

Objectives & Scope

The objectives and scope of this audit are to determine:

If Social Workers (BSW) can perform tasks currently performed by sworn Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Officers on a temporary or long-term basis to:

A) alleviate the police staffing shortage

B) better manage Charlotte's homeless population and citizens with mental illnesses in an effort to reduce crime

Methodology

The following methodologies should be used to meet the objectives:

- *Reviewing previous City of Charlotte studies and Council reports on police staffing, Community-Oriented Policing, and civilianization of police positions*
- *Reviewing studies and audits from other jurisdictions on these topics*
- *Interviewing staff in the Police Department, Human Resources, Budget Office, and City Manager's Office*
- *Reviewing budget documents and payroll/personnel reports*
- *Surveying and interviewing Police Department and Human Resources representatives in other jurisdictions*
- *Reviewing job classification descriptions for relevant positions in the City of Charlotte and in other jurisdictions*
- *Reviewing information from BLET Training academies*
- *Reviewing internal Police Department documents such as relevant General Orders, Field Training Manuals and internal memoranda*
- *Reviewing of CMPD arrest and public contact statistics for comparative analysis*

Background

Charlotte's city leaders have stated explicit concern over CMPD staffing shortages.

As of April 2020, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) has over 150 officer vacancies. Over the past several years, CMPD has faced staffing shortcomings relative to Charlotte's rapid growth and departmental retirings. In an attempt to overcome staffing shortages and to help reduce crime, the Safe Communities Committee (SCC) is providing a probable solution to fill sworn CMPD vacancies with Social Workers (BSW).

The 150 vacancies represent roughly 8% of CMPD's needed staffing requirements.¹

Per the National Institute of Health (NIH) *"Medium and large police departments estimate that 10% of their contacts with the public involve persons with mental illness."*²

Mental illness directly relates to placing law enforcement into situations where violence is a highly probable outcome. *"Numbering fewer than 1 in 50 U.S. adults, individuals with untreated severe mental illness are involved in at least 1 in 4 and as many as half of all fatal police shootings."*³

Would allowing a BSW to handle the public contacts involving the mentally ill and homeless population show impact towards lowering crime?

Will the infusion of BSWs within the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department have an impact on policing culture?

Will there be budgeting implications? The average CMPD officer salary is \$49K. In North Carolina the average BSW salary is \$55K. Would the lowering of equipment and weaponry needs and costs offset the increased salary position?

*Audit timeframe not to exceed 24 months.

¹ "Charlotte city leaders address shortage of officers on police force." report by WSOC [LINK](#)

² "Improving police response to persons with mental illness: A Multi-level conceptualization of CIT" NIHMSID: NIHMS69181 [LINK](#)

³ "People with Untreated Mental Illness 16 Times More Likely to Be Killed By Law Enforcement" Treatment Advocacy Center [LINK](#)