



? Why we did this audit

As Ottawa grows and public safety needs evolve, Ottawa Police Service (OPS) faces increasing staffing pressures. Persistent vacancies, recruitment challenges, and rising service demands has made it more challenging to deliver effective policing. With over 85% of OPS's budget allocated to compensation, ensuring effective staffing is crucial for OPS to fulfill its mandate.

The Audit of Staffing was initiated to assess whether OPS has the appropriate staffing and deployment strategies, processes and resources to support the achievement of its service demands and operational needs. Robust staffing practices are essential to maintaining public trust, supporting member wellness, and ensuring public safety.

Q What we found

Our audit noted that, while OPS is actively working to address staffing challenges, there are key areas where additional focus is required to effectively meet current and future policing demands. Frontline deployment is currently based on outdated targets and does not reflect Ottawa's changing landscape, including population growth and the mental health and substance use crises.

The audit found that, although OPS has a well-established recruitment program, supporting policies are outdated and not consistently followed. With the exception of Use of Force training, there is no complete, up-to-date matrix of mandatory training by role and rank, and formal tracking is inconsistent.

OPS also faces challenges in using data to inform staffing decisions. Data is fragmented across systems that do not communicate, leading to inconsistencies and reliability issues.

💡 We made ten recommendations to ensure that:

- Staffing policies are periodically reviewed and updated through the implementation of a formal cyclical process. This should include ensuring policies reflect current practices across the policing sector.
- Sufficient resources are in place to complete necessary background checks .
- Complete recruitment files exist including the establishment of a central repository of supporting documentation and a formal verification process.
- Mandatory training is appropriately managed and overseen, including the development of a complete training matrix by role and rank.
- An appropriate approach to the assessment of the minimum frontline deployment requirements is established.
- Reliable, integrated systems are introduced to support appropriate staffing and deployment decisions.