

Police Department

LOB #202:

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION BUREAU, MAJOR CRIMES

Purpose

The purpose of the Major Crimes Division is to centralize the investigative entity of the Criminal Investigations Bureau that is responsible to conduct criminal investigations of all major crimes including murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, motor vehicle theft, financial crimes, fugitives from justice, and cases involving children that occur in Fairfax County. The vast majority of the Division's cases are referred to the Major Crimes Detectives from patrol officers, while others are generated by citizens and outside law enforcement agencies. Detectives also initiate cases as appropriate during the course of ongoing criminal investigations. Major Crimes Detectives have total responsibility for investigating these cases and working with the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office to prosecute serious criminal offenders.

Description

The Major Crimes Division of the Criminal Investigations Bureau is composed of ten specialized investigative units. Each unit within the division contains a squad of detectives and a first line supervisor. Squad members receive highly specialized training to develop their expertise and mandated certifications in their respective investigative fields. These squads include Homicide, Cold Case, Sex Crimes, Robbery, Child Abuse, Computer Forensics, Child Exploitation, Financial Crimes, Auto Theft, and the Fugitive Squad. Each of the ten squads receives support for their victims of crime by the Victim Services Section that is additionally housed within the Major Crimes Division.

Benefits

The Major Crimes Division is responsible to investigate the most serious criminal offenses against persons that occur in Fairfax County. In an effort to ensure investigations of these crimes are consistently conducted by highly trained and specialized detectives, the Major Crimes Division was created as a centrally located investigative entity within the police department staffed with highly trained detectives. These detectives are responsible to investigate all major cases that occur across the County, regardless of the geographic area of the County in which they occur. The development of specialized detectives working from a centralized location provides superior customer service and reflects sound management of resources to ensure the needs of both crime victims and community members are met. The direct byproduct of deploying the best detectives to investigate the most serious offenses is a direct reflection of the decreasing crime rate that is enjoyed by all of the counties citizens and visitors. The primary benefit provided by the Major Crimes Division to the community is the feeling of safety and security afforded by the knowledge that serious criminal offenses are being thoroughly investigated and criminals are being held accountable. Providing community members with an overall sense of safety and security facilitates engagement of community members, promotes the county economy, and assures community members have desirable places to live, work, shop, play, and grow old.

Mandates

The Major Crimes Division is mandated to enforce and investigate selected laws of the Code of Virginia and Fairfax County Code.

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Trends and Challenges

Currently, one of the greatest challenges facing the Major Crimes Division is the increased caseload of the Computer Forensics Unit. This occurrence is directly attributed to the technological improvements that have been made concerning the collection and storage of electronic data. For example, currently 64 percent of U.S. adults own a smartphone which has considerably increased from just 35 percent in 2011. In consideration of this fact, American life is dominated by talking, texting, e-mailing, social networking, taking photographs or videos all of which create electronic evidence critical to detectives in solving crime. Because the staffing of the Computer Forensic Unit has not paralleled the advances made in technology, evidence is not being processed and crimes are not being solved. Currently, the backlog in computer evidence has become so great that many detectives don't bother to submit evidence knowing that it will not be processed in a reasonable amount of time to either solve crime or prosecute offenders. Staffing in the Computer Forensics Unit has not increased in sixteen years, when it was increased from two detectives to its current staff of three detectives.

In addition to the Major Crimes Division's current needs in Computer Forensics, equally important and also increasing exponentially, is the reported number of financial crimes that are being reported for investigation and processing. Currently, the Financial Crimes Section experiences the largest caseload in the Major Crimes Division with an average of approximately 1,000 cases per year. As financial crimes (check frauds, credit card frauds, construction frauds, embezzlements, false pretenses, and identity theft cases) continue to increase in frequency, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that staffing and span of control of detectives/investigators maintains pace with the continuing complex financial schemes that are victimizing the citizens of the county. Currently, the Financial Crimes Section is staffed with twelve detectives, three civilian investigators (working with the Financial Crimes Online Reporting (FiCOR) system), and one supervisor.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #202: Criminal Investigation Bureau, Major Crimes			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$9,334,101	\$9,810,942	\$9,746,899
Operating Expenses	153,702	288,345	205,720
Total Expenditures	\$9,487,803	\$10,099,287	\$9,952,619
General Fund Revenue	\$91,843	\$387,262	\$23,000
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$9,395,960	\$9,712,025	\$9,929,619
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	97 / 97	100 / 100	101 / 101
Total Positions	97 / 97	100 / 100	101 / 101

