



Office of the
Auditor General
City of Ottawa

Ottawa Police Service Audit of Staffing



SEPTEMBER 2025

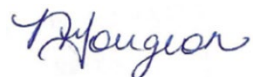
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Acknowledgement

The team responsible for this audit was comprised of Atul Arora and Siam Rahman from the Office of the Auditor General and independent policing subject matter experts from TNT Justice Consultants (external consultants), under the supervision Joanne Gorenstein, Deputy Auditor General and my direction. My colleagues and I would like to thank those who contributed to this audit.

Respectfully,



Nathalie Gougeon, CPA, CA, CIA, CRMA, B. Comm
Auditor General

Introduction

On October 23, 2023, the Ottawa Police Service Board (OPSB) approved a motion inviting the Auditor General to assess the risks and opportunities within the Ottawa Police Service (OPS or the Service) to improve efficiency. This led to the development of the Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) 2024-2027 Audit Work Plan for OPS.

The Audit of Staffing was included in the OAG's 2024-2027 Audit Work Plan for OPS, approved by the OPSB on May 27, 2024.

Background/Context

OPS provides law enforcement and public safety services to the city of Ottawa (Ottawa), serving over one million residents. With a workforce of approximately 2,150 employees - 1,494 sworn officers and 656 civilians - OPS is structured into three main Commands:

1. Community Policing;
2. Intelligence, Information & Investigations; and
3. Corporate Support.

The **Community Policing Command** focuses on maintaining public safety through frontline policing (e.g., platoons, airport unit), neighbourhood policing (e.g., neighbourhood resource teams, community safety & wellbeing branch), and specialized policing (e.g., courts, custody & traffic, special events & paid duties). This command ensures a visible and responsive police presence in the community.

The **Intelligence, Information & Investigations Command** is responsible for major, frontline and specialized investigations, information services, intelligence services, and the communications branch. This command plays a critical role in solving complex crimes and managing information flow within OPS.

The **Corporate Support Command** plays an important role by providing administrative support in areas such as Finance, Information Technology, and Human Resources. These services are fundamental to the efficient operations of the entire organization.

Effective staffing is crucial to OPS's ability to fulfill its mandate and meet community needs. Notably, OPS's 2025 approved budget indicates that 85% (\$378.5M) of its funding is allocated to compensation, underscoring the central role of staffing in operations.

OPS faces several staffing challenges, including vacancies and recruitment difficulties, particularly in sworn and specialized civilian positions. These issues have, historically, led to staffing shortages, negative impacts on member wellness, and service gaps. As calls for service increase, crime becomes more complex, and demonstrations disrupt public

order, OPS struggles to meet current demand¹.

Key initiatives to address these challenges include the [Staffing Stabilization Strategy](#), [District Revitalization Project](#), and exploring alternative staffing models such as the increased use of Special Constables. These are briefly discussed below.

Staffing Stabilization Strategy

To address staffing challenges, OPS has developed a Staffing Stabilization Strategy (2024–2026), aimed at stabilizing staffing levels, improving member wellness, and ensuring adequate community policing. The strategy includes hiring sworn officers and civilian staff annually over the next three years, with a focus on attrition, stabilization, growth, and event response. The hiring targets under this strategy are adjusted quarterly based on factors such as actual retirements and resignations. The strategy is crucial to addressing ongoing staffing shortages and aligning with OPS's broader goals of enhancing public safety, supporting member well-being, and meeting strategic priorities.

District Revitalization Project

The District Revitalization Project aims to reshape the current deployment model by dividing Ottawa into four (4) districts. Each district will manage local policing resources (e.g., frontline, traffic, Neighbourhood Resource Team) while specialized units (e.g., forensics, marine, dive & trail) will be shared across all districts. The first phase of this project is set to launch in January 2027, with improvements and adjustments to follow over time, further impacting deployment in the future.

Alternative Staffing Project

The Alternate Staffing Project focuses on identifying areas where Special Constables can assist, and support sworn officers in their duties. Special Constables are civilian members who play an important role within OPS; they act as Peace Officers and have limited law enforcement powers. Special Constables can participate in frontline roles to enhance community safety and help relieve some workload strain from sworn officers. Historically, Special Constables have been used in roles such as cell-block transfers, court security, and liaison. However, due to the broadened authorities granted to Special Constables under the new [Community Safety and Policing Act](#) (CSPA), their responsibilities have recently expanded to include traffic services and the custody of individuals apprehended

¹ [2025 Draft Operating and Capital Budget Presentation \(November 13, 2024\)](#)
[2025 Draft Budget Book \(November 13, 2024\)](#)

² The latest collective agreement between Ottawa Police Association and Ottawa Police Services Board was ratified in December 2024.

under the *Mental Health Act* through the District Special Constable Pilot Project. The Alternate Staffing Project aims to build on this progress by exploring additional ways to leverage Special Constables, with potential areas under consideration including fraud investigations, the forensics unit, and warrant writing, among others. The first cohort of Special Constables for this program have been onboarded, and additional candidates are expected to be recruited later in 2025 and into 2026.

Audit Objective and Scope

The objective of this audit was to provide reasonable assurance that OPS has the appropriate staffing and deployment strategies, processes and resources to support the achievement of its service demands and operational needs, to ensure adequate and effective policing.

