



Lethbridge Police Service  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2023



The Lethbridge Police Service acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian Plains and pays respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Lethbridge and Area Métis.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE POLICE COMMISSION CHAIR

These past few years the citizens of Lethbridge have seen our city change and with that, our policing approach to ensure a safe community for all has had to adapt. The type of crimes executed include more crimes of opportunity, scams/frauds and cyber crime. On top of those, the stresses contributed to coming out of the pandemic and prolific drug addictions have created challenges within our city with a sharp increase in the number of unhoused individuals. All of these contribute to the rising workload of our officers and staff. Therefore, one of the goals of the 2023 – 2026 Lethbridge Police Service Strategic Plan is *Promote Wellness and Growth*.



**Dawna Coslovi**

We knew that we needed to change the way we were looking at policing in our community. In the fall of 2022, the Lethbridge Police Commission (LPC) presented our budget request to City Council for 2023 – 2026, which illustrated the urgent need for additional funding to hire more officers and staff. For a city of 100,000 plus citizens, we didn't have enough staff to provide policing at the level to which we aspired. City Council approved our budget request which paved the way for robust recruiting and the realization of other operational initiatives, such as the replacement of much needed equipment and resources.

In 2023, four Town Hall meetings were held in each patrol zone of the city – downtown, south, north and west. These gatherings gave both LPS and Commission members the opportunity to interact with citizens. For LPC, that is extremely important as we represent all citizens of Lethbridge. We heard the concerns raised by citizens and, in many cases, LPS was able to quickly arrange for the necessary resources to action the concerns. The sharing of dialogue also provided the audience with information on what a citizen can do to help prevent crimes of opportunity and to keep their own surroundings safe.

I am pleased to see the forward momentum of LPS – especially to increase the staffing complement. And, in 2023, the Commission extended the employment contract for our Chief to August 31, 2026. This extension will further ensure that our future plans remain on track.

Our Commission is very proud of the fact that, despite the challenges of the past year, LPS employees remained steadfast in their commitment to take public safety to heart in their everyday interactions. We are extremely grateful for the loyalty and dedication shown by all sworn and civilian employees. On behalf of the Commission, I am happy to present this 2023 Annual Report.



## **MISSION**

*Through partnerships and collaboration, the Lethbridge Police Service strives to create a safe community for all.*

## **VISION**

*Guided by the highest standards of policing, we are committed to supporting our community by addressing crime, maintaining public safety and strengthening public trust.*

## **VALUES**

*Respect  
Courage  
Accountability  
Professionalism  
Collaboration*

# MESSAGE FROM CHIEF SHAHIN MEHDIZADEH



As we reflect on our successes and challenges in 2023, the Lethbridge Police Service (LPS) remains committed to our mission of providing a safe community for all. I want to recognize and thank all of our employees for their hard work, dedication and commitment to model our core values in all that they do. I am proud of our strong team, what we have achieved and what we will continue to accomplish working together.

I am also grateful for and appreciate the support we continue to receive from our citizens, the Lethbridge Police Commission, City Council and Administration and all our community partners.

In 2023 – the first year in a new four-year budget cycle – an increase in the LPS budget resulted in the ability to begin addressing capacity and staffing challenges within both our sworn and non-sworn ranks. An additional 11 officers were hired along with more than a dozen new civilian positions. We are committed to keep the momentum going with two cadet classes every year for the next three years starting in 2024.

Within the three pillars of our strategic plan – Community Safety, Community Engagement and a Healthy Organization – we focused on initiatives to reduce crime and disorder, engage, consult and collaborate with members of our community and further our efforts to ensure employee wellness and resiliency throughout the organization.

Our Crime Severity Index decreased eight per cent, which equates to an overall five per cent reduction in crime – a downward trend we are working to continue. With significant efforts focused on CompStat – a data-driven model used to manage prolific offenders and more effectively deploy resources – we will continue to work in partnership with parole, probation and the Crown's office to implement strategies that will help prevent and reduce crime and disorder.

In 2023, a number of initiatives were completed including the implementation of our Virtual Opioid Dependency Program (VODP), which stations a paramedic in our short-term holding facility to provide immediate access to opioid agonist medications and connections to support individuals with addictions seeking long term treatment. VODP paramedics also provide minor treatment, emergency and ongoing care to detainees helping to reduce unnecessary calls to EMS. When there are no detainees in cells, VODP paramedics also perform community outreach, primarily with the vulnerable population downtown.

Partnership and collaboration with community stakeholders was key in 2023 and we will continue to strengthen and build relationships and identify mutual opportunities to come together for the good of our city.