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	CY 2013 Actual	CY 2014 Actual	CY 2015 Estimate	CY 2016 Estimate	CY 2017 Estimate
Major Crimes Division - Number of Cases Assigned	5,918	5,239	4,476	5,211	5,211
Major Crimes Division - Number of Cases Cleared	3,622	3,201	3,307	3,377	3,377
Murder Cases - Number of Cases Investigated	8	10	11	11	11
Murder Cases - Number of Cases Cleared	8	7	10	10	10
Rape Cases - Number of Cases Investigated	114	103	125	114	114
Rape Cases - Number of Cases Cleared	88	74	96	86	86
Robbery Cases - Number of Cases Investigated	178	164	178	178	178
Robbery Cases - Number of Cases Cleared	53	57	69	60	60
Financial Crimes - Number of Cases Assigned to Detectives	1,028	1,187	933	1,049	1,049
Financial Crimes - Number of Cases Assigned to Detectives	351	280	266	299	299
Computer Forensics - Number of Cases Assigned	138	147	178	154	154
Computer Forensics - Average Days to Complete Case	75	87	89	84	84
Computer Forensics - Number of Requests Pending at End of Year	74	51	59	61	61

As shown in the metrics, the numbers of cases investigated for the crimes of murder, rape, and robbery have remained relatively static. Consequently, the number of detectives assigned to these investigative squads and case load remains sufficient and acceptable to achieve the desired objectives pertaining to case closures. By contrast, Financial Crimes and Computer Forensics is trending in the opposite direction. Caseloads in both the Financial Crimes and Computer Forensics investigative sections have only increased resulting in declining closure rates and increased wait times for computer evidence to be analyzed. The cause of both these occurrences is the Major Crimes Division's lack of response and ability to keep pace with modern technology.

In an effort to address these issues, the current staffing of both the Computer Forensics Section and the Financial Crimes Section must be examined. Currently, the Computer Forensic Section is staffed by three detectives that are tasked to collect and examine all electronic evidence requests that are made of them by the agency's detectives, investigators, and patrol officers. The currently authorized staffing of the Computer Forensic Section has not changed in sixteen years. In consideration to the advances in technology, the staffing of this section does not reflect the obvious need. To accomplish this, staffing of the Computer Forensic Section clearly needs increased in an effort to both decrease caseload and allow detectives the time to conduct the required in-depth analysis of the ever increasing complexity of data that is currently being stored on the smallest of electronic devices.

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Currently, the majority of the cases investigated by the detectives of the Financial Crime Section are being submitted to the police department via the Financial Crimes Online Reporting (FiCOR) system. Following submission of these electronic cases, non-sworn FiCOR civilian investigators evaluate and prioritize cases by working with victims to provide them relief and resolution to the ever increasing frequency of check frauds, credit card frauds, construction frauds, embezzlements, false pretenses, and identity theft cases that are plaguing the citizens of the county. While the majority of these cases do not have viable investigative leads for detectives to pursue, FiCOR investigators provide assistance and important information to victims in an effort to restore their credit ratings and recover lost funds. As the frequencies of these cases have continued to increase, staffing levels of FiCOR investigators has not kept pace. Consequently, victims are not being contacted for several days and cases are not being evaluated for assignment to detectives in a timely manner. Until this situation is addressed, the current level of customer service will continue to degrade as reflected and predicted in the attached Performance Measures.

To address these identified deficiencies, both the Financial Crimes and Computer Forensic Sections require direct mitigation in the form of increased staffing to ensure customer service of crime victims is maintained and crimes are closed. Detailed staffing request to address these issues are currently included in the FY 2016-FY 2020 Public Safety Staffing Plan.