The scope of the audit included the following:

- Governance framework overseeing staffing and deployment, ensuring staffing data is accurate and updated to support informed decision-making.
- Efficiency of the recruitment process and the adequacy of officer training programs, ensuring alignment with staffing goals and compliance with the CSPA.
- How staffing levels and frontline deployment are monitored and adjusted, ensuring alignment with service demands and operational needs.

The audit focused on practices, policies, and data related to the fiscal years of 2023 and 2024.

Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for additional details on the objective, criteria, and approach to the audit. This audit was conducted in conformance with the Institute of Internal Auditors International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing².

Each finding in this report has been assigned a rating that prioritizes the associated remediation. Rating definitions are provided in [Appendix 2](#).

Conclusion

Effective staffing and deployment are critical for OPS to fulfill its mission to protect the safety and security of our communities. Recognizing that the achievement of this requires a qualified, dedicated and available sworn and civilian workforce, OPS continues to develop and implement strategies for sustainable staffing. As Ottawa continues to grow

² <https://www.theiia.org/globalassets/site/standards/mandatory-guidance/ippf/2017/ippf-standards-2017-english.pdf>.

and the complexity of policing increases, our audit has identified areas where additional focus is required to support its staffing and deployment strategies.

Deployment of frontline officers is currently based on outdated targets and does not consider changes to OPS's operating environment including population growth, urban sprawl and the opioid and mental health crises being faced across the city of Ottawa. Changes to the CSPA has provided new opportunities to rethink the approach to staffing and deployment, including increasing responsibilities assigned to Special Constables. This and other initiatives, such as district policing, are expected to have an impact on how frontline staff are deployed.

While the audit noted that OPS has a well-established recruitment program, supporting policies are not regularly reviewed and updated. This has led to non-compliances with the *Sworn Recruitment Policy* as current practices are not aligned with this policy.

Related to sworn officer training, we noted that Use of Force³ training and requalification, which are legislatively required, are being tracked effectively and prompt action is taken to recover related equipment for all individuals who are not in compliance. However, a current, complete matrix of mandatory training by role and rank does not exist and there is inconsistent formal tracking of completion of mandatory training across the Service. This has resulted in a lack of evidence to demonstrate all mandatory training has been completed.

It is recognized within OPS that there is a need to modernize and improve the approach to leveraging data for staffing and deployment decisions. There are numerous systems where various pieces of data exist; however, these systems do not communicate with one another and there are often conflicts between them, impacting the reliability and accuracy of the data. Recent activities have been undertaken to develop new tools to help reconcile and analyze data for improved decision making; however, sustainable solutions need to be considered.

Additional opportunities to further strengthen OPS's recruitment program were outlined in a management letter, which was provided directly by the OAG to management.

³ Under Ontario's *Community Safety and Policing Act*, Use of Force training refers to the mandatory education and skill development required for police officers and special constables to ensure the lawful, safe, and effective application of force in the line of duty. Sworn Officers must successfully complete the "Use of Force Requalification" course annually.

Value of Audit: The audit made recommendations to ensure that OPS has updated policies and practices and effective strategies in place, supported by appropriate tools and data related to staffing and deployment such that the Service will be in a better position to meet service demands and operational needs.

Audit Findings and Recommendations

The following sections outline the audit findings and recommendations, which are presented in chronological order by process: 1) recruitment; 2) training; and 3) deployment.

1. Sworn and Civilian Recruitment

Recruitment is a foundational component of organizational effectiveness, directly influencing the quality, readiness, and integrity of the police service. For OPS, ensuring that recruitment practices are timely, compliant, and aligned with operational needs is essential to maintaining public trust and delivering effective policing.



The recruitment process for new sworn officers differs significantly from that of civilian employees, both in structure and timing. Sworn officer recruitment is a year-round process, primarily coordinated with four annual intake cycles at the Ontario Police College. It involves multiple steps: an optional meet-and-greet with recruiters, submission of a recruit application package, a valid physical readiness evaluation, a pre-background questionnaire, an interview, a psychological assessment, a comprehensive background investigation, and a medical evaluation.

In contrast, civilian hiring follows a more traditional process. Candidates submit a cover letter and resume, followed by a practical skills assessment. If shortlisted, candidates proceed to a panel interview and a background investigation. Civilian hiring occurs only when there are available vacancies. Specialized civilian positions will have recruitment processes more closely aligned to that of sworn officers.

1.1 Staffing policies are outdated and do not reflect current practices.

Priority
Rating: Moderate

As a part of the audit, relevant policies were reviewed. It was noted that OPS has appropriate staffing policies in place, which align to peer police services. Many of the staffing and related policies have been updated in the last five (5) years. However, instances were noted where the policies were last amended over five (5) years ago. Examples of this are as follows:

- Civilian Job Competition Policy – last updated in 2015
- HR Business Partner Procedure manual for Civilian Staffing – last updated in 2015
- Civilian Internal Movements Guidelines – last updated in 2016
- Civilian Temporary Opportunity Process – last updated in 2019
- Frontline Directorate Operational Staffing Process – last updated in 2019
- Civilian Acting Assignment Guidelines – last updated in 2019

Outdated policies may not reflect current practices or requirements of applicable legislation and organizational objectives. This was deemed to be the case from audit testing performed, as instances were identified where operational practices did not align with the established policy expectations (see Section 1.2 below).