**Deputy Chief  
Gerald Grobmeier**



**Inspector  
Jason Dobirstein**

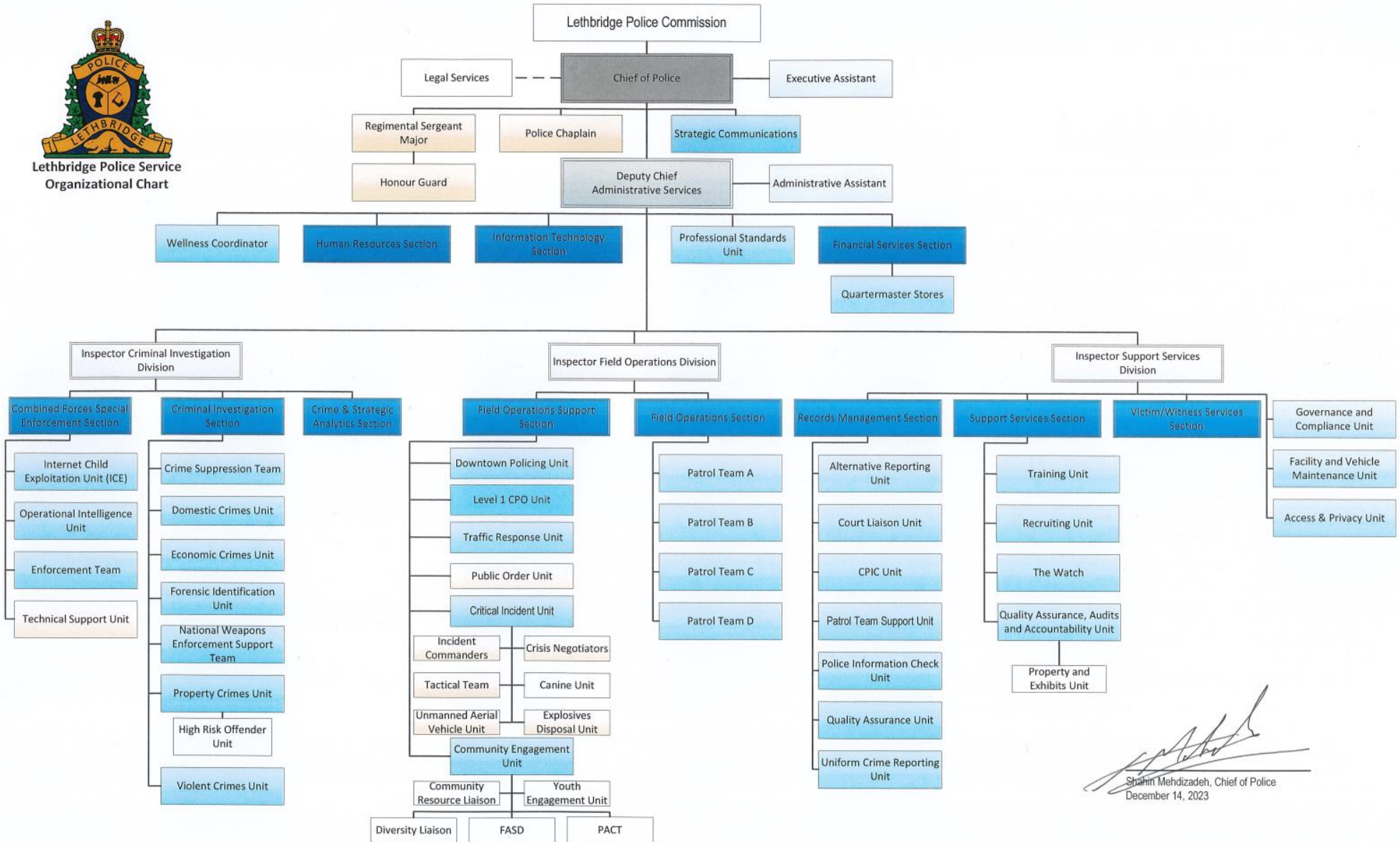


**Inspector  
Russell Lawrence**



**Inspector  
Jason Walper**

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



*Shahin Mehdizadeh, Chief of Police*  
December 14, 2023



## LETHBRIDGE POLICE IN THE COMMUNITY



# COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Collaboration is one of LPS' core values and is an integral part of community policing. Working in partnership with our community helps identify challenges, drive operational decision-making and strengthen our efforts to provide a safe community for all.

In 2023, LPS contracted IPSOS to conduct our annual Community Survey collecting feedback from Lethbridge residents on their perceptions of the police service, community safety and policing priorities.

Overall, perceptions of LPS remain highly positive with a strong majority of citizens indicating they are satisfied with the services provided. A total of 86 per cent of respondents believe LPS is doing a good job policing the community and 83 per cent indicated LPS is meeting citizen expectations. Of the 14 per cent who rated LPS as doing a poor job, the main reasons cited were a high crime rate, inequality in treatment and call response.

When asked about perceptions of safety, two-thirds believe Lethbridge is a safe community overall. Approximately 37 per cent say the city has become less safe over the past year, mainly attributed to drugs, homelessness and crime. Property crime, drug crime and crimes against persons were identified as the top three policing priorities.

In addition, LPS hosted four Town Hall meetings in each patrol beat in the city. The sessions included an overview of LPS and a presentation detailing crime trends in the city overall, as well as data specific to each geographic region – north, south, west and downtown. An open mic session followed and community members shared their personal experiences being impacted by crime, asked a variety of questions ranging from police response to crime prevention and shared feedback on issues they'd like to see police focus on.

The information shared during the Town Hall meetings and Community Survey was discussed further and used as LPS began development of its 2024 Annual Policing Plan, which sets out yearly goals and initiatives aligned with the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Both the Community Survey and Town Hall meetings will continue in 2024.







