of SLCPD respondents reported poor morale that had not improved over the previous year. Nearly two-thirds did not believe the department had a positive culture. Confidence in leadership decision-making was also low; 79 percent of respondents said they did not believe hiring, promotions, or raises were based on clear criteria.

Many also expressed doubts about senior leadership's commitment to excellence or ethical conduct; over half of respondents reported they did not believe senior leaders modeled ethical behavior.



Figure 1.4 A Majority of SLCPD Staff Do Not Believe Senior Leadership Models Ethical Behavior. We believe this is one of the most concerning findings from the survey. Senior leadership is responsible for promoting and demonstrating ethical conduct in an organization. A weak “tone at the top” impacts all areas of an organization.

Survey Question: "Senior leadership models ethical behavior."



Source: Auditor generated from OLAG culture surveys of Utah law enforcement agencies.

Due to poor morale, the department has experienced significant turnover in recent years. Between 2020 and 2024, the SLCPD lost 282 sworn officers, nearly half of its sworn workforce of approximately 600. Turnover was also high among senior leadership. During the same period, 13 different individuals cycled out of the approximately 10 sworn senior management positions (excluding the chief).⁹ Although the department has hired significantly to mitigate these losses, the department is losing experienced officers and experiencing inconsistency in senior leadership.

It should be noted that the newly appointed chief has started to implement changes within the department in hopes of improving officer morale and culture. He has appointed a new department leadership team and established practices for better internal communication. We are encouraged by actions taken by the new chief during this audit. We suggest that this leadership team continue to implement these practices to improve the department.

⁹ These positions include assistant chiefs, deputy chiefs, and commanders.



1.2 A Coordinated Approach Between the Mayor and Police Chief is Necessary for Effective Public Safety

Utah Code and Salt Lake City Ordinance¹⁰ designate the mayor as having authority over all city departments, including the police department. The mayor is ultimately accountable for the administration of all laws and ordinances of the city. Best practices note that “mayors are held accountable for public safety in their jurisdiction, even when laws or political opposition limit their formal power.”¹¹ The mayor’s leadership impacts the police chief, the department, and the enforcement of laws. Because elected mayors may not have specialized training or expertise in law enforcement, the chief must exercise strong leadership to coordinate department priorities with the mayor. A lack of coordination between the two leaders can result in department inefficiencies. We highlight a specific example of how a lack of coordination between the mayor and the previous chief resulted in ineffective action for homeless camping violations.



The expectations and coordination between the mayor and police chief are critical for effective enforcement.

Poor Leadership and Coordination Led to Low Enforcement of the City’s Camping Ordinance

Salt Lake City Ordinance states, “It is unlawful for any person to camp...or pitch a tent...or any other type of camping equipment on any ‘public grounds.’”¹² It should be noted that we did not assess the merits of the camping policy—that is the role of policymakers. Our focus was on whether the mayor and chief coordinated their efforts to enforce the existing ordinance. Officers reported they were confused about whether they should enforce the ordinance after the mayor made comments to the news media in 2021.¹³ After this statement, it appears that the previous chief did not attempt to clarify this issue to the department. Officers reported that they did not receive directions from the chief, leaving them uncertain about the enforcement of the ordinance. Over two years later, in November 2023, the chief finally issued a directive to enforce camping citations.

¹⁰ *Utah Code* 10-3b-202 and Salt Lake City Ordinance 2.04.010

¹¹ Harvard Kennedy School. *Mayor to Mayor: Taking the Lead on Police Accountability*, 2023.

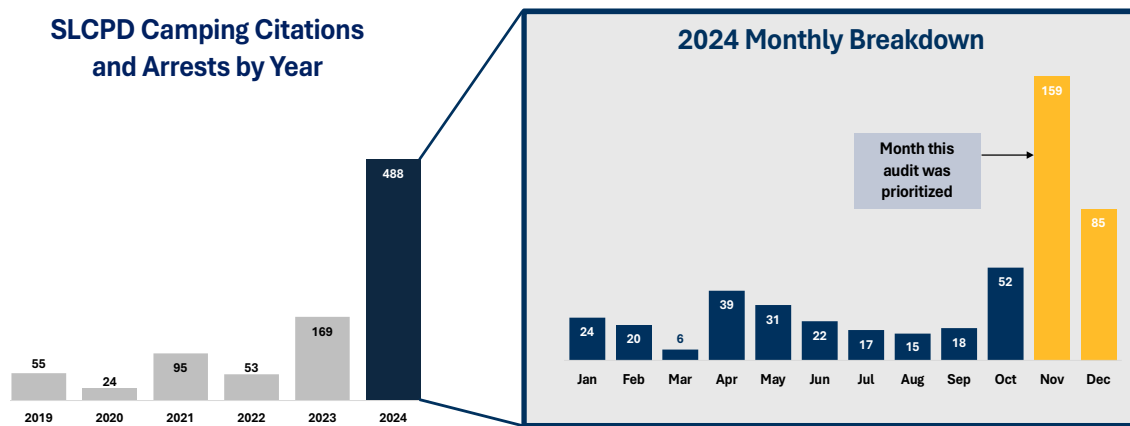
¹² Salt Lake City Ordinance 11.12.080

¹³ The mayor stated to KUTV in 2021: “The city’s philosophy really is to not criminalize homelessness, and enforcing that camping ordinance really means giving out citations that lead to unpaid tickets and warrants which are things that ultimately keep people from accessing housing...we can’t be holding a ticket as the hammer, so to speak, to get them to take up services.”



Despite this directive, camping citations remained low. Enforcement data suggests that the department did not begin seriously enforcing this ordinance until late 2024, when state officials took a leadership role in this issue.

Figure 1.5 Camping Citations Issued by SLCPD Officers Increased Dramatically after Pressure from State Leaders. Camping citations spiked around November 2024. The increase coincided with this audit’s prioritization and the letter sent to the city by state leaders urging better public safety.



Source: Auditor generated from SLCPD data.

This lapse in enforcement emphasizes the need for the mayor and the police chief to be coordinated and united on the department’s enforcement strategy. Aligned leadership can reduce confusion and ineffective enforcement. It is equally important that this shared strategy is clearly communicated by the police chief to line officers so they can operate with clear expectations.

Establishing a Shared Public Safety Vision and Measures for The Chief’s Performance Could Enhance Police Effectiveness

Best practices state that the mayor and police chief should coordinate on the vision and goals for public safety. The collaboration on a shared strategy aligns the two leaders on police operations. This alignment may have been lacking, as the department did not retain a strategic plan before January 2025, when Salt Lake City developed a public safety plan.

Additionally, it is important for the mayor to hold the police chief accountable. Without a clear understanding of the chief’s performance, there is a risk that ineffective leadership could persist. Greater performance accountability could be accomplished by using key performance metrics that accurately demonstrate organizational effectiveness. In Chapter 2, we discuss the need for a strategic plan and measurements tied to public safety goals. The two leaders could use the recommendations from Chapter 2 to establish a coordinated effort for effective public safety and highlight key measurements to gauge the chief’s performance.



BACKGROUND

The Salt Lake City Police Department does not retain a strategic plan to guide public safety outcomes due to a lack of prioritization by the previous administration. While the department collects a substantial amount of operational data, it lacks direction on how to use it. This chapter explores how the department can strengthen its operations by reestablishing a strategic vision and using goals and performance metrics to drive results.

FINDING 2.1

Creating and Implementing a Strategic Plan Could Help Unify the Department Around Shared Public Safety Goals

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

The Salt Lake City Police Department should develop and implement a strategic plan that defines organizational objectives, sets a clear direction, and includes mechanisms to evaluate progress toward its goals. Senior leaders should ensure this process results in stronger department unity and greater alignment.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

Senior leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should establish and clearly communicate department goals with specific measurements that are tied to a newly created strategic plan. These goals should assist leaders in accurately measuring the department's performance and provide enhanced accountability to the community.



CONCLUSION

Without using performance metrics to guide decisions, leadership is operating without a clear view of what's working and what's not. Strategic planning and the intentional use of performance measures enable leadership to improve practices, set clear expectations, and hold staff accountable for their performance.





Chapter 2

Strategic Vision and Use of Performance Metrics Can Further Public Safety Goals

The Salt Lake City Police Department (SLCPD or department) does not maintain a current strategic plan to guide public safety outcomes due to a lack of prioritization by the previous administration. The department collects a substantial amount of operational data, but it lacks direction from leadership on how to use it. Without a strategic plan, the department is missing opportunities to establish meaningful goals to improve public safety. While Salt Lake City's new public safety plan highlights areas to improve public safety, the department needs its own strategic plan.

Healthy governance in any organization begins with a clear understanding of purpose and direction. A strategic plan reflects the core of an organization. While it supports the establishment of clear public safety goals, its primary influence is uniting the department around a shared vision and purpose. It maps how a department will realize its vision and encourages innovative progress toward public safety goals. It reassures both department members and the community that resources are being used effectively and towards shared expectations. This chapter explores how the SLCPD can strengthen its operations by reestablishing a strategic vision and using goals and performance metrics to drive results.