RECOMMENDATION 1 – FORMAL CYCLE FOR POLICY REVIEW

The Chief Human Resources Officer should, in conjunction with the Policy Development Office, implement a formalized, cyclical process for the periodic review and update of all staffing and related Human Resources policies. This process will help ensure policies remain current, relevant, and aligned with organizational objectives and regulatory requirements.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 1

Management agrees with this recommendation. Human Resources Civilian and Sworn Staffing is currently developing an annual review framework designed to ensure that all policies, procedures, and service standards are regularly reviewed jointly by OPS HR Staff and the Policy Development Office (PDO) for accuracy, effectiveness, and continuous improvement.

This framework will implement a formalized annual process to review HR policies commencing in Q1 2026 and will engage the PDO when revisions are required, as per the Policy Instrument Framework. Policies that require changes will be reviewed with

the support of the PDO. Additionally, a strategic policy alignment review will occur once every three years to ensure that policies are aligned with organizational strategic priorities, commencing in Q1 2026, with HR engaging the PDO when changes are needed.

1.2 For specific successful sworn and civilian recruits hired, there were matters that were raised through the psychological assessments that went unaddressed.

Priority
Rating: High

Sworn Recruitment

As outlined in the *Sworn Recruitment Policy*, one of the critical steps of sworn recruitment is the completion of a psychological assessment. The objective of the psychological assessment is to ascertain which candidates possess good moral character and suitability for policing. Conducted by a pre-qualified, external psychologist, it adheres to Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police guidelines to ensure candidates' fitness for law enforcement service.

The psychologists conducting the assessment must provide a standardized report that clearly states whether a candidate is suitable, suitable with concerns, or unsuitable for law enforcement service. Where candidates are deemed suitable with concerns, or unsuitable, specific actions must be taken. From our benchmarking exercise, this approach is consistent with other police services' policies.

Our audit testing identified differences between established requirements per the *Sworn Recruitment Policy* and current practices. These include:

a) Candidates deemed “unsuitable” are removed from the process and barred from reapplying for 12 months.

From audit testing of a sample of fifteen (15) sworn officer staffing files, there were two (2) instances identified whereby a sworn recruit is deemed “unsuitable” by the pre-qualified external psychologist. Despite the requirements of the *Sworn Recruitment Policy* to remove individuals from the recruitment process who are deemed “unsuitable”, these candidates were allowed to proceed. It should be noted that for one of the instances identified, evidence was on file that the results of the psychological assessment were considered as part of the subsequent background investigation.

b) Candidates deemed “suitable with concerns” must undergo further verification or validation is needed. Areas of concern to be included in background investigation.

Our sample testing identified multiple instances where sworn recruits were deemed “suitable with concerns” by the designated psychologist, and thus additional verification or validation was needed. However, there were two (2) instances (out of the sample of 15 staffing files tested) whereby no evidence was available to demonstrate that the required additional verification or validation was completed by the background investigator to enable the candidates to continue through the process.

Civilian Recruitment

While not required for all civilian positions, there are specialized civilian roles which require a similar psychological assessment. From audit testing of a sample of ten (10) civilian hiring files, there were three (3) instances where the psychological assessment deemed the respective candidates as “suitable with concerns”. In these files, from our review of the background investigation conducted subsequently, this scoring from the psychological assessment was not considered and, consequently, there was no evidence of additional investigation or assessment undertaken to alleviate the concerns raised via the psychological assessment.

By not adhering to the established recruitment policies, OPS is recruiting candidates who may not possess the necessary mental fitness and suitability to serve in law enforcement. Further, without additional assessment conducted as part of the background investigation, there is a risk that the concerns raised are not sufficiently resolved to make an informed hiring decision.

Current practices related to psychological assessments differs from the policy in place, and more closely represents modernized approaches to such assessments. We understand from management that the psychological assessment should not represent a selection decision (i.e. pass/fail) but rather should provide information that can be utilized within a comprehensive selection system to inform an eventual decision. This was reinforced through our subject matter experts who confirmed similar direction from the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and insights from other police services.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – REINFORCE POLICY EXPECTATIONS

The Chief Human Resources Officer should update the *Sworn Recruitment Policy* to reflect current practices across the sector. Once updated, policy expectations should be communicated and reinforced for those involved in the recruitment process. Should scenarios exist that require exceptions to the policy, guidelines should be formalized to ensure proper documentation and escalation to the necessary authority for approval.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 2

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Planning and Policy team has met with the Acting Manager of Employment Screening and Management to review and revise the existing Sworn Recruitment Policy. Additional work is underway to further develop the accompanying Sworn Recruitment Procedures to ensure alignment with best practices and organizational needs. A preliminary draft has been submitted by the Policy/Planning representative and is currently under review for feedback and proposed additions. The objective is to finalize and implement both the policy and procedures by the end of Q3 2025.

1.3 The amount of time taken to recruit sworn officers may potentially lead to the loss of prospective candidates.

Priority
Rating: Moderate

OPS has established a formal program to guide its recruitment and hiring activities. This is to ensure that sworn positions are filled consistently and effectively with qualified, diverse individuals who demonstrate high integrity to serve the organization and the city of Ottawa. As outlined above, the process includes a series of structured steps, from the initial online application and candidate interviews to background investigations and medical assessments, which collectively support the selection of suitable candidates and may culminate in a formal offer of employment.

Through audit interviews and testing, it was observed that OPS's recruitment and hiring process for sworn officers can be lengthy, leading to delays in onboarding. We understand that, in some cases, extended timelines have contributed to candidates withdrawing from the recruitment process.