## SUPPORTING SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The Lethbridge Police Service is a proud supporter of Special Olympics and in 2023 officers and civilian staff hosted and participated in a number of community events, raising nearly \$33,000.

In 2023, the LPS' fundraising efforts kicked off with the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge – the first in-person event since the pandemic. The 'Brrrothers in Blue' police team returned to the icy water and were joined by numerous community teams who also took the plunge.

Over the summer, Cst. Braylon Hyggen represented the Law Enforcement Torch Run at the Special Olympics World Games in Berlin, helping to carry the torch through 16 communities.

In September, the LPS Run celebrated its 11<sup>th</sup> year, offering 5K, 10K and half marathon distances that attracted runners from throughout western Canada.

Rounding out the fall, Cops, Pops and Pizza saw police officers and Special Olympics athletes serving up slices and selling stuffed animals. The event, held the same night as the Lethbridge Hurricanes' Teddy Bear Toss, gave residents an opportunity to enjoy a meal and purchase their hockey game stuffy.



# CHARITY CHECKSTOP

The Lethbridge Police Service held its fourth annual Charity CheckStop in early December and, thanks to many generous community donations, helped make Christmas a little merrier for the less fortunate.

The event was once again hosted in partnership with Christmas Hope, a collaboration between Volunteer Lethbridge, the Interfaith Food Bank, Lethbridge Food Bank, Lethbridge Family Services (Angel Tree), Salvation Army (Toys for Tots) and My City Care (Shop of Wonders).

In 2023, the event moved to the Park Place Mall and throughout the day vehicles steadily rolled through with toy, cash and food donations. In total, 1,459 gifts, 1,015 lbs. of food and \$5,129 in cash donations were received, demonstrating the significant community spirit and generosity of Lethbridge and area residents.

Santa even stopped by to see the kids and take a few pictures!



“

*It is our goal to provide safe communities. We will continue to maintain public safety through prevention, detection and resolution of crime and disorder.*

”

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: COMMUNITY SAFETY

### REDUCE PROPERTY CRIME

- In 2023, LPS hired a total of 11 sworn officers to help strengthen the frontline and increase capacity to respond to calls for service. LPS also continued to prioritize the use of data to drive deployment and other operational decisions. A dedicated Crime Analysis Unit was created and the CompStat program was expanded to include offender condition checks and deployment strategies targeting problem locations. In addition, an intelligence portal was created and is updated daily to ensure cross-organizational awareness and collaboration.

### IMPROVE CITIZEN PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

- A total of 11 Community Peace Officers (CPOs), including a Sergeant position, have been deployed with three CPOs dedicated to frontline patrol duties, marking a 300 per cent increase on the street. LPS continued to proactively share information, including crime reduction and prevention content along with other initiatives and operational successes online and across the organization's social media platforms. The annual Community Survey noted a decrease in safety perceptions attributed mainly to issues involving drugs, homelessness and crime – a trend that other communities across the country are also experiencing.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIRTUAL OPIOID DEPENDENCY PROGRAM (VODP)

- Since its inception in April 2023, nearly 50 people have been referred for addictions treatment through the VODP program. The collaborative initiative with Alberta Health Services provides daily paramedic coverage in the LPS short-term holding facility. Paramedics provide medical assessments and same-day treatment for opioid addictions as well as minor treatment, emergency and ongoing care to detainees, helping to reduce unnecessary calls to EMS. When there are no detainees in cells, VODP paramedics also perform community outreach, primarily with the vulnerable population downtown.

### INCREASE CAPACITY TO INVESTIGATE FRAUD

- In order to keep up with technology and increase capacity to investigate complex frauds involving the use of cryptocurrency, specialized software that traces cryptocurrency transactions was purchased and training was provided to members of the Economic Crimes Unit. The addition of Chainalysis software has helped eliminate the need to rely on larger agencies for assistance, increasing efficiency and allowing investigations to progress in a more timely fashion.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## INCREASE COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

- Lethbridge Police continued to implement strategies to engage with citizens, including four Town Hall meetings in each patrol beat in the city. The organization is also working to improve service delivery, including an enhanced website and the addition of online Police Information Checks. The annual Community Survey noted a total of 83 per cent of Lethbridge citizens were satisfied with LPS – on par with the previous year.

## EXPAND SOCIAL MEDIA INTERACTIONS

- LPS increased its social media following by nearly four per cent, with page/post visits to Facebook and Instagram channels up significantly. Efforts are ongoing to enhance operational and awareness messaging that serves to showcase LPS success and promote crime prevention. With the addition of a Communications Strategist, there are now two full-time positions providing 24/7 communications coverage.

## PROVIDE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ABOUT POLICING TO NEWCOMERS

- Partnerships and opportunities for formal meetings were re-established with the re-appointment of a Diversity Liaison Officer, a position that was vacant due to frontline policing challenges. The Canadian Law and Culture course was delivered to several groups of new Canadians and members of the recruiting team engaged with local immigrant organizations.

## INCORPORATE BLACKFOOT CULTURE TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TOWARDS TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

- Revitalization of the Indigenous Advisory Committee, which consists of local Blackfoot Elders who provide advice and guidance to the organization, resulted in significant collaboration on a project to translate the LPS values into Blackfoot. An expression of interest was issued and an artist was selected and created a visual representation of the values. The artwork will be publicly unveiled in 2024.