2.1 Creating and Implementing a Strategic Plan Could Help Unify the Department Around Shared Public Safety Goals

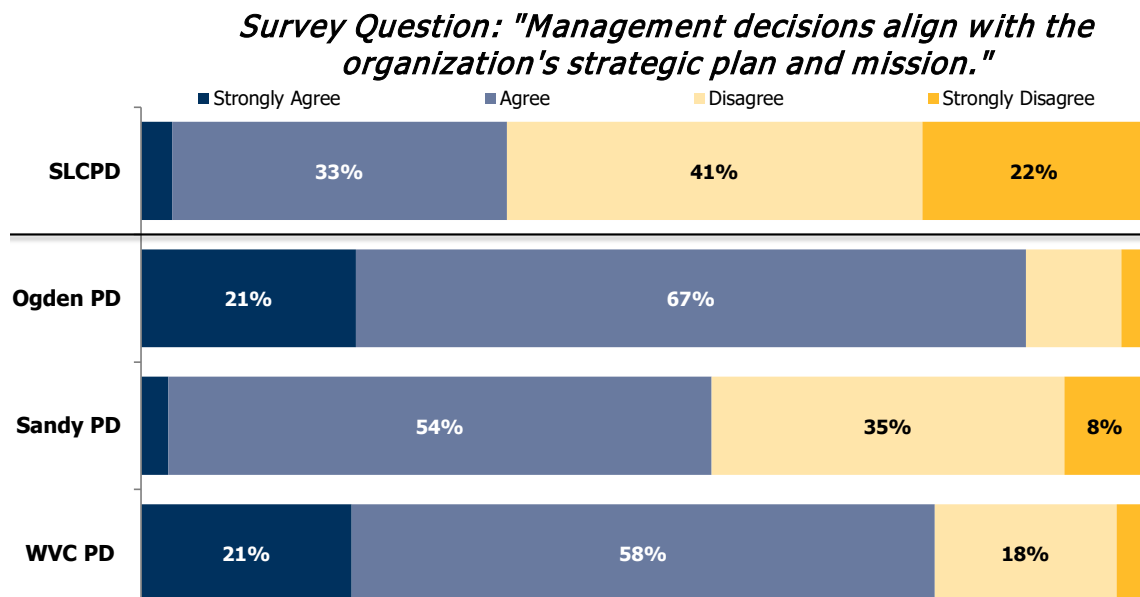
In early 2025, Salt Lake City's mayor created an outward-facing public safety plan in response to concerns from state leaders. Prior to this new plan, the SLCPD had not maintained a strategic plan for three years.^{14 15} This lack of strategic direction created a disconnect between officers and department leadership over public safety goals. For example, our culture survey found that 63 percent of department members believe that management's decisions do not align with the department's mission or strategic plan. Over half of the respondents did not believe the department was driven by goals.

¹⁴ The new chief of police has acknowledged the lack of a strategic plan and expressed intent to create one with his new leadership team.

¹⁵ The most recent strategic update was the SLCPD's revision to their Crime Control Plan in 2022.



Figure 2.1 A Majority Feel that Management’s Decisions Do Not Align with the Department’s Strategic Mission. Management’s and staff’s perceptions of the department’s mission are not aligned.



Source: Auditor generated from OLAG culture surveys of Utah law enforcement agencies.

While the department retains a mission statement, vision, and core values, several department members expressed they do not feel these are applied meaningfully. Feedback from several officers revealed frustration with the previous leadership’s lack of strategic direction and internal communication. For example, several senior officers expressed that organizational strategy does not guide the department’s decisions. Many of these officers have been with the SLCPD for several years and hold high-level positions within the organization. Some explained that the previous administration attempted to create an updated strategic plan, but it ultimately was never finalized. Other comments expressed that the department’s vision and mission statements were vague, failed to address modern policing challenges, or were not reinforced by administration. Reflecting these perspectives, one officer stated:



SLCPD Officer:

“For a long time, I have personally wondered what we as an organization were trying to achieve. Things were published externally, such as call response times, but never talked about within and nobody knew what we were trying to achieve as an organization. When the department did restructure recently, there were 4 areas of emphasis but those quickly took a back seat as goals to achieve once the novelty wore off and the pressure for cleaning up the city increased.”

These concerns highlight the need for a department-wide strategic plan. Without a strategic plan, organizations can fall into a reactionary mindset, moving from crisis to crisis. Strategic planning is essential for aligning leadership, staff, and city stakeholders around shared expectations. For example, the mayor and the police chief can use a strategic plan to align public safety goals for the city.

This plan can serve as a roadmap to support the mayor's duty to enforce the law and as a framework for evaluating the chief's performance.¹⁶ National policing organizations¹⁷ recognize strategic planning as a best practice, and other Utah law enforcement agencies have current strategic plans to guide their operations.

While the city's new public safety plan highlights ways to improve public safety, we recommend that it be accompanied by an internal department plan focused on specific goals for meeting the city plan's broad directives.



Prior leadership did not prioritize using the rich data available to drive performance. This limits their ability to proactively address public safety challenges.

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

The department should develop and implement a strategic plan that defines organizational objectives, sets a clear direction, and includes mechanisms to evaluate progress toward its goals. Senior leaders should ensure this process results in stronger department unity and greater alignment.

The Department Could Enhance Its Use of Goals And Performance Metrics to Improve Effectiveness

The department collects a wide range of operational data. However, prior leadership did not establish expectations for how that data should be used to assess progress toward goals. Instead, metrics are tracked in response to frequent requests from commanders, internal staff, and the public, rather than according to a cohesive, forward-looking strategy established by senior leadership. These metrics reflect program outputs and workload measures such as calls for service, staffing statistics, and citywide crime rates. While some of these metrics could be

¹⁶ Finding 1.2 in Chapter 1 discusses how the relationship between the mayor and the police chief is essential to meet public safety goals.

¹⁷ These organizations include the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Police Executive Research Forum.



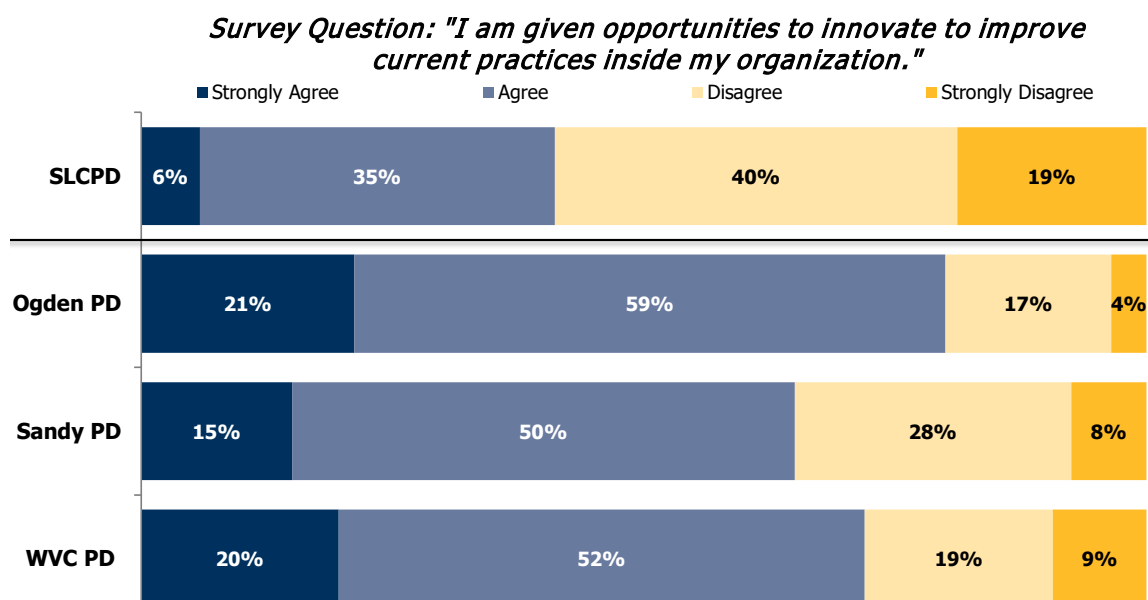
used to evaluate the department's performance, senior leaders have not linked them to strategic goals or used them to assess progress.



Without using performance metrics to guide decisions, leadership is operating without a clear view of what's working and what's not.

Without using performance metrics to guide decisions, leadership is operating without a clear view of what's working and what's not. This limits the department's ability to proactively address public safety challenges and stifles opportunities for innovation. For example, the lack of strategic professional development planning has likely contributed to increased turnover in recent years. The department has also missed opportunities to strategically improve 911 call response times.¹⁸ The lack of strategic planning has contributed to a majority of officers feeling the department is not guided by performance measures. As seen in the following figure, department members also report that there are few opportunities to innovate or improve operations.

Figure 2.2 A Majority of SLCPD Members Do Not Believe They Can Innovate in Their Positions. These results differ considerably from other Utah law enforcement agencies. Emphasizing innovation helps organizations proactively respond to changes instead of reacting to them after they happen.



Source: Auditor generated from OLAG culture surveys of Utah law enforcement agencies.

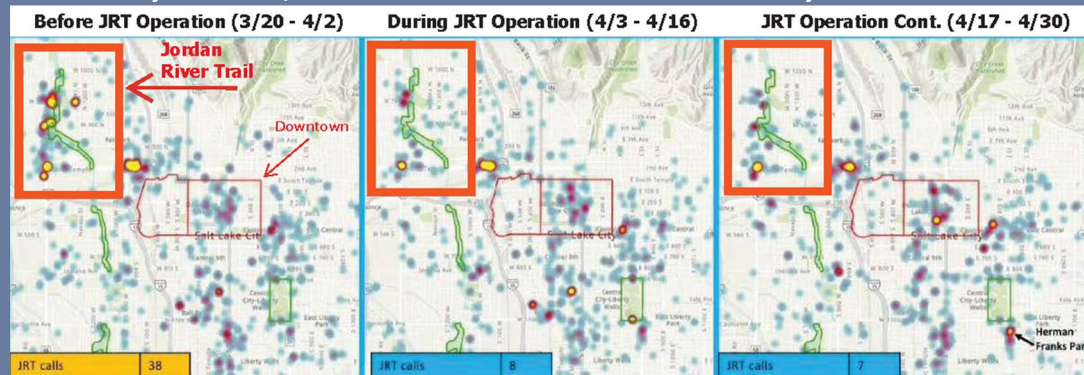
Strategic planning and the intentional use of performance measures enable leadership to improve practices, set clear expectations, and hold staff accountable for their performance. We are encouraged that the new administration is

¹⁸ Professional development and 911 call response times are discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

currently developing a strategic plan. While the new plan is not yet implemented, we are also encouraged by the implementation of strategic initiatives that use data to track performance and inform decisions. A recent example is described in the box below.

A Recent Example of Effective Data Use

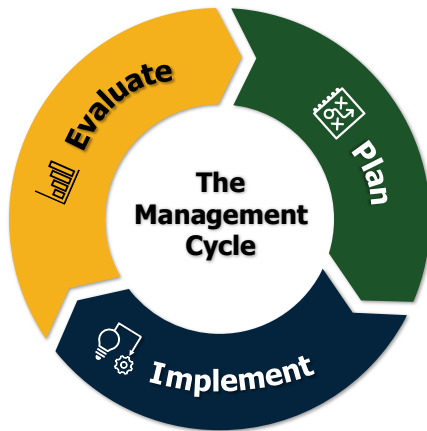
In April 2025, the new administration conducted a targeted operation to close the Jordan River Trail due to consistent issues relating to homelessness around that area. During this closure, the department increased enforcement around that area. Notably, leadership tracked these efforts through heatmaps showing the distribution of calls for service specifically relating to homelessness issues. The orange box shows the Jordan River Trail area. The smaller red box shows the downtown area, and the green box shows Liberty Park. The dots show the number of calls for service, blue indicating fewer, yellow indicating more. The maps show that as the operation continued, calls simultaneously shifted away from the JRT and towards the downtown and Liberty Park areas.



Auditors observed management using this information to coordinate new enforcement areas to account specifically for the shift in crime caused by the JRT operation. We believe this type of strategic use of data can significantly increase performance.

Organizations that provide best practices for policing recognize that the complex nature of law enforcement makes it hard to capture effectiveness through a single set of metrics.¹⁹ However, these organizations also emphasize that meaningful measurement is both possible and essential. It is not enough to set goals once: Organizations must continually evaluate performance, assess community needs, and determine whether goals are clearly communicated and bought into by the department. This process is reflected in the Management

¹⁹ United States Department of Justice and the RAND Corporation.



Cycle graphic from our best practices handbook.²⁰ Furthermore, the National Institute of Justice recommends that performance metrics should be clearly communicated, measured, and tracked over time.²¹

Leaders must plan what they want to achieve and implement their vision by communicating it to those responsible. Senior leaders should continually monitor and adjust plans as necessary. Once leaders have a strategic plan

established, this cycle should continue repeatedly. This ensures goals are evaluated often to ensure they are informed by performance.

We reviewed two areas measured by the SLCPD to determine if the department could improve its usage of data metrics to meet public safety goals. It is important to note that setting goals, objectives, and strategies is the primary responsibility of the department's management. This audit does not prescribe specific metrics to track. Rather, it suggests areas that the new administration might consider based on our observations.



We reviewed two areas measured by the SLCPD to determine if the department could improve its usage of data metrics to meet public safety goals.

911 Response Time Goals

The SLCPD follows best practices by prioritizing 911 calls based on urgency. This ensures that the most critical incidents receive the fastest response. Until recently, the department's goal was to respond to high-priority 911 calls (known as Priority One calls) within 10 minutes.²² However, we were unable to determine why 10 minutes was set as the goal for this metric. Senior leaders indicated that the goal was decided several years prior, and no one knew how this target was decided. Recent performance shows that the median response time for all three patrol divisions has improved each year, with each division

²⁰ Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General. *The Best Practice Handbook—A Practical Guide to Excellence for Utah Government*. Report No. 2023-05, 2023.

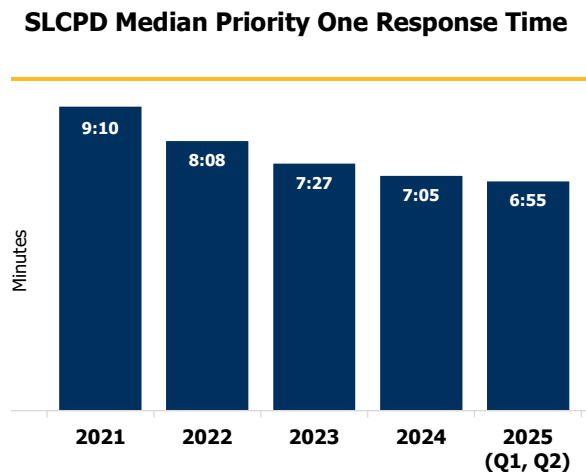
²¹ National Institute of Justice. *The IMPACTT of a Patrol Officer: Evaluating Productivity Metrics*, 2020.

²² During this audit, the new administration revised the department's goal for Priority One calls to 7 minutes.



beating the 10-minute target. Figure 2.3 shows the department's overall annual performance for this goal.

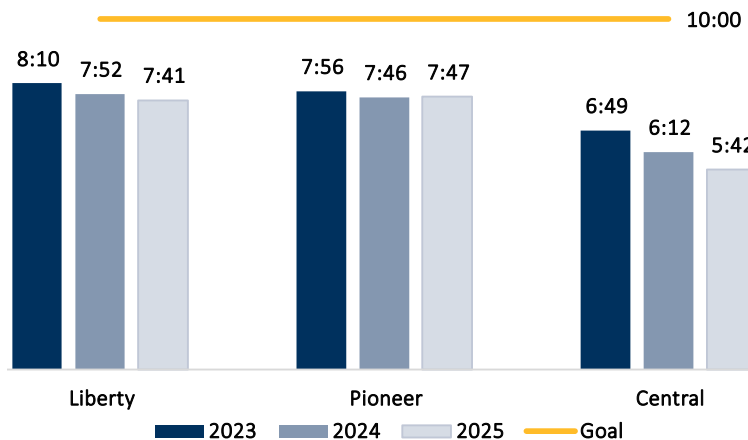
Figure 2.3 The SLCPD's Median Response Time to Priority One Calls Has Consistently Met Leadership's Target. The department has been well within its stated goal in recent years. The yellow line indicates the 10-minute goal the department set for Priority One 911 calls.



Source: Auditor generated from SLCPD data.

However, this measurement looks at the median response time for the whole department. We found that response times change when it is separated by each of the three patrol divisions. For example, one of the divisions has a median response time of under 6 minutes, while another has a longer response time of nearly 8 minutes.²³

Figure 2.4 Leadership Should Consider Whether One Standardized Goal for All Divisions is Appropriate or Whether Individualized Goals Should Be Set for Each Division. Priority One response times vary by division. While the Liberty and Pioneer Divisions are similar, the Central Division has a significantly quicker response time.



Source: Auditor generated from SLCPD data.

²³ Data for 2025 only reflect performance for Q1 and Q2.



While there are variations among patrol divisions, each division has comfortably met the 10-minute goal for the past three years. This indicates that the goal has not been adjusted to account for actual performance. Goals that are continuously met over time provide little incentive for forward progress and greater improvement. They can also lead to a sense of complacency. By not adjusting goals based on performance, senior management signals little desire for improvement or innovation.



Goals that are continuously met over time provide little incentive for forward progress and greater improvement.

In addition to setting response time goals based on past performance, the department could modify the goals for each division. For example, some patrol divisions cover larger geographic areas than others, which can contribute to longer response times. Additionally, officer staffing between patrol divisions is regularly adjusted based on calls for service. It does not appear that senior leadership adjusts the response time goal in a similar way. In deciding how to measure response time, division specific goals may need to be considered.

During this audit, the new administration revised this goal from 10 minutes to 7 minutes. They still may want to consider whether this goal remains appropriate over time or whether it should be adjusted to reflect performance levels by each patrol division. They could also consider setting goals for lower priority calls as well. Reviewing response times will give leaders an opportunity not only to set goals but also to use those goals to drive performance and increase the department's impact. Goals need to be challenging enough to drive meaningful progress. We believe that collecting quality data and seeking continuous improvement for call response times will enhance police performance.

Training and Leadership Development Goals

Officers expressed during the audit that they believed management did not prioritize retention of staff. Because of this lack of prioritization, the department has lost 282 sworn officers between 2020 and 2024—nearly half of their sworn workforce. High turnover can affect officer and department effectiveness. A best practice policing organization warns that “over time, agencies with higher turnover and less experienced officers will suffer a reduction in productivity and

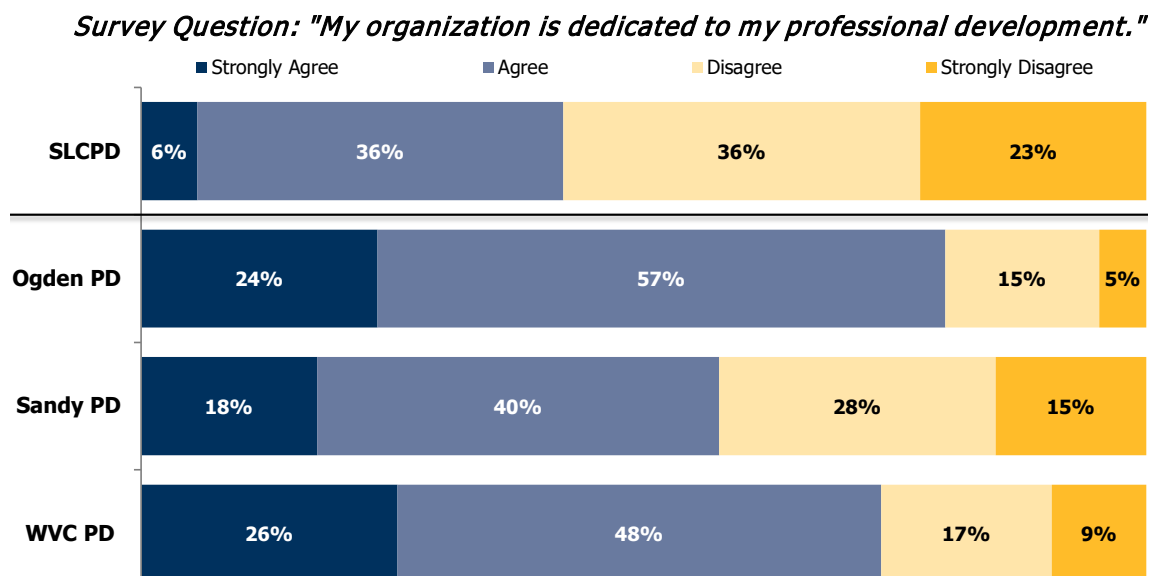
a lower quality of service delivery.”²⁴ Additionally, leadership must communicate the department’s values and vision to a large influx of new officers. Without their buy-in, the impact of the department’s strategic vision and goals will be diminished. Considering the addition of new officers, senior leaders should consider improving the quantity of training opportunities.

We found that the department allocated minimal funding for officer training. This limited the scope and quality of training provided.

All law enforcement officers are required by Utah Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to receive 40 hours of annual training. Beyond this annual training, it appears the department has not regularly offered targeted training aimed at enhancing their leadership pipeline. For example, as noted in Chapter 1, only half of all officers have acknowledged that they have read the department’s policy manual. This is concerning, as it is a simple training measure to ensure officers comply with policies and procedures.

The department also appears to have allocated minimal funding for officer training, which limits the scope and quality of training provided. A consistent theme from both leaders and staff was a desire for more training opportunities.

Figure 2.5 A Majority of the SLCPD Feel that the Department Does Not Prioritize Developing Staff. A consistent theme from both leaders and staff was a desire for more training opportunities.



Source: Auditor generated from OLAG culture surveys of Utah law enforcement agencies.

²⁴ International Association of Chiefs of Police. *Best Practices Guide—Recruitment, Retention, and Turnover of Law Enforcement Personnel*, 2008.



The training of new staff is ultimately leadership's responsibility. It helps facilitate both acceptable performance and provides an opportunity for leaders to communicate their vision for the department.

The training of new staff is leadership's responsibility. It helps facilitate acceptable performance and provides an opportunity for leaders to communicate their vision for the department. In response to senior leaders' lack of emphasis on training, some division leaders have taken the initiative by organizing training opportunities within their respective patrol divisions.

Despite these recent initiatives, we found that processes for career growth and leadership training were limited and inconsistent. For example, there was no structured supervisory training until after the new chief was hired.

Senior leaders should establish specific goals to track both officer and supervisor training. Best practice organizations recommend training techniques such as:

- Developing a comprehensive onboarding program
- Assigning mentors
- Incorporating professional development plans for officers

These practices, among others, can be tracked and evaluated to enhance officer performance. Providing adequate training is essential for officers to remain current with evolving practices and challenges. This approach may be particularly helpful in supporting new officers as they develop their skills.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

Senior leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should establish and clearly communicate department goals with specific measurements that are tied to a newly created strategic plan. These goals should assist leaders in accurately measuring the department's performance and provide enhanced accountability to the community.



BACKGROUND

Timecard falsification occurred during state-funded homeless overtime shifts designed to enforce the city's camping ordinance. In response, the department conducted a limited internal investigation; however, leadership did not expand the investigation to assess the full extent of the issue. They also did not take sufficient steps to address the violations.

FINDING 3.1

**Weak Accountability Mechanisms
and Poor Shift Oversight Contributed
to Timecard Falsification**

RECOMMENDATION 3.1

Executive leadership the Salt Lake City Police Department should proactively ensure all overtime shifts have adequate supervision. This supervision should include sufficient staffing of supervisors and regular monitoring of performance by command staff. These practices should ensure officers are held accountable for performing the work they are compensated for.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2

Leadership of the Salt Lake Police Department who oversee homeless overtime shifts should implement accountability mechanisms to ensure these shifts achieve their intended outcomes. These mechanisms should include establishing adequate supervision, actively monitoring officer performance, and enforcing compliance with shift expectations. Strengthening oversight will help prevent future misconduct and improve the effectiveness of these operations.



CONCLUSION

Leadership was aware that these overtime shifts had limited supervision and accountability controls but ultimately did little to remedy these concerns. This weak control framework by management allowed falsification to occur across several months.





Chapter 3

Weak Controls and Inadequate Management Practices Enabled Timecard Falsification

Timecard falsification occurred during state-funded homeless overtime shifts designed to enforce Salt Lake City's camping ordinance. In response, the Salt Lake City Police Department (SLCPD or department) conducted a limited internal investigation. However, leadership did not expand the investigation to assess the full extent of the issue or take sufficient steps to address the violations. Leadership was aware these overtime shifts had limited supervision and accountability controls but ultimately did little to remedy these concerns. This weak control framework allowed falsification to occur across several months.

Our office notified and assisted the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), which is responsible for administering the grant that funds the homeless overtime shifts. DWS initiated its own audit into this issue and their results are pending. Our audit examines the internal control failures that allowed timecard discrepancies to persist.

3.1 Weak Accountability Mechanisms and Poor Shift Oversight Contributed to Timecard Falsification



Inadequate supervision created many opportunities for poor performance and allowed officers to claim unworked time on homeless overtime shifts.

Inadequate supervision of shifts facilitated poor work performance and allowed officers to claim unworked time on homeless overtime shifts. Despite these issues, leadership did not adequately address known performance concerns related to these shifts by ensuring adequate supervision. Leadership's apparent lack of concern for these violations was highlighted by their failure to investigate beyond a single month and their unwillingness to refer these cases for screening of criminal charges. The new chief has begun addressing this issue, and we are encouraged by the steps he has taken.

Homeless Overtime Shifts Did Not Have Adequate Supervision and Accountability Mechanisms

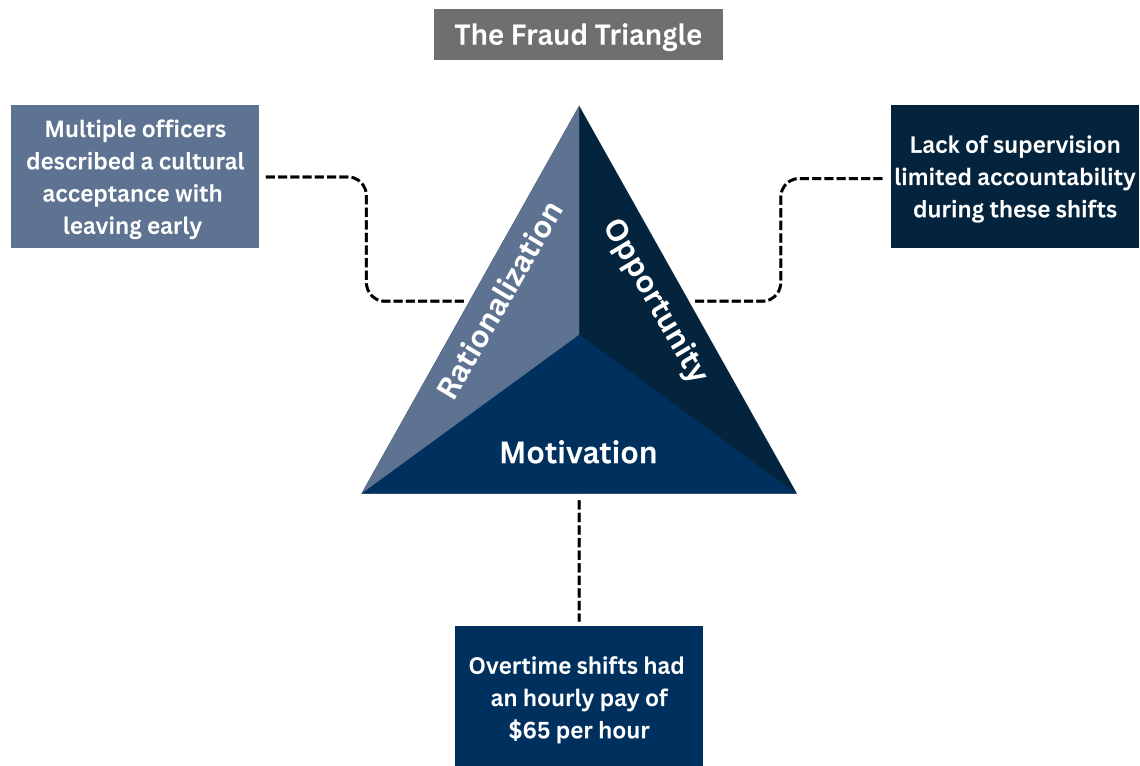
A lack of strong leadership and weak accountability for known violations allowed timecard discrepancies to occur among several officers. These cases were enabled by a combination of leadership failures related to three factors:



- **Opportunity:** These shifts did not maintain adequate supervision and accountability controls. Leadership was aware of the lack of supervision but did not adequately remedy it.
- **Rationalization:** Officers justified their behavior through cultural norms, which they felt accepted tardiness or early departures from shifts.
- **Motivation:** Officers could have been incentivized by relatively high hourly pay and minimal oversight, likely making homeless overtime shifts a sought-after option for additional compensation with little accountability.

These elements are described in the figure below.

Figure 3.1 Timecard Discrepancies Were Enabled by a Combination of Poor Supervision, High Hourly Pay, and Poor Department Culture. These shifts provided motivation to record time not worked.



Source: Adapted from the National Whistleblower Center.

Supervision over homeless overtime shifts was inadequate from their outset. These shifts are voluntary overtime opportunities designed to ensure a constant police presence among the homeless population to discourage illegal camping, drug use, or other criminal behavior. Despite these shifts covering a 24-hour period, there initially were no ground-level supervisors assigned to ensure work was performed. Later, only one supervisor was appointed to supervise all overtime shifts. This level of supervision is unacceptable and requires immediate correction.



Despite shifts covering a 24-hour period, there initially were no ground-level supervisors assigned to ensure work was performed.

Leadership identified that poor work was being performed during these shifts as early as 2021. They attempted to make corrections by communicating expectations for the shifts and indicating that officers' work needed to improve. Their communications appeared ineffective, as leaders repeated calls for improved work performance multiple times. Leadership was aware of these performance issues several months prior to the department receiving allegations of falsification. If leadership had established better supervisory controls, the opportunity for falsification might have decreased, and the department might have detected it more quickly.



Multiple officers described that it was culturally acceptable to leave patrol shifts early and assumed that principle applied to homeless overtime shifts.

When questioned regarding timecard discrepancies, some officers described a cultural acceptance with leaving shifts early. However, none of these officers could identify a specific person who told them about this practice. This practice violates the department's policy that officers should not leave early or arrive late without permission.²⁵ Some officers also stated they believed they could record overtime worked if they were simply within the city limits. This practice is

contrary to the shift's description, which states, "Officers are expected to establish a police presence and conduct enforcement in the designated areas." Yet, some officers were still reporting that they worked the whole shift, even when they left early or arrived late. Ultimately, the department paid funds for work not performed.

²⁵ SLCPD Policy Manual 1008.4.



The Department Investigated Only One Month of Discrepancies

The department's internal affairs unit received a complaint in September 2023 about officers submitting false or inaccurate timecards during October 2022. The unit subsequently compared timecard and vehicle GPS data for October 2022 only. They found timecard discrepancies for 22 out of the 62 officers who participated in homeless overtime shifts that month. The discrepancies included:

- Leaving shifts early
- Arriving to shifts late
- Missing shifts completely
- Being outside designated enforcement areas
- Spending shift time at police headquarters

None of these officers were placed on administrative leave, despite its widespread use as described in Chapter 1, until after the new chief's tenure began.²⁶ Discipline for officers ranged from informal caution to days off without pay. None of these cases were referred for screening of criminal charges, and no efforts appeared to have been made to recoup the lost funds.

Several stakeholders expressed confusion about why the department only investigated one month of discrepancies. This limited scope hindered the department's ability to understand the full extent of timecard discrepancies and take appropriate disciplinary or corrective action. We attempted to determine why the department stopped the investigation after a review of only one month. Internal affairs leadership explained they only have authority to investigate the timeframe in the specific complaint. However, they noted that department leadership could have authorized them to expand the investigation. This authorization apparently did not occur.

We expanded the department's investigation to gauge the extent of this issue. Our analysis found similar discrepancies in the months surrounding the one investigated previously, confirming that timecard issues spanned a longer timeframe than the single month investigated by the department.

The following figure shows a brief timeline of the events around the SLCPD's limited internal investigation.

²⁶ Five officers were later suspended by Utah POST for these discrepancies and were subsequently placed on administrative leave by the new chief.



While the officers who falsified their timecards bear primary responsibility, prior leadership failed to adequately manage the shift’s risks or ensure that assigned duties were properly fulfilled. The lack of oversight for homeless overtime shifts highlights a gap in leadership accountability. Although our review focused on this specific shift due to the timecard discrepancies, we are concerned that similar oversight weaknesses could be present in other shifts or areas of police operations. We are encouraged, however, by the actions taken by the new chief of police and Utah POST to address these issues. Even so, to restore public trust and ensure accountability, we recommend that leadership implement robust oversight mechanisms across all overtime shifts and conduct periodic reviews to detect and deter future misconduct.

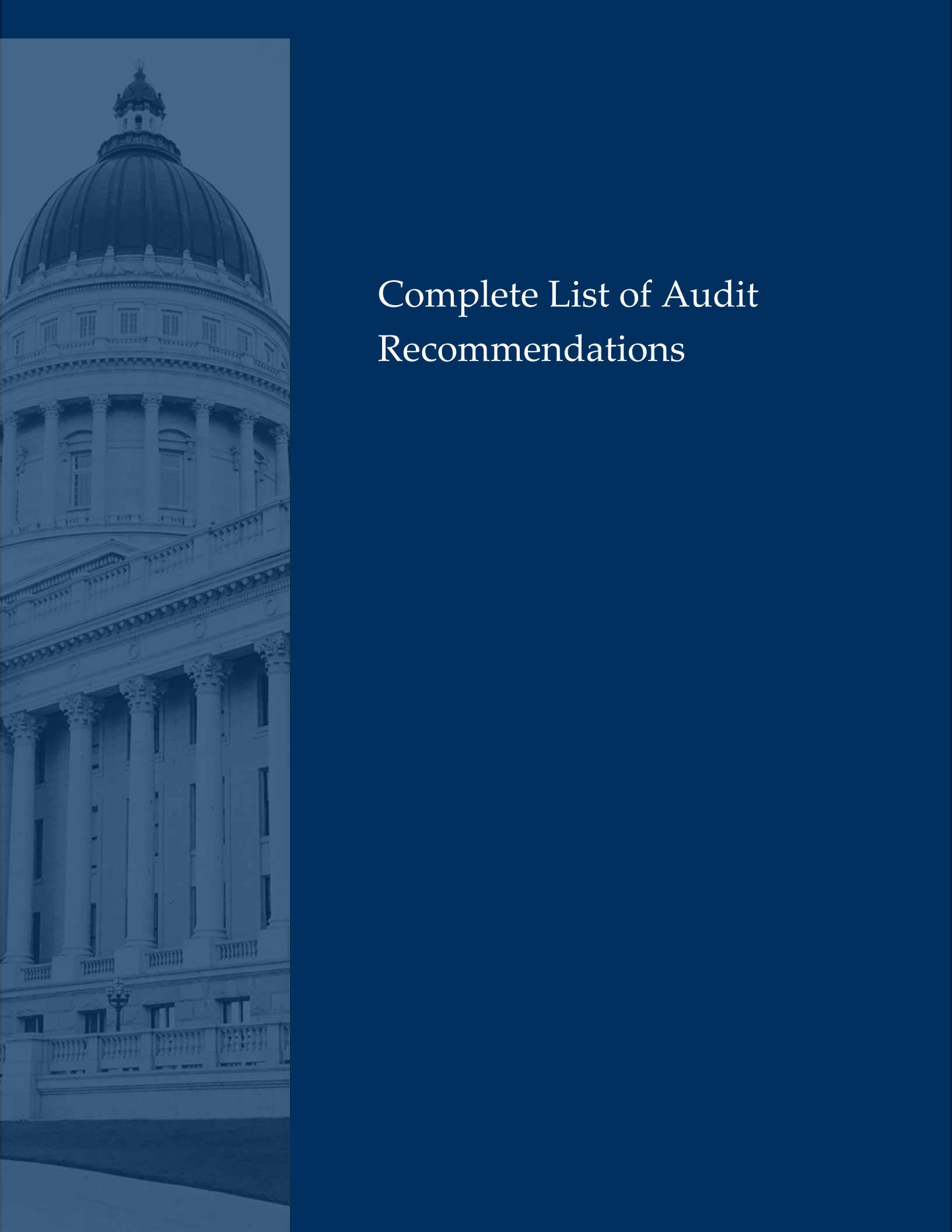
RECOMMENDATION 3.1

The Salt Lake City Police Department’s executive leadership should proactively ensure all overtime shifts have adequate supervision. This supervision should include sufficient staffing of supervisors and regular monitoring of performance by command staff. These practices should ensure officers are held accountable for performing the work they are compensated for.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2

Salt Lake City Police Department leadership who oversee homeless overtime shifts should implement accountability mechanisms to ensure these shifts achieve their intended outcomes. These mechanisms should include establishing adequate supervision, actively monitoring officer performance, and enforcing compliance with shift expectations. Strengthening oversight will help prevent future misconduct and improve the effectiveness of these operations.





Complete List of Audit Recommendations





Complete List of Audit Recommendations

This report made the following eight recommendations. The numbering convention assigned to each recommendation consists of its chapter followed by a period and recommendation number within that chapter.

Recommendation 1.1

Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should limit use of administrative leave to circumstances listed in internal policy. Use of leave should be accompanied by consistent record keeping that includes the reasons leave was used in each case. These practices promote accountability and equitable treatment across all staff.

Recommendation 1.2

Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should follow the chain-of-command structure to be in line with its policy. Leadership should ensure that staff have clear and identifiable roles for command to promote effective communication, which should help rebuild trust within the department.

Recommendation 1.3

Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should consider the merits of an internal audit function. The inclusion of an audit function could identify inefficiencies, ensure compliance, and improve the department's performance.

Recommendation 1.4

Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should take an active role in setting, managing, and revising department policy on a continual basis. This process should include ensuring policies are updated promptly and staff are held accountable for understanding them. An increased focus on department policy should help ensure leadership's expectations are effectively communicated and understood.

Recommendation 2.1

The Salt Lake City Police Department should develop and implement a strategic plan that defines organizational objectives, sets a clear direction, and includes mechanisms to evaluate progress toward its goals. Senior leaders should ensure this process results in stronger department unity and greater alignment.

Recommendation 2.2

Senior leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should establish and clearly communicate department goals with specific measurements that are tied to a newly created strategic plan. These goals should assist leaders in accurately measuring the department's performance and provide enhanced accountability to the community.

(Continued on the Next Page)

Recommendation 3.1

Executive leadership the Salt Lake City Police Department should proactively ensure all overtime shifts have adequate supervision. This supervision should include sufficient staffing of supervisors and regular monitoring of performance by command staff. These practices should ensure officers are held accountable for performing the work they are compensated for.

Recommendation 3.2

Leadership of the Salt Lake Police Department who oversee homeless overtime shifts should implement accountability mechanisms to ensure these shifts achieve their intended outcomes. These mechanisms should include establishing adequate supervision, actively monitoring officer performance, and enforcing compliance with shift expectations. Strengthening oversight will help prevent future misconduct and improve the effectiveness of these operations.



Appendix

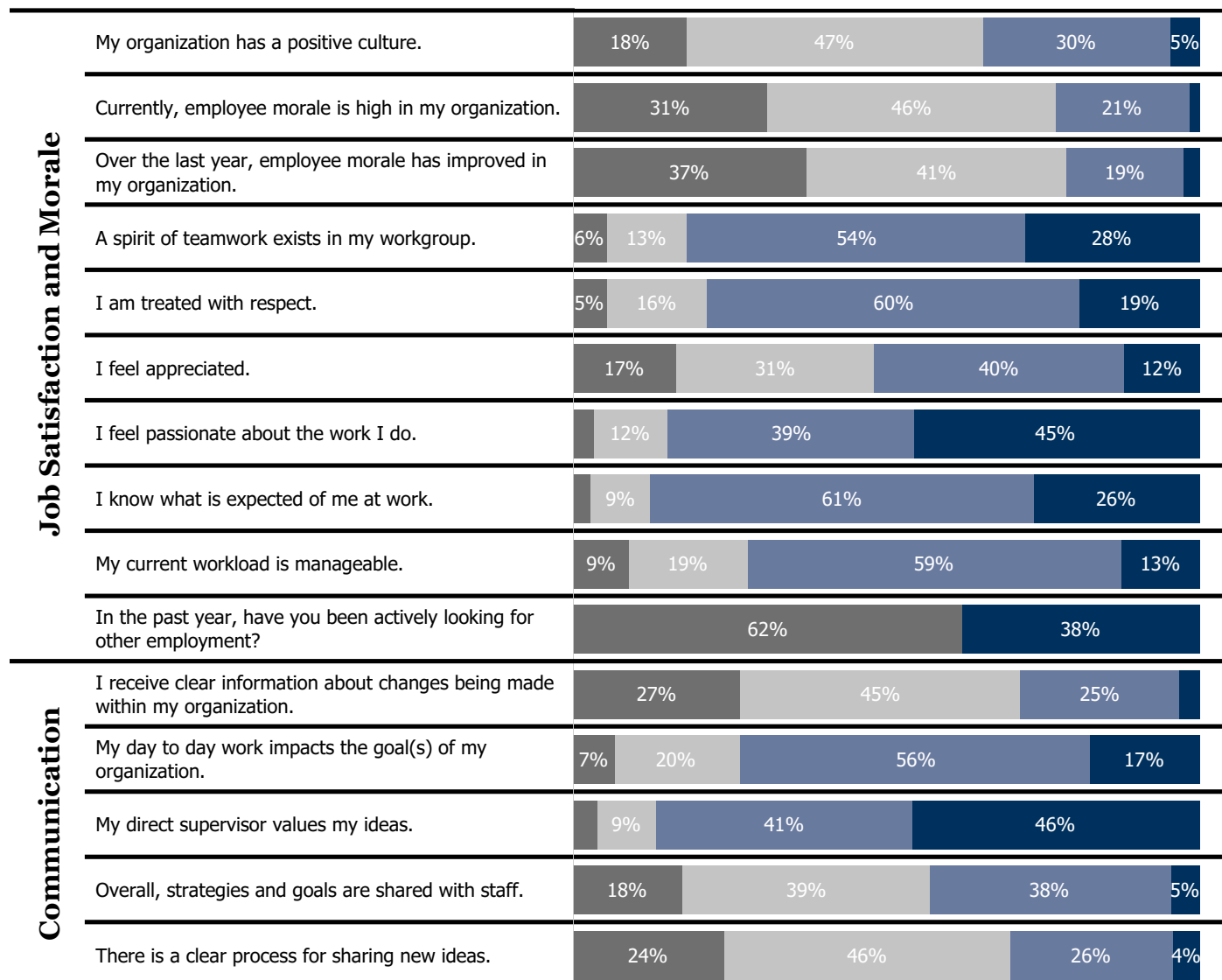


A. Salt Lake City Police Department Culture Survey



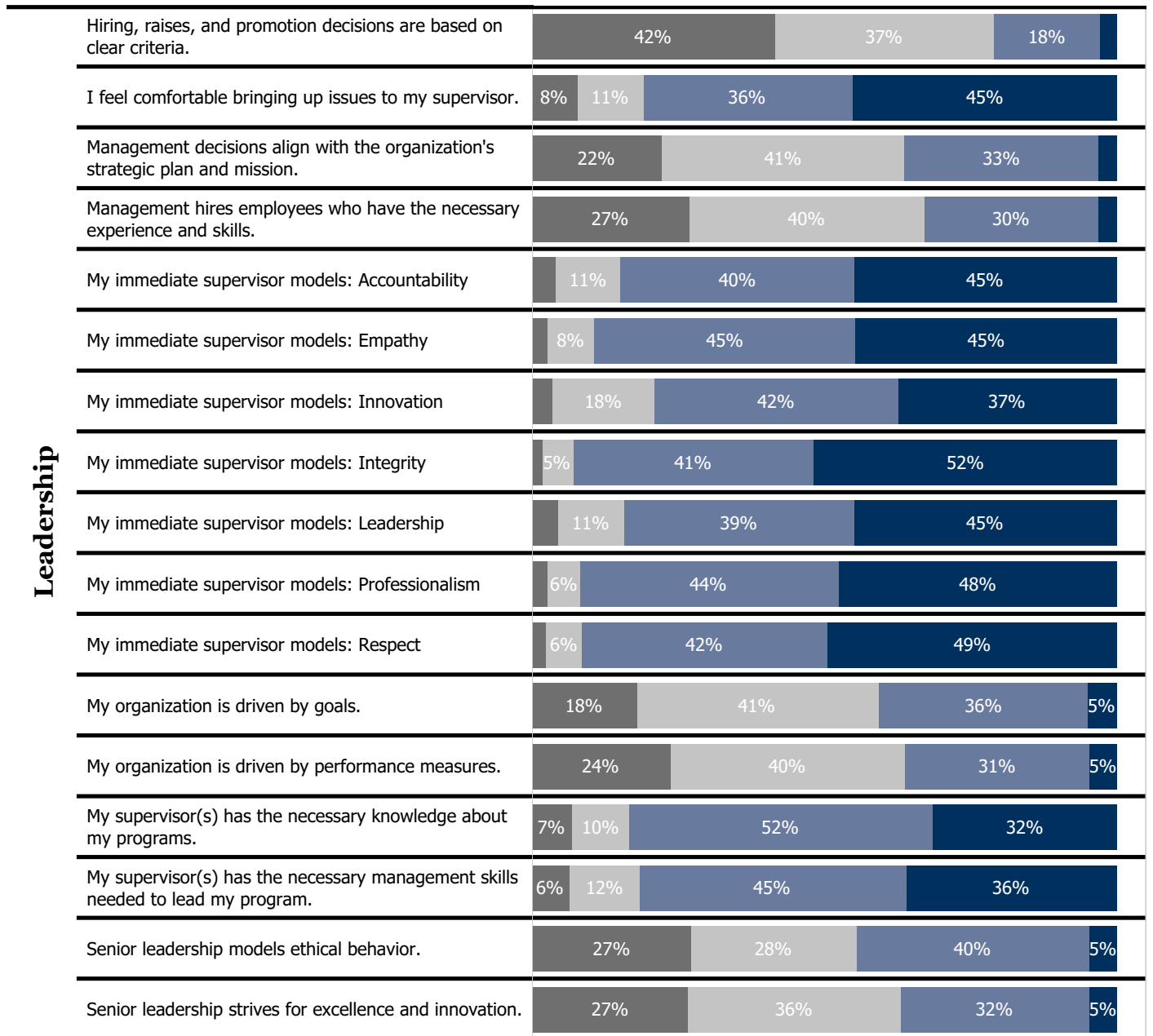
Survey Invitations - 758
 Number of Responses - 468
 Response Rate - 62%

How likely would you be to recommend your organization to someone seeking employment? (with 0 being extremely unlikely and 10 being extremely likely)



Legend

No		Yes	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree



Legend

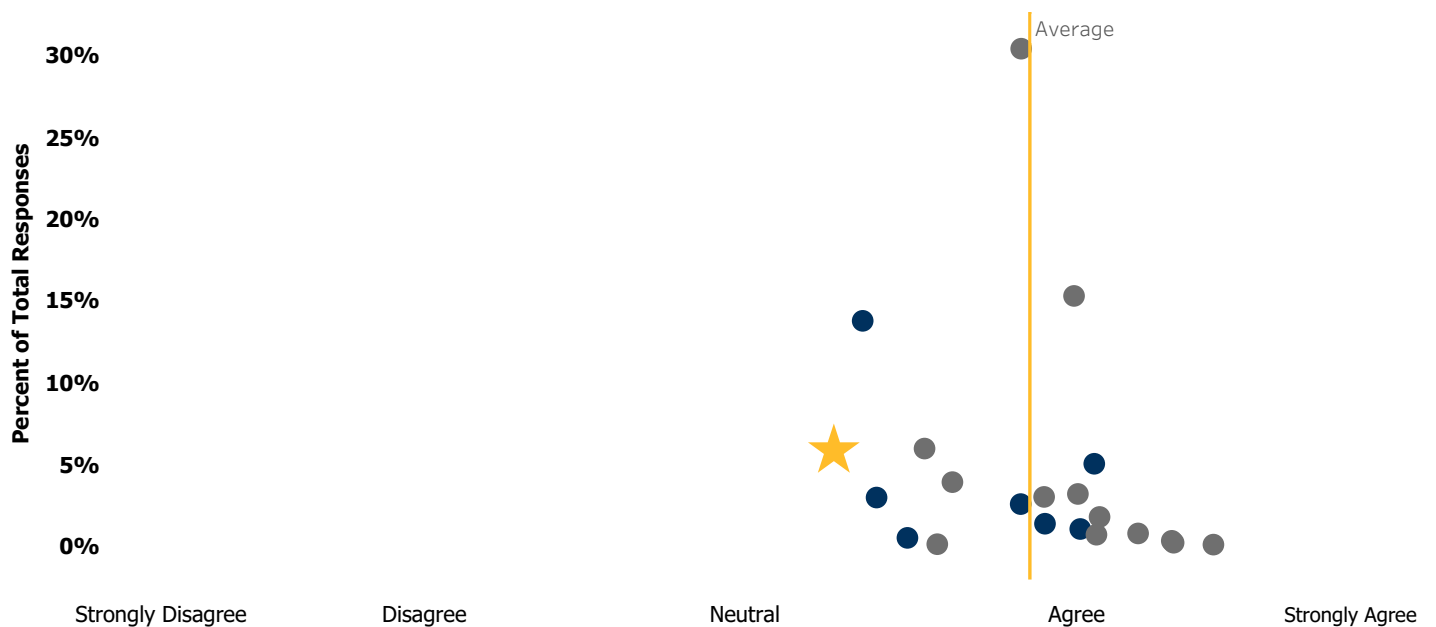
No		Yes	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Professional Behavior	Are you aware of the procedure for filing grievances (i.e. complaints that could include violations of policy, mistreatment, etc.)?	33%	67%
	To the best of my knowledge, senior leadership is held accountable when they behave inappropriately.	37%	28% 31%
	To the best of my knowledge, staff are held accountable when they behave inappropriately.	15%	27% 50% 8%
	To the best of my knowledge, supervisors and managers are held accountable when they behave inappropriately.	19%	32% 44% 6%
Professional Development	Do you receive a performance evaluation annually?	7%	93%
	I am able to get the training I need to do my job effectively.	15%	29% 48% 8%
	I am given opportunities to innovate to improve current practices inside my organization.	19%	40% 35% 6%
	I am provided with the appropriate resources to complete my job duties.	13%	26% 52% 8%
	I am given feedback from my supervisor on a regular basis to help improve my job performance.	7%	20% 55% 18%
	I find my performance evaluation feedback valuable	13%	25% 50% 12%
	Mistakes are met with corrective, rather than punitive, action.	19%	27% 46% 8%
	My organization is dedicated to my professional development.	23%	35% 36% 6%
	Training is ongoing.	8%	25% 57% 10%

Legend

No		Yes	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Overall Survey Score







Agency Response Plan





POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dear Legislative Audit Team,

Thank you for taking the time to thoroughly review the practices and procedures of our department. We appreciate the time and effort it took to provide insight and recommendations. We are currently in the process of redefining our mission, vision and values for the department with feedback from our staff. Our effort includes three guiding pillars—Our People, Our Community, Our Future leading to a long-term strategic plan to guide our actions moving forward. We see this audit as a valuable tool to shape that process as we work together to protect and serve Utah's capital city. We concur with many of the findings and have already started implementing solutions. Below, you will find how we are working toward the recommendations.

Recommendation 1.1 Executive leadership should limit use of administrative leave to circumstances listed in internal policy. Use of leave should be accompanied by consistent record keeping that includes the reasons leave was used in each case. These practices promote accountability and equitable treatment across all staff.

The Salt Lake City Police Department (SLCPD) has implemented several measures to ensure the appropriate and consistent use of administrative leave. The department is nearing the final stages of revising its Internal Affairs policies and procedures to reflect these improvements.

Under the updated guidelines, administrative leave will be reserved for situations where it is clearly necessary and appropriate. Lower-level complaints will be addressed at the division level through the employee's chain of command, ensuring that minor issues are resolved promptly and at the most appropriate supervisory level. More serious incidents or allegations will be investigated by the Professional Standards Division, as authorized by command staff.

The purpose of these changes is to enhance timeliness, consistency, and fairness in the handling of policy violations, while ensuring that each case is addressed at the proper level of oversight.

In addition, before placing any officer on administrative leave, the department will first evaluate the feasibility of assigning modified or alternative duties. This approach allows employees to continue contributing to departmental operations whenever possible while still supporting the integrity of ongoing investigations.

Professional Standards will focus on conducting thorough fact-finding investigations but will no longer be responsible for determining the final outcome of complaints. Instead, a designated leadership advisory group will review each case, issue the official findings and determine any corrective actions when necessary. This structure is designed to promote fairness, consistency, and transparency in the complaint-review process.



POLICE DEPARTMENT

Responsible for implementation: Deputy Chief Alex Garcia

Estimated completion: Third Quarter 2026

Recommendation 1.2 Police executive leadership should follow the chain-of-command structure to be in line with its policy. Leadership should ensure that staff have clear and identifiable roles for command to promote effective communication, which should help rebuild trust within the department.

The department will reinforce adherence to the chain of command for all communication, policy changes, and organizational decision-making. Under the direction of the Chief of Police, supervisors will receive clear guidance that outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee. This approach is intended to promote consistent messaging, ensure accountability, and maintain transparent communication both upward and downward throughout the organization. By prioritizing structured and efficient communication, the department will ensure that all personnel understand their duties and remain informed about operational expectations.

To support these improvements, the department has restructured its leadership meeting format to increase engagement and involvement from sworn command staff. This enhanced participation strengthens their role in guiding day-to-day operations and fosters more effective communication with line-level personnel. At the same time, the department will continue to rely on the expertise of its civilian advisors, ensuring they maintain a vital role in providing subject-matter guidance within their specialized areas.

Responsible for implementation: Chief Brian Redd

Estimated completion: Structural adjustments have already occurred with more internal communication restructuring to be complete by Second Quarter 2026.

Recommendation 1.3 Executive leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should consider the merits of an internal audit function. The inclusion of an audit function could identify inefficiencies, ensure compliance, and improve the department's performance.

The newly established administrative team has reached a consensus that creating an internal auditor position is essential for strengthening oversight and improving organizational accountability. We are currently developing the structure and responsibilities of this role, with plans to have the position fully implemented and functioning by early 2026.

Responsible for implementation: Chief Brian Redd



POLICE DEPARTMENT

Estimated completion: Second Quarter 2026

Recommendation 1.4 Police executive leadership should take an active role in setting, managing, and revising department policy on a continual basis. This process should include ensuring policies are updated promptly and staff are held accountable for understanding them. An increased focus on department policy should help ensure leadership's expectations are effectively communicated and understood.

A Policy Committee has been established by command staff to provide structured oversight of all departmental policy development, review, and revision. The committee will meet on a biweekly basis—or more frequently when circumstances require—to ensure that policy updates are evaluated in a timely, consistent, and comprehensive manner.

Following each Policy Committee meeting, all recommended revisions will be forwarded to the Chief's Office for consideration during a formal Policy Approval Meeting. During this meeting, command leadership will review the proposed changes, authorize necessary revisions, and finalize all policy updates. Once a policy receives final approval, implementation will begin immediately. Supervisors will be responsible for ensuring that all affected personnel receive prompt notification of the changes and complete any associated training requirements. This process is designed to maintain organizational readiness and ensure that all employees remain aligned with current standards and expectations.

To further strengthen oversight and enhance coordination, the department has reassigned the policy function to the Professional Standards Bureau. Additionally, we are assessing the feasibility of implementing training bulletins or similar communication tools to provide clearer, more efficient dissemination of policy updates across the department. This effort aims to ensure that information reaches personnel quickly, is easily understood, and supports consistent compliance with updated policy guidance.

Responsible for implementation: Deputy Chief Alex Garcia

Estimated completion: Will occur on an ongoing basis, but auditor expected to be hired by Second Quarter 2026 and will be given the task to assess policy needs.

Finding 1.2 A Coordinated Approach Between the Mayor and Police Chief is Necessary for Effective Public Safety.



POLICE DEPARTMENT

While the audit did not make a formal recommendation on this finding, the department and Mayor's Office agree that a coordinated approach is critical for effective public safety. We do not dispute that officers could have been confused about when and how to issue citations to people who were violating the City's camping ordinances, given the complexity of surrounding case law on the issue at the time. Moving forward the mayor is leading efforts on a Public Safety plan and coordinating regularly with the Chief. The department is also developing a long-term strategic plan that will incorporate coordinated efforts into the future. In addition, given recent case law updates providing clarification we anticipate stronger coordination from here on out.

Recommendation 2.1 The Salt Lake City Police Department should develop and implement a strategic plan that defines organizational objectives, sets a clear direction, and includes mechanisms to evaluate progress toward its goals. Senior leaders should ensure this process results in stronger department unity and greater alignment.

The department is in the final stages of refining our new Mission, Vision, and Values, which will serve as the foundation for our future direction. As part of this effort, we are also establishing a set of strategic pillars that will guide the development of a comprehensive long-term strategic plan. These pillars will help ensure that our priorities, decisions, and initiatives remain aligned with the core principles that define the organization.

The strategic plan will outline a clear path forward, articulate measurable objectives, and include meaningful mechanisms to assess progress toward our goals. This approach will allow us to evaluate our performance over time and make informed adjustments as needed.

Formal development of the strategic plan is scheduled to begin in January 2026.

Responsible for implementation: Chief of Staff Glen Mills

Expected completion: The process is underway and expected to be complete by Second Quarter 2026.

Recommendation 2.2 Senior leadership of the Salt Lake City Police Department should establish and clearly communicate department goals with specific measurements that are tied to a newly created strategic plan. These goals should assist leaders in accurately measuring the department's performance and provide enhanced accountability to the community.

As previously noted, the department is actively engaged in redefining our Mission, Vision, and Values to more accurately reflect our organizational priorities and the evolving needs of the community. Included in this effort is the development of a set of strategic pillars that will form the foundation of a comprehensive long-term strategic plan intended to guide our actions and decision-making into the future.



POLICE DEPARTMENT

We agree with the assessment that the department maintains strong data systems and possesses significant opportunities to further drive operations through the analysis and strategic use of that data. To maximize these benefits, our data efforts must be fully aligned with our organizational objectives and clearly communicated to both our employees and the community.

Responsible for implementation: Chief of Staff Glen Mills

Expected completion: Third quarter 2026.

Call Response Times

Regarding call response times specifically, the department is reviewing how to improve response times for all priority areas. Equally important, we are committed to enhancing our communication to employees and the public so that progress, challenges, and expectations are transparent and well understood.

Staff Development, Training, and Retention

We share the assessment that investing in our personnel is a critical priority. The first pillar of our strategic plan—*Our People*—reflects this commitment: *Our people are our greatest strength, and we prioritize their wellness, professional development, safety, and shared values to create a thriving and resilient organization.*

To support this goal, the department recently allocated two additional FTEs to the Training Division, implemented first-line supervisor training, launched leadership forums, and implemented a comprehensive assessment of officer training needs. As part of our strategic plan, we will further prioritize staff development by establishing clear key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress and ensure accountability.

This strategic plan will establish clearly defined goals, measurable performance indicators, and clear expectations that provide employees with meaningful direction and support. These components are intended to ensure that personnel at all levels understand the department's strategic priorities and have the structure and guidance necessary to align their daily responsibilities with long-term organizational objectives.

Recommendation 3.1 Executive leadership the Salt Lake City Police Department should proactively ensure all overtime shifts have adequate supervision. This supervision should include sufficient staffing of supervisors and regular monitoring of performance by command staff. These practices should ensure officers are held accountable for performing the work they are compensated for.



POLICE DEPARTMENT

A Lieutenant has been assigned to oversee the department's part-time Police Officer Special Employment (POSE) program. Each part-time work assignment has a designated department point of contact as well as a business owner or representative at the worksite.

Currently, the Lieutenant receives a monthly report listing any shifts that officers signed up for but did not work. They then follow up with the assigned officers to determine the reasons for the missed shifts.

Under existing SLCPD policy, officers working a part-time shift must either log the assignment in the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) or contact dispatch directly. When doing so, they are required to provide their name, the worksite address, and the scheduled hours of the shift.

Beginning in November 2025, patrol watch commanders have access to a daily list identifying all officers working POSE assignments, including their assigned locations and scheduled hours, improving both efficiency and oversight.

Responsible for implementation: Deputy Chief Brandon Christiansen

Expected completion: First quarter 2026.

Recommendation 3.2 Leadership of the Salt Lake Police Department who oversee homeless overtime shifts should implement accountability mechanisms to ensure these shifts achieve their intended outcomes. These mechanisms should include establishing adequate supervision, actively monitoring officer performance, and enforcing compliance with shift expectations. Strengthening oversight will help prevent future misconduct and improve the effectiveness of these operations.

To enhance and ensure adequate supervision, SLCPD has added a full-time Mitigation Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Commander. In addition, Watch Command, Patrol Sergeants, Bike Sergeants, and the three Homeless Resource Sergeants have been given clear expectations and direction regarding the supervision of mitigation work during daily shifts—particularly during periods when the Community Impact Division (CID) administration is not on duty. At all times, a minimum of two field Sergeants and one on-duty Watch Commander will be available to provide oversight.

Clear expectations, directions, and instructions have now been integrated into the SLCPD POSE part-time sign-up system, ensuring that officers understand their responsibilities before accepting a mitigation shift. This update was completed in November 2025 and is intended to create greater consistency in how mitigation work is carried out across the department.

Historically, mitigation shifts were not required to be highly responsive to CAD calls and were instead primarily assigned to general areas to conduct mitigation activities. While this approach allowed officers to focus on location-based problem solving, it also resulted in reduced responsiveness to homeless- and



POLICE DEPARTMENT

transient-related calls for service routed through 911. To address this gap and increase operational accountability, the department has revised expectations for mitigation shifts to include timely response to these calls.

Under the updated model, officers working mitigation shifts are now directed to actively respond to homeless- and transient-related CAD calls. Additionally, watch commanders will have the ability to provide more direct guidance and oversight during these shifts, strengthening real-time decision-making and improving supervision.

A weekly random audit process was implemented on September 15, 2025, to strengthen oversight and accountability within mitigation operations. This audit is conducted under the direction of the Community Impact Division (CID) Lieutenant responsible for supervising mitigation shifts, ensuring that evaluation and monitoring efforts remain consistent and unbiased. The audits will occur frequently and are intended to reinforce operational expectations, verify that assigned shifts are being appropriately staffed and completed, and confirm that officers are maintaining a productive and professional workflow. Through this ongoing process, leadership can more effectively identify areas of success, address emerging concerns, and support continued improvement across mitigation shifts.

Instances in which an officer is found to have worked less than expected will be addressed directly by CID leadership. If an officer repeatedly fails to meet the required work standards, they may be deemed ineligible to continue working mitigation shifts.

Historically, all officer's shift hours have been pre-loaded into Telestaff, requiring them to manually subtract any time taken off. This process has created challenges, reduced accuracy, and limited the ability to verify actual hours worked. To improve accountability and ensure accurate reporting, the department is implementing a new requirement for officers to enter the exact hours worked for every shift including mitigation shifts directly into Telestaff. This change will move the system from an assumption-based model to a documented, officer-reported model, increasing transparency and enabling more effective oversight.

A pilot program is currently underway to test the updated process, with a full department-wide rollout scheduled for early 2026. This daily reporting requirement will provide clearer documentation, strengthen accountability, and support more accurate management of mitigation operations.

Responsible for implementation: Deputy Chief Brandon Christiansen

Expected completion: First quarter 2026.

Thank you again for your thorough review of the policies and practices of the Salt Lake City Police Department, and for the opportunity to respond to the Findings and Recommendations. We look

ERIN MENDENHALL
Mayor



POLICE DEPARTMENT

BRIAN REDD
Chief of Police

forward to attending the Legislative Audit Committee meeting next week. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns in the meantime.

Sincerely,

Erin Mendenhall, Salt Lake City Mayor

Brian Redd, Chief of Police

LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL



1975 - 2025



THE MISSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL IS TO

AUDIT · LEAD · ACHIEVE

WE HELP ORGANIZATIONS IMPROVE