A benchmarking analysis with police services of similar size in Ontario indicated that a standard time-to-hire—from initial application to the issuance of an offer of employment—is between six (6) to nine (9) months. However, audit testing of 15 sworn officer files revealed that in three (3) instances, the total time exceeded one (1) year. A closer review of these cases highlighted significant delays in assigning background investigations to investigators. This ranged between three weeks to seven months.



Beyond these three cases, four (4) additional files from our testing showed delays of over one (1) month in assigning the background investigator following the prior recruitment step. In addition to inefficiencies in their assignment, resourcing constraints within the background investigation function were also identified.

Prolonged hiring timelines can result in reduced competitiveness in attracting and securing qualified candidates because of the increased risk of candidates withdrawing during the recruitment process. Ultimately, there could be an operational impact from unfilled vacancies and onboarding lags.

OPS has acknowledged the challenges associated with background investigation delays and has taken several remedial actions, including assigning background investigators earlier in the process and reorganizing the background investigation team. These initiatives were implemented between late 2024 and early 2025 and are expected to make an impact on the timing of background investigations going forward.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – EFFICIENCY OF BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

The Chief Human Resources Officer should, leveraging the new structure for background investigations, assess the resource needs for the team to ensure timely assignment and completion of background investigations.

This should include implementing a process to consistently track timelines throughout the recruitment process, which can be used to assess trends, bottlenecks, and the impact of any process/resource changes.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 3

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Employment Screening Branch was established in April 2025 and a permanent Manager for this Branch has been selected. The Manager has implemented tools and process improvements aimed at strengthening oversight, improving efficiency, and reducing risks associated with delays in background investigations.

To further mitigate resourcing risks, additional employment screeners have been hired. Two staff members were fully trained in June 2025, and five additional candidates have completed the process and are being onboarded for January 2026. Planning is also underway to establish a sustainable staffing approach through evergreen postings to ensure continuity in hiring screeners as needed.

All initiatives planned, including full implementation of staffing and technology solutions, are on track for completion by the end of Q2 2026.

1.4 Current practices related to record-keeping of candidate recruitment files resulted in challenges in locating and accessing recruitment documents.

Priority
Rating: Moderate

Per the *Sworn Recruitment Policy*, candidate files are required to be completed and maintained for seven (7) years. This includes all relevant documentation to support the rationale behind the outcome in each candidate file.

From audit testing performed, the documentation/records pertaining to key steps in the recruitment process was not a) consistently maintained in a central repository, and b) were not subject to a verification step to confirm the completeness of the documentation to support decisions made.

Central Repository for Recruitment Documentation

Rather than having a central repository, it was noted that documentation is generally stored in multiple places. Certain documents are maintained within the SuccessFactors system (e.g. candidate application, resume and cover letter, required evidence to support the intent to hire, and letter of employment). However, it was communicated that SuccessFactors does not allow for all documents to be stored in each candidate file. As a result, OPS has created a secure drive to be used as a repository for all other documentation in the recruitment process (e.g. pre-background questionnaire, interview notes/scoring, psychological assessment, background investigation, medical assessment).

From audit testing of a sample of fifteen (15) sworn officer staffing files, there were two (2) instances of key documents missing from the candidate file. From audit testing of a sample of ten (10) civilian hiring files, there were also two (2) instances of key documents missing from the candidate file.

Without a central repository for recruitment files, it can be challenging to ensure the completeness of all files and the availability of applicable documentation.

Verification of Completeness of Recruitment Documentation

Our audit procedures confirmed that there is no established process for verification of the completeness of documentation and support for the recruitment decisions made.

We learned that OPS has created a “Candidate Recruitment Tracking Log,” which is designed to have a designated civilian member review the results of each recruitment

phase and sign off that it has been completed and complies with applicable requirements. From the recruitment file testing performed, there was no evidence that this key activity was being completed whether using this template, or via any other means.

Without a verification check of recruitment files, OPS cannot be assured that all steps of the recruitment process have been completed, all applicable policies have been adhered to and decisions made can be supported.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – DOCUMENTATION REPOSITORY FOR CANDIDATE FILES

The Chief Human Resources Officer should establish a central repository for all documentation to support the required steps in the recruitment process. As part of this, the functionality of SuccessFactors should be considered to the extent that it could be used to maintain all documentation associated with the recruitment process as support for compliance with all applicable policies.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 4

Management agrees with this recommendation. The ongoing migration of all documentation and electronic files from shared network drives to Microsoft SharePoint will support the centralization of records across all stages of the recruitment process. This transition will establish a single, structured repository to enhance accessibility, version control, and audit readiness.

The SharePoint migration is currently in progress and will be fully implemented in alignment with the revised recruitment process by the end of July 2025.

SuccessFactors will continue to house the initial application, résumé (CV), and fitness documents which will be downloaded in PDF format and saved to SharePoint. This approach ensures consistency, central access, and proper documentation throughout the screening process.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – VERIFICATION OF RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

The Chief Human Resources Officer should introduce a structured verification mechanism to ensure recruitment files consistently demonstrate adherence to all critical components of the recruitment process. This measure will enhance transparency, accountability, and compliance with established recruitment policies and standards.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 5

Management agrees with this recommendation. The implementation of enhanced functionality within SuccessFactors by the end of Q2 2026 will track all components of the recruitment files. This functionality will enable recruiting teams to perform quality assurance in a timely, structured manner and introduce a two-step verification process for member files to further strengthen accuracy and oversight. In the interim, the existing checklist will be used consistently to document the quality assurance by Q3 2025.