## COMPLETION OF THE LPS MASTER PLAN

- The Service engaged Stantec to conduct comprehensive stakeholder engagement sessions, site tours and other planning to facilitate the creation of a 10-year Master Plan. The plan was finalized and is currently being reviewed.

“

*We will advance public safety by continuing to build and invest in relationships and work collaboratively with our partners and members of the community we serve.*

”

“

*We recognize the value of our employees and volunteers. We want all employees to be healthy, well-trained, committed and reflect the demographics of the communities we serve.*

”

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY: HEALTHY ORGANIZATION**

### **HIRE TO INCREASE FRONTLINE STRENGTH**

- Recruiting challenges are universal to all law enforcement agencies and LPS continues to prioritize hiring to meet demands and reduce capacity challenges on our current compliment of officers. The Recruiting Unit was increased to two full-time officers and a civilian administrative position. Recruiters hosted, attended and partnered with other agencies on numerous recruiting events in southern Alberta and across Canada. Social media marketing efforts were significantly enhanced to attract new and experienced officers to Lethbridge. A total off 11 new officers were hired in 2023.

### **INCREASE FEMALE SWORN RANKS**

- Sworn female ranks were increased from 12 per cent to 14 per cent in 2023. Efforts targeted to attract women to careers in policing include all female bootcamps, the addition of a female recruiting officer, videos and social media posts showcasing current women in policing, as LPS works to increase the number of female officers in line with the national average.

### **INCREASE RECRUITING EFFORTS TO ATTRACT CANDIDATES FROM UNDER REPRESENTED GROUPS**

- LPS is committed to increasing diversity and hiring to better reflect the demographics of the community we serve. Recruiters worked to build and strengthen partnerships with Indigenous organizations, initiated a partnership with Blood Tribe Police Recruiting to provide mentorship for applicants throughout the different stages of the application process and engaged with newcomer organizations to facilitate outreach with new residents.

### **INCREASE CIVILIAN SUPPORT**

- A total of 13 out of 15 new civilian positions were filled in 2023, increasing administrative support and helping to address capacity challenge. Social media and other marketing avenues were leveraged to attract well-qualified candidates.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF A WELLNESS COORDINATOR**

- A new Wellness Coordinator was hired to manage all aspects of the LPS wellness program. Following an employee survey an audit of current services and supports was initiated to help identify potential gaps and aid in determining future needs that will best serve employees based on the priorities they identified.

# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

**106,550**  
\*2023 City Census  
**POLICING POPULATION**  


**262**  
**EMPLOYEES**  
Community Peace Officers: 11  
Police Officers: 160  
Civilians: 91

**85**  
**VOLUNTEERS**  
Victim Services: 63  
The Watch: 22


**124**  
**SQUARE KILOMETRES  
OF POLICING  
JURISDICTION**

**POLICE  
INTERACTIONS**  
**58,307**  
\*Calls for service, traffic  
stops and subject stops

**ONLINE**  
**753**  
**CRIME REPORTS**

**SOCIAL MEDIA**  
**61,000**  
**FOLLOWERS**

**BUDGET**  
**47.1M**  
Salary & Benefits: \$39M  
Operating Costs: \$8.1M

  
**6,223**  
**CRIMINAL CODE CHARGES**

**ALBERTA TRAFFIC SAFETY ACT**  
 **4,630**   
**CHARGES**

# CALLS FOR SERVICE

## TOP 5 CALLS CITYWIDE

- 1) Trespassing/unwanted
- 2) Disturbance/nuisance
- 3) Public service
- 4) Theft
- 5) Suspicious person/wanted

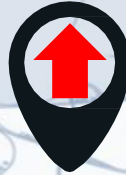


**NORTH**

2023: 7,435

2022: 7,523

LPS20

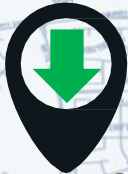


**DOWNTOWN**

2023: 13,193

2022: 11,773

LPS10



**WEST**

2023: 6,439

2022: 6,682

LPS40



**SOUTH**

2023: 10,815

2022: 10,729

LPS30

# STATISTICAL DATA: METHODOLOGY

Unless otherwise indicated, this report covers events that occurred between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023, and were reported by January 15, 2024.

Calls for service and collision totals were determined with data from the Public Safety Communications Centre (PSCC) Computer Aided Dispatch database and the Lethbridge eCollision database respectfully.

Totals for Criminal Code Charges, Alberta Traffic Safety Act Charges, Crimes Against Person, Property Crimes, Drug Violations, and Traffic Violations were calculated using data from the LPS Niche Records Management System (RMS), which has been quality checked by the Service's Record Management Uniform Crime Reporting Team. Violations that were unfounded (confirmed to be without merit) were not included.

To be consistent with how crime data is reported to the province of Alberta, crime totals in this report were calculated at the violation level, instead of the occurrence or incident level (each occurrence can have one to many incidents, and each incident can have up to four violations). Due to this change in reporting, the totals for Child Sex Offences, Fraud, Hit and Run, and Collisions with Property Damage will differ significantly to the totals on previous annual reports.