2. Training of Sworn Officers

Training is critical to ensuring that sworn officers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and certifications required to perform their duties safely, lawfully, and effectively. At OPS, mandatory training is governed by internal policies and legislative requirements. Evidence of completion is managed primarily through the Talent Management System and the eForce platform.

2.1 There is limited oversight relative to completion of mandatory training of sworn officers.

Priority
Rating: High

OPS has established a base listing of mandatory training requirements for all sworn officers. The Talent Management System is used to coordinate and administer the training and professional development of its personnel. We understand that there are limitations with the functionality of this system and how training is tracked. More specifically, there is no functionality within the system to track progress against required training or alerts/notifications when training is coming due or is overdue. The Talent Management System can only verify whether training is completed by manually looking up an employee's completed training records.

Because of the limitations of the Talent Management System, a manual process has been established whereby evidence of the completion of training is sent to OPS's Professional Development Centre for record keeping and updating of the system. This process relies very heavily on the individual who completed the training to submit their documentation as evidence of completion of training.

The exception to this is the training tracked through the eForce training system. Use of Force and other training regarding tactical skills that is legislatively required is formally tracked in eForce and alerts are shared with each sworn officer and their direct superior.

If sworn officers are not up to date on their Use of Force training, they must return their use of force equipment (i.e. firearm and/or taser) until the training is completed.

Completion of Mandatory Training

From audit testing of the training records of 25 sworn officers, we found that for all 25 officers, there was missing evidence of the completion of mandatory training courses. This ranged from missing evidence of the completion of three (3) courses to 14 courses per officer. Examples include:

- Patrol Carbine (firearm) User Course or required requalification course (evidence of qualification was missing for 11 of 25 individuals);
- Call it out: Racism, Discrimination and Human Rights (evidence of qualification was missing for 4 of 25 individuals);
- Victim Bill Rights (evidence of qualification was missing for 12 of 25 individuals); and
- Multi-Jurisdictional Police Response to a Critical Incident (evidence of qualification was missing for 21 of 25 individuals).

No exceptions were found relative to the Use of Force training. It should be noted that discussions with representatives from the Professional Development Centre indicated that it is possible that these training courses has been completed; however, there was no evidence available to demonstrate this. As noted, on an ad-hoc basis, a report can be pulled from the Talent Management System to summarize the completion of training and identify individuals who have not completed their required training. However, there is no formal process to do this periodically. This will only be done when there is a specific internal or external request.

Mandatory Training Requirements

Currently, the Professional Development Centre maintains a spreadsheet on OPS's Intranet with all the base mandatory training that all sworn officers within OPS are required to take to be compliant with OPS policies and applicable legislation. However, it was noted that specific individuals are required to take additional required training (either per legislation or OPS requirements) based on various factors such as their role, the team they are assigned to, seniority level, etc. These required courses are not maintained in this same centralized listing; the reliance is on individual supervisors to determine this for their staff and track their completion. As a result, multiple lists of mandatory training for sworn officers are maintained and tracked across different teams.

Validation and Confirmation of Completion of Training

As noted above, reliance is placed on supervisors to be tracking the overall completion of training for their staff. Historically, evidence of this oversight activity was included as part of the annual review process whereby each supervisor would confirm, in writing, that the staff member had completed all their required professional development. From our review of the standard performance review template used during the audit period, it was noted that this confirmation was no longer in the performance checklist. From a review of an older template made available (2019), there was a single checkbox where supervisors would be expected to attest that they reviewed each sworn officer's compliance with all mandatory training.

Overall, without evidence that sworn officers have completed all mandatory training within the expected timeframes, there is a risk that these officers are not equipped or qualified to undertake their daily responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 6 – FORMAL MATRIX OF MANDATORY TRAINING

The Chief Human Resources Officer should ensure that a comprehensive mandatory training matrix—organized by role and rank—is developed to promote consistency, accountability, and completeness in the delivery of required training and professional development. This should include both legislated and internally mandated training. This matrix should be retained centrally and updated regularly.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 6

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Talent Development & Performance Management (TDPM) team is in the midst of developing a comprehensive training program and matrix organized by role and rank. Police service members will have access to training opportunities centered around several themes to ensure compliance with legislative and internal training requirements, support promotional aspirations as well as encourage personal/professional growth for interest without promotion. Each theme will be incorporated at every level of training and will be an extension of training previously provided as one advances in their career. The training will be delivered in various formats: online, in-class, and hybrid. The TDPM section, in collaboration with the Professional Development Centre (PDC), will manage the repository of course materials and will be responsible for the development of and maintenance of a system that tracks courses and their completion across the organization. This recommendation will be fully responded to by the end of Q4 2026.

RECOMMENDATION 7 – TRACKING OF MANDATORY TRAINING

The Chief Human Resources Officer should formally assign roles and responsibilities for the monitoring of both legislated and internally mandated mandatory training for sworn officers/specialized staff. This would include a thorough review of existing training management tools to assess their effectiveness in enabling OPS to fulfill its oversight responsibilities. Enhancements or replacements should be considered where current systems do not adequately support these formal tracking and monitoring activities.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 7

Management agrees with the recommendation. The TDPM section will engage in a thorough review of existing training management tools and will assess the effectiveness of these tools in tracking, monitoring, and reporting on legislative compliance. With migration of training records to the Success Factors Learning Management System in 2026, the TDPM section, through the Learning Developers and supported by Information Technology, will then develop a set of dashboards to capture all internally mandated and legislated training. These will assist Chain of Command in monitoring compliance. The TDPM section will work cooperatively with other sections to ensure a timely tracking, monitoring, and reporting with this, and all related work, being completed by the end of Q4 2026.

3. Deployment of Frontline Officers

Effective deployment is essential to OPS's ability to deliver timely emergency response, maintain public safety, and support community policing efforts. In a policing context, deployment refers to the strategic assignment and distribution of sworn officers across operational units, shifts, and geographic areas to ensure adequate coverage for emergency response, proactive policing, and public safety. It involves the planning, scheduling, and real-time allocation of frontline resources based on operational priorities, staffing availability, and community needs.

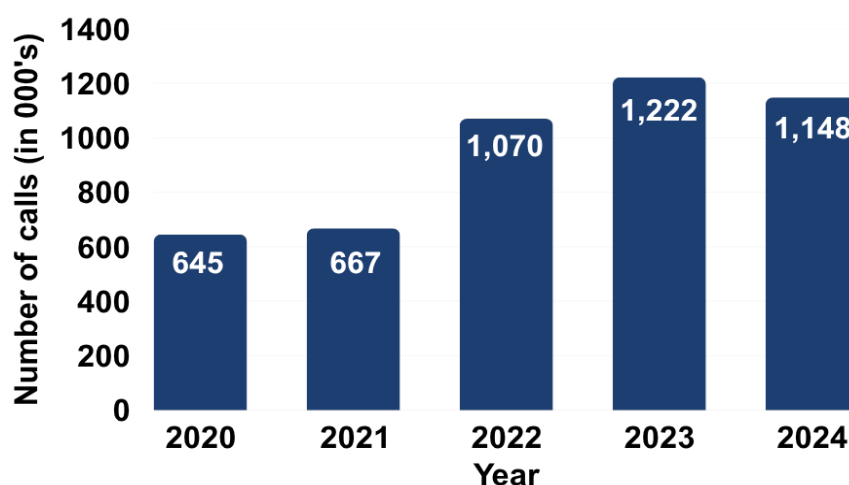
3.1 Frontline deployment targets are outdated and increasingly difficult to sustain.

Priority
Rating: High

The Frontline Directorate is responsible for emergency response, proactive community engagement, and maintaining public order across Ottawa. As the largest operational unit within OPS, it oversees patrol operations city-wide and is critical to the delivery of core policing services.

OPS is contractually obligated to maintain a minimum of 42 frontline patrol cars on duty at any given time 24 hours a day, as stipulated in Article 12 of the Collective Agreement with the Ottawa Police Association (OPA). This threshold, established during Ottawa's amalgamation in 1995, has not gone through a formal assessment since then. There is broad recognition that this minimum is no longer sufficient given Ottawa's population growth, urban expansion, and the increasing complexity of policing. As outlined in **Figure 1** below, calls for service have increased 90% between 2020 and 2023.

Figure 1 - Annual Calls for Service (000s)



Through interviews, it was noted that OPS, recognizing the insufficiency of the 42-patrol car requirement, typically targets a higher deployment level; closer to 48 patrol vehicles. However, this is an informal target and is not consistently achievable given frontline resource constraints. Interviews with Platoon Duty Inspectors indicated that while 48 vehicles are the operational goal, the contractual minimum of 42 is often all that is achievable, particularly during night shifts and shift changeovers.

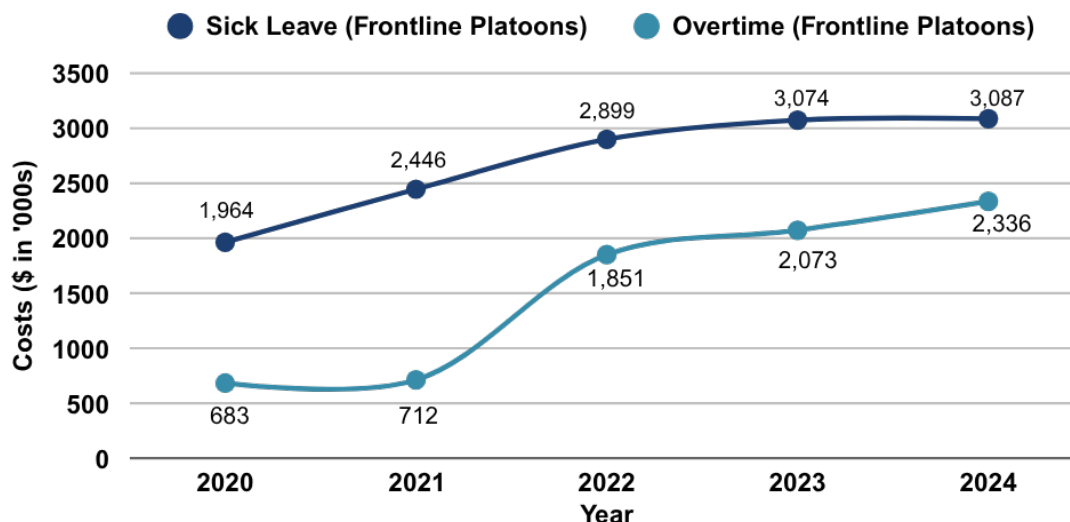
OPS has not conducted a comprehensive review of its deployment methodology and associated targets to ensure it reflects current service demands. OPS has several ongoing initiatives—such as the District Revitalization Project and the expansion of the use of Special Constables—that will affect future frontline deployment needs.

It should be noted that as part of our benchmarking exercise two (2) peer police services in Ontario confirmed that they revisit their deployment methodology at least every five (5) years.

Due to staffing challenges, including rising sick leave, OPS has, at times, been challenged to meet its minimum deployment targets, increasingly relying on overtime. As outlined in **Figure 2**, between 2020 and 2024, sick leave costs for Frontline Platoons rose by 57%

(from \$1.97M to \$3.09M), while overtime costs grew by 242% (from \$683K to \$2.34M). This reliance on overtime is financially unsustainable and contributes to officer fatigue and burnout.

Figure 2 – Frontline Platoon – Sick leave and Overtime Costs (\$'000s)



Without establishing the appropriate number of frontline resources to address the current needs of the community, OPS cannot position itself to meet its mandate of effective and efficient policing. Further, without the corresponding appropriate number of frontline resources, OPS risks continued operational strain and reduced service effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION 8 – FRAMEWORK FOR FRONTLINE DEPLOYMENT

The Chief of Police should conduct a structured, evidence-based assessment to determine the minimum frontline deployment requirements needed to ensure adequate and effective policing in today's operating environment. A process should be established to undertake this review on a periodic basis.

Once established, the minimum frontline deployment requirements should be compared to OPS's staffing complement and ongoing staffing strategies to ensure alignment.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 8

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Chief of Police will conduct a structured, evidence-based assessment to determine minimum frontline deployment requirements needed to maintain adequate and effective policing in the City of Ottawa.

It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the end of Q3 2026, though work to prepare for conducting this assessment (implementation plan, assignment of tasks, and so on) will begin in Q1 of 2026.

To ensure that these updated minimum frontline deployment requirements reflect future operational needs, the Chief of Police will ensure that a framework (and policy) are in place and that a refresh/evergreen exercise is undertaken at least every five years to maintain relevance. Staffing complement and strategies will be updated to reflect any changes should they arise.

3.2 There is no reliable tool available to support sworn staffing decisions.

Priority
Rating: Moderate

OPS has established a Sworn Staffing Committee to oversee staffing decisions for sworn officers at the Constable and Sergeant ranks. The Sworn Staffing Committee is responsible for managing staffing movements across the organization, including temporary assignments and project-based deployments, which helps to ensure operational requirements are met. This committee meets weekly to review staffing requests and make decisions based on current service delivery needs.

We learned from our audit that there have been longstanding challenges in effectively allocating sworn officers. Until recently, there was no centralized or reliable tool to support staffing decisions. Supervisors and managers relied on multiple data sources across different systems, leading to inconsistencies and inefficiencies. We understand that, historically, Sworn Staffing Committee meetings were often dominated by debates over data accuracy rather than focused decision-making.

To address this issue, the Sworn Staffing Tool was developed in 2025. This spreadsheet-based tool is intended to provide a centralized view of staffing variances to support deployment decision-making. The tool leverages data from OPS's Human Resources system to compare budgeted positions by unit/team against actual, active headcount. While the Sworn Staffing Tool represents a step forward, it is still in the pilot phase and continues to be refined. For example, approved staffing movements must still be manually updated in multiple systems. This dual-entry process introduces redundancy and increases the risk of further discrepancies between systems.

Until the Sworn Staffing Tool is finalized and integrated into a streamlined workflow, OPS will continue to face challenges in making timely, data-driven staffing decisions. A reliable, automated, and centralized staffing tool is essential to support operational planning and ensure that sworn resources are allocated efficiently and effectively across the organization.

RECOMMENDATION 9: TOOL TO SUPPORT STAFFING AND DEPLOYMENT DECISIONS

The Chief Human Resources Officer should ensure that a sustainable, efficient tool for staffing and deployment information is developed leveraging reliable, up-to-date information.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 9

Management agrees with this recommendation. In partnership with Workforce Operations, Human Resources Sworn Staffing has developed a Sworn Staffing Tool to assist with the management of personnel placement and movements that incorporates real-time SAP information. This Staffing Tool tracks staffing substantive positions, temporary assignments and absences of members in real-time. The information is shared in a dashboard available to senior leaders. Reports can be generated from this tool in excel format. The Staffing tool will be further developed to include Duty Roster information by the end of Q4 2026.

3.3 Multiple systems used for scheduling and time reporting create inefficiencies and risk of error.

Priority
Rating: Moderate

OPS currently relies on two separate reports/systems to manage sworn officer scheduling and time reporting: the Active Duty Roster (scheduling) and the Organizational Scheduling and Logistical (OSL) Solutions Reports (time reporting). These systems operate independently and are not integrated, resulting in inefficiencies and a heightened risk of data and payroll inconsistencies.

The Active Duty Roster is utilized only by the Frontline Policing Directorate to accurately track sworn officer availability in real time. It is regarded by frontline staff as a more up to date and reliable data source for staff availability. In contrast, the OSL Solutions Reports represent the entire organization's official time and attendance system. OSL Solutions Reports is expected to be the source of truth for attendance, scheduling, payroll, time bank management and reporting. However, because attendance information for frontline staff are often being recorded in the Active Duty Roster, key scheduling and timekeeping data must be manually reconciled between the two systems, as they do not communicate with one another.

Interviews with sworn officers revealed that updates to the OSL Solutions Reports are not prioritized, with most operational decisions and tracking based on the Active Duty Roster. Our audit testing confirmed discrepancies between the two systems which caused impacts to individual members' leave balances and/or payroll.

To address these issues, in 2024 a reconciliation tool was developed to align data between the two systems. This tool was leveraged in an exercise at the end of 2024 to reconcile discrepancies and ensure accurate time and attendance records, including leave balances, at year-end. A commitment had been made to performing this reconciliation quarterly beginning in Q1 2025. However, as of May 2025 (the end of our audit fieldwork), no reconciliation had been completed for the current year.

The continued reliance on two independent systems, combined with inconsistent reconciliation practices, undermines the accuracy of staffing data and creates operational inefficiencies, as well as a risk of payroll errors. A more integrated and automated approach is needed to ensure reliable scheduling and time reporting across the organization.

RECOMMENDATION 10: INTEGRATED SYSTEM FOR SCHEDULING AND TIME REPORTING

The Chief Financial Officer should explore the feasibility of implementing a single, integrated system for scheduling, deployment, and time reporting. This system should consolidate all relevant data needed to support frontline policing resource decisions ensuring accuracy, completeness, and operational efficiency.

In the interim, the quarterly reconciliation between existing systems should be completed on a timely basis to mitigate the risk of relying on inaccurate information.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 10

Management agrees with the recommendation. The Chief Financial Officer will perform a feasibility study on the implementation of a single system that addresses OPS's requirements for scheduling, deployment and time reporting. The feasibility study will be completed by end of Q2 2026.

In the interim, the Chief Financial Officer will commit to having a quarterly reconciliation performed on the data in the Duty Roster and OSL system. A reconciliation was performed in July and another will be performed in September 2025 and quarterly thereafter until a new solution is implemented. Information identified through these reconciliations will be shared with Frontline Staff Sergeants for resolution as required.

Appendix 1 – About the Audit

Audit Objective and Criteria

The objective of the audit was to provide reasonable assurance that OPS has the appropriate staffing and deployment strategies, processes and resources to support the achievement of its service demands and operational needs, to ensure adequate and effective policing.

The scope of the audit included the following:

- Governance framework overseeing staffing and deployment, ensuring staffing data is accurate and updated to support informed decision-making.
- Efficiency of the recruitment process and the adequacy of officer training programs, ensuring alignment with staffing goals and compliance with CSPA.
- How staffing levels and frontline deployment are monitored and adjusted, ensuring alignment with service demands and operational needs.

The audit focused on practices, policies, and data related to the fiscal years of 2023 and 2024.

Criteria listed below were developed from our assessment of key risks related to OPS's staffing and deployment processes in support of meeting service demands and operational needs, and in consultation with subject matter experts.

1. Governance and Decision Making	
1.1	A formal governance framework overseeing staffing (e.g., hiring, transfers, promotions), and deployment practices is in place.
1.2	Staffing-related data is accurate, complete and regularly updated, ensuring informed decision-making in hiring, deployment, and transfers.
2. Recruitment and Training	
2.1	The recruitment process is formally defined, efficient, with established timelines for filling vacancies and sufficient HR resources to meet staffing goals.
2.2	Officer training programs have the capacity and resources to meet training requirements and ensure staff are ready for deployment.

3. Deployment and Staffing Resource Allocation	
3.1	Staffing levels are regularly monitored and adjusted to meet deployment requirements, maintaining service levels.
3.2	Changes in population, crime trends, and geographic factors are regularly reviewed and impacts on deployment numbers are considered in order to consistently meet service demands.
3.3	Deployment decisions are informed by up-to-date staffing data and thorough workload analysis, ensuring alignment with operational needs and service effectiveness.

Audit Approach and Methodology

Audit staff performed the following procedures to complete this audit:

- Review relevant documents (e.g., policies, procedural documents, frameworks, strategic project updates);
- Interviews and walkthroughs with key OPS personnel and relevant partners/agencies;
- Utilize subject matter expertise in the area of staffing and deployment within policing and law enforcement;
- Benchmarking with other Ontario/Canadian police services, where relevant;
- Perform other analysis and tests, as deemed necessary.

Appendix 2 – Rating Scale for Audit Findings

The following rating definitions were used to assign priority to the findings associated with this audit.

Priority Rating	Description
Critical	The finding represents a severe control deficiency, non-compliance or strategic risk/opportunity and requires an immediate remedy. If left uncorrected, this could have a catastrophic impact on the achievement of the City's strategic priorities, its ongoing business operations, including the risk of loss, asset misappropriation, data compromise or interruption, fines and penalties, increased regulatory scrutiny, or reputation damage.
High	The finding represents a significant control deficiency, non-compliance or strategic risk/opportunity and requires prompt attention. If left uncorrected, this could have a significant impact on the achievement of the City's strategic priorities, its ongoing business operations, including the risk of loss, asset misappropriation, data compromise or interruption, fines and penalties, increased regulatory scrutiny, or reputation damage.
Moderate	The finding represents a moderate internal control deficiency, non-compliance or is a risk/opportunity to business operations that should be addressed timely. If left uncorrected, this could have a partial impact on business operations, resulting in loss or misappropriation of organizational assets, compromise of data, fines and penalties, or increased regulatory scrutiny. Typically, these issues should be resolved after any high-priority findings.
Low	The finding should be addressed to meet leading practice or efficiency objectives. Remediation should occur as time and resources permit. While it is not considered to represent a significant or immediate risk, repeated oversights without corrective action or compensating controls could lead to increased exposure or scrutiny.