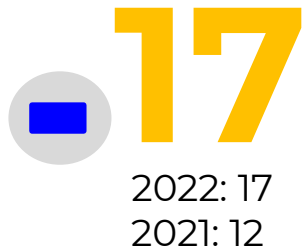
AUT	AL	WVS	PLZ	ILR	GRT	OPT
1,822 (+75)	20,347 (+800)	896 (+25)	4,300 (+225)	10,985 (+160)	445 (+15)	4,854 (+193)
MBC	LSI	MLO	FOU	WPH	WDR	SMI
3,605 (+210)	9,542 (+128)	2,409 (+25)	7,604 (+145)	4,522 (+125)	1,432 (+54)	3,452 (+144)
YBV	GNN	SMJ	IT	NLM	CCX	SMY
3,204 (+30)	5,211 (+154)	7,104 (+40)	7,450 (+98)	782 (+74)	1,901 (+291)	3,280 (+28)
MBS	WPT	NAM	ALZ	LSD	SWK	WVS
3,320 (+128)	712 (+73)	134 (+6)	2,022 (+86)	431 (+48)	4,297 (+22)	12,430 (+224)





# OTHER POLICE RESPONSES

## CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM DEPLOYMENTS



## MISSING PERSONS



ADULTS: 178  
YOUTH: 355








2022: 362  
ADULTS: 143  
YOUTH: 219

2021: 356  
ADULTS: 146  
YOUTH: 210

# CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS

	2023	2022	2021
HOMICIDE	1	2	1
ATTEMPTED MURDER	0	2	0
SEXUAL ASSAULT	159	133	113
CHILD SEX OFFENCES	72	27	22
ASSAULT	1,633	1,423	1,216
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY	30	24	18
ROBBERY	73	46	57
CRIMINAL HARRASSMENT	84	70	74
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	2,225	1,752	1,820

## PROPERTY CRIMES

	2023	2022	2021
 ARSON	44	14	41
 BREAK AND ENTER	1,051	965	1,045
 THEFT/SHOPLIFTING	3,705	4,002	3,464
 THEFT OF VEHICLE	320	375	244
 ATTEMPTED VEHICLE THEFT	59	46	14
 POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY	283	360	142
 FRAUD	1,592	978	577
 MISCHIEF	1,593	1,302	1,026

## DRUG OCCURRENCES

### GENERAL ACTIVITY

**372**   
**REPORTS**

2022: 334  
 2021: 413

### POSSESSION

**837**   
**REPORTS**

2022: 485  
 2021: 630

### TRAFFICKING

**232**   
**REPORTS**

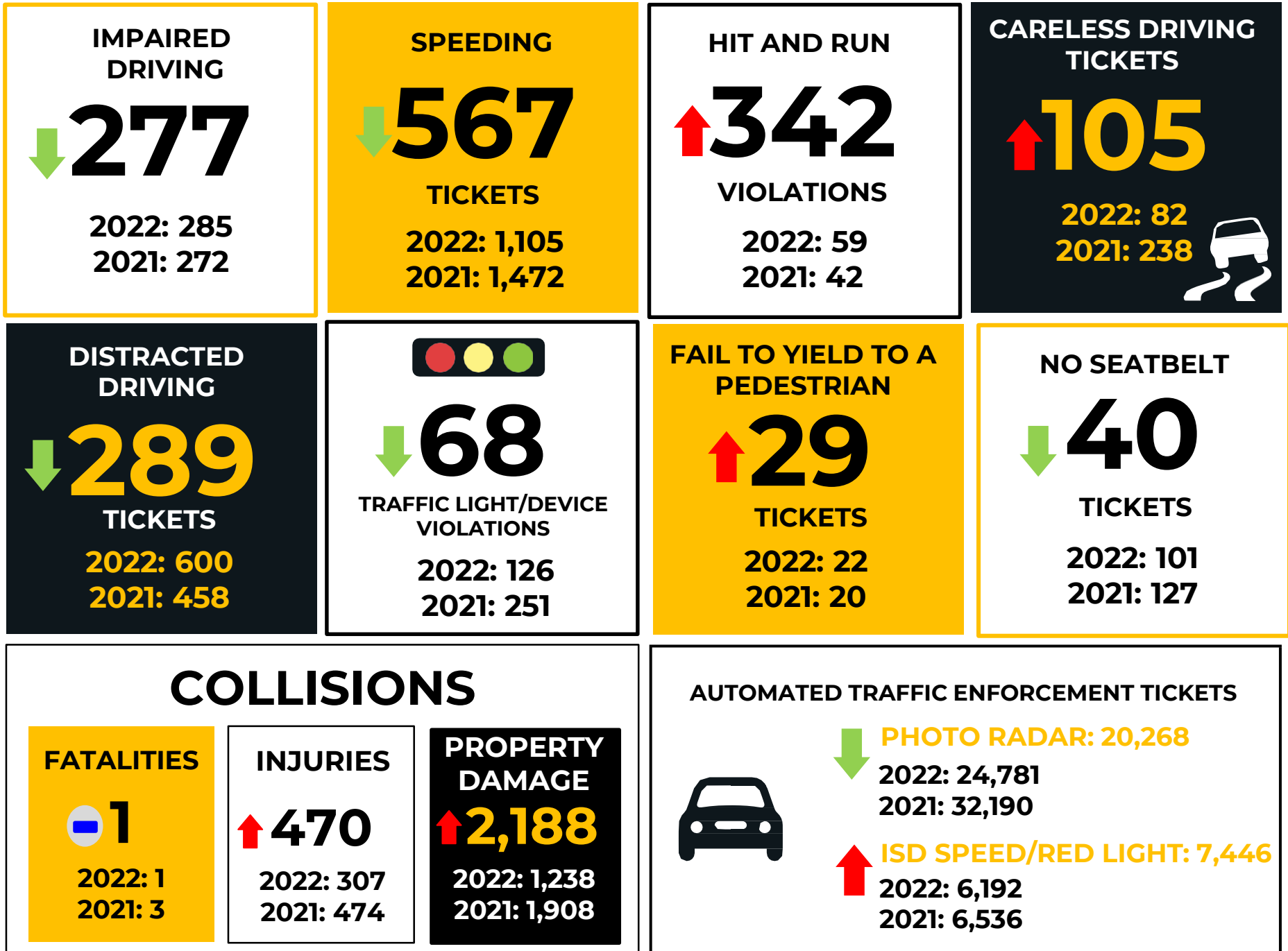
2022: 159  
 2021: 203



## LETHBRIDGE POLICE IN THE COMMUNITY



# TRAFFIC SAFETY AT A GLANCE



# ABOUT OUR EMPLOYEES



**160**

**POLICE OFFICERS**

FUNDED POSITIONS: 175



**11**

**COMMUNITY  
PEACE OFFICERS**

FUNDED POSITIONS: 15



**91**

**CIVILIANS**



**85**

**VOLUNTEERS**



**AVERAGE IN-SERVICE  
TRAINING HOURS**

**28**

**PER MEMBER/PER  
YEAR**

**OFFICER  
EXPERIENCE**

**0-10  
YEARS  
30%**

**20-30  
YEARS  
20%**



**10-20  
YEARS  
49%**

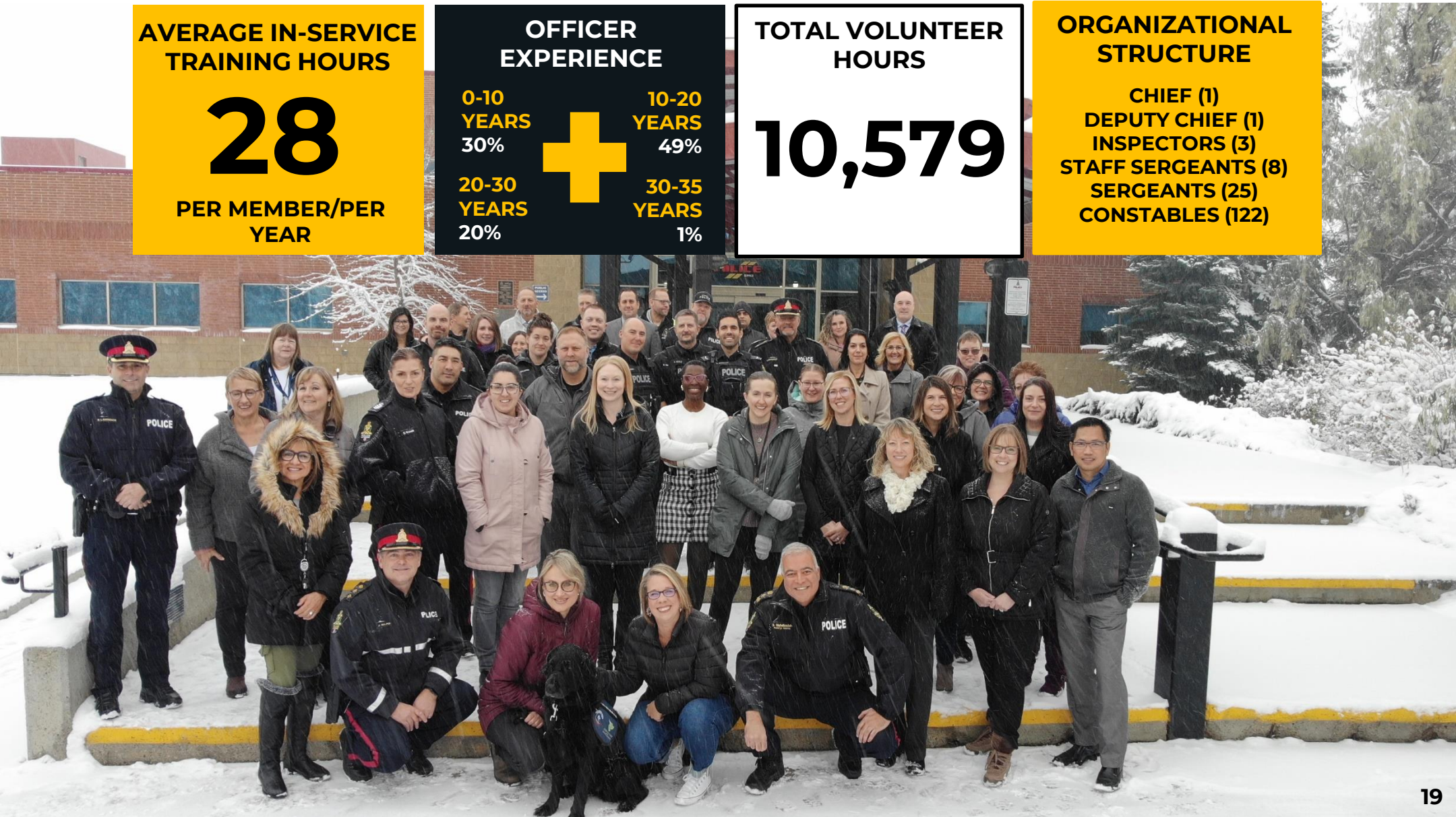
**30-35  
YEARS  
1%**

**TOTAL VOLUNTEER  
HOURS**

**10,579**

**ORGANIZATIONAL  
STRUCTURE**

**CHIEF (1)  
DEPUTY CHIEF (1)  
INSPECTORS (3)  
STAFF SERGEANTS (8)  
SERGEANTS (25)  
CONSTABLES (122)**



# LONG SERVICE MEDALS & COMMENDATIONS

## 32-YEAR ALBERTA EMERGENCY SERVICE BAR

Insp. Jason Dobirstein  
Cst. Wes Olsen

## 22-YEAR ALBERTA EMERGENCY SERVICE BAR

Staff Sgt. Pete Christos  
Staff Sgt. Robin Klassen  
Staff Sgt. Jason LeBlanc  
Staff Sgt. Christy Woods  
Sgt. Jay McMillan  
Sgt. Steve Veale  
Sgt. Bryan Whelpley  
Cst. Richard Borthwick  
Cst. Mike Fielding  
Cst. Brent Lorenz  
Cst. Mark Smith  
Cst. Chris Stock  
Cst. Rob Thibeau

## 20-YEAR POLICE EXEMPLARY SERVICE MEDAL & ALBERTA POLICE OFFICER LONG SERVICE RECOGNITION MEDAL

Staff Sgt. Trevor Sheppard  
Staff Sgt. Mike Williamson  
Staff Sgt. Christy Woods  
Sgt. Ryan Darroch  
Sgt. Denton Michelson  
Sgt. Rick Semenuik  
Cst. Ryan Kiddine  
Cst. Dan Shurtz

## ALBERTA EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDAL

Cst. Jonathan Brunning  
Cst. Paul Davis  
Cst. Kris Deines  
Cst. Drew Kanyo  
Cst. Josh Kurtz  
Cst. Kim Pierzchala

## LETHBRIDGE CITY POLICE MEDAL

Sgt. Ashlin Snowden  
Cst. James DeMone  
Cst. Braylon Hyggen  
Cst. Stephanie Law  
Cst. Jason Roth  
Cst. Dan Shurtz  
Cst. Mark Smith

## SERVICE RECOGNITIONS

### CHIEF'S COMMENDATION

#### SWORN:

Cst. Terry Fieguth  
Cst. Andrew Firby  
Cst. Braylon Hyggen  
Cst. Steven Zwartbol

#### CIVILIAN:

Norman Lee Cutforth  
Jessica Durand-Kaustinen  
Carmen Hellowell  
Kristen Saturley



## CPL. CUMMING'S WATCH

In 2023, the entire Lethbridge Police Traffic Response Unit received the Cpl. Cumming's Watch Award – a distinction that recognizes dedicated efforts to remove impaired drivers from the road.

The Cpl. Cumming's Watch started in 2015 and is a collaborative effort between Alberta RCMP, MADD Canada and Alberta Transportation. The program is named in honour of Cpl. Graeme Cumming, an RCMP member who was killed by an impaired driver while attending a traffic incident on Highway 3 on August 12, 1998.

Officers who charge between 15 and 24 impaired drivers during a calendar year, receive a silver challenge coin. For charging more than 25 impaired drivers, officers are issued a gold challenge coin.

The October ceremony marked the first time in LPS history the entire Traffic Response Unit received Watch awards in the same year.

**Cst. Mike Dowsley**  
32 impaired drivers

**Cst. Jack Kryzstofiak**  
17 impaired drivers

**Cst. Shaun McCarthy**  
23 impaired drivers

**Cst. Brent Paxman**  
35 impaired drivers

**Cst. Jason Roth**  
19 impaired drivers



## TRUNK OR TREAT

The Lethbridge Police Service hosted its first ever 'Trunk or Treat' event in 2023, handing out candy from decorated police vehicles to little ghouls and goblins.

A number of police vehicles were stationed at locations in north and west Lethbridge and officers were on hand to take pictures and most importantly hand out over 1,000 pounds of candy.

The free family event provided police with an opportunity to connect with community members young and old to help foster positive relationships with law enforcement.

The event was wildly successful, and the police service is grateful to the many community members who stopped by to support the event, show off their costumes, take a few pictures and add some tasty treats to their loot bags.





The Lethbridge Police Victim/Witness Services Unit (V/WSU) is a 24/7 police-based victim assistance program that strives to provide information, support and referrals to victims or witnesses of crime or tragedy in the City of Lethbridge.

Volunteer Crisis Support Workers are civilian first responders who provide practical support during the first few critical hours after a crime or tragedy. V/WSU serves as a central information point for those who have been victimized, providing updates on the status of an investigation or subsequent court case as well as relay information about victim impact statements, requests for restitution, provincial financial benefits, and referrals to counselling services, specialized community resources, shelters, child protection and crisis lines.

## 2023 IN REVIEW

- Volunteer hours: 6,295
- Volunteer shifts: 1,311
- Callouts: 241
- On-call hours: 11,831
- Training hours: 2,293
- Files reviewed: 15,497



# VICTIM/WITNESS SERVICES UNIT

A prime focus of 2023 was enhancing our annual Crisis Support Worker (CSW) recruitment. This year V/WSU collaborated with the Lethbridge Police Service by hosting the process through the Service's online HR portal. This new process helped emphasize the critical nature of the CSW role, while providing a direct link from social media posts and the ability to review applications from an analytical angle. The response was overwhelmingly positive with increased engagement from the community and a remarkably diverse group of strong applicants. The unit saw 58 applications from invested citizens who wanted to support members of the community in their darkest days. This was a great response and the collective skill set and community investment from the pool of applicants was truly impressive.

In 2023, Victim/Witness Services also rolled out an enhanced Peer Support Program. Peer support is a supportive relationship between people with a shared experience – for example, as Crisis Support Workers in V/WSU, teammates know better than anyone what this job consists of and its impact. In the case of V/WSU, there are several elements where support could be provided, either operationally by way of explaining office procedures, resource options or best practices when supporting a victim, or personal support by way of a chance to debrief any phone call interactions, callout experiences and personal situations which may have an impact on the individual's life. The peer support team includes 12 people working on rotation who contact each CSW after their shift for a check-in. This proactive approach to V/WSU wellness has been felt quickly and powerfully, helping to ensure strong internal connections and longevity of volunteers and their service to the community.

Facility Dog DWW Kourt attended a Facility Dog Bootcamp at Dogs With Wings in Edmonton to strengthen her skills and add some new ones. Kourt performed very well and exceeded all expectations in her learning. Later in the year, both of DWW Kourt's handlers were invited to Edmonton to attend the Dogs With Wings Gala where Program Manager Cat Pooley delivered the keynote address about the impact DWW Kourt has had on the LPS team, the community and victims.

# THE WATCH

The Watch Program is a volunteer-based initiative of the Lethbridge Police Service with the objective of enhancing the community as a safe and friendly place for everyone to live, work, shop and enjoy, through social outreach, connection and intervention. Members of The Watch manage a range of issues and events that historically involved police intervention, but in reality, are not part of core police functions and most do not require police involvement. In managing these kinds of events and activities in place of the police, capacity is created for officers to respond to incidents that involve criminal activity.

In 2023, there were 15 volunteers recruited, hired and trained. Despite some turnover of paid Team Lead positions, by the end of the year there were five full time Team Leads and three casuals in place.

A new Watch Manager was hired and the team took on additional responsibilities, including reporting garbage and graffiti to the appropriate service provider for clean-up and response to non-violent, unwanted guest calls. New rules for reporting fires and a new policy for a streamlined process for past volunteers to re-join The Watch were also implemented.

## 2023 IN REVIEW:

- Hours of service: 4,284
- Response to 9,038 events
- Wellness checks: 581
- Overdose events: 66
- Safe Walks: 498
- Needles located and reported for disposal: 862
- Transportation arrangements for vulnerable people: 280
- Use of The Watch phone to connect vulnerable people with family or services: 578





## LETHBRIDGE POLICE IN THE COMMUNITY



# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The purpose of the Professional Standards Unit is to safeguard public trust and confidence in the Lethbridge Police Service by investigating and resolving complaints regarding policy, service delivery and employee conduct in a timely, unbiased and transparent manner. Complaints are received from the public or initiated internally and may be criminal in nature and/or identified as an officer misconduct or complaint against police policies under the Alberta Police Act. Under Section 46 of the Police Act, serious and sensitive allegations are forwarded to the Director of Law Enforcement for review and may be assigned to the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team.

## Statutory Investigations

In 2023, there were four statutory investigations. Three investigations have been completed and are awaiting Crown Review and the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team maintains carriage of the fourth.

## Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT)

There was one incident involving ASIRT in 2023, which remains under investigation. In addition, ASIRT currently maintains carriage of a 2021 investigation that has been completed, but is currently awaiting Crown Review.

## Law Enforcement Review Board (LERB)

There is one outstanding matter before the Law Enforcement Review Board related to a 2021 disciplinary hearing decision where the complainant appealed the sanctions received by the cited officers. A decision is anticipated by the second quarter of 2024.

## Biased Based Policing Complaints

In 2023, one public complaint was received where race was cited as a contributing factor to the overall treatment and police response to a call for service. The matter was investigated and determined to be unfounded.

## PUBLIC COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS

In 2023, the Chief of Police directed investigations with respect to 11 public complaints that involved the following allegations: breach of confidence (4), corrupt practice (1), deceit (1), discreditable conduct (14), insubordination (1), neglect of duty (13), unlawful/unnecessary use of authority (23) and unlawful/inappropriate use of force (18)

### Disposition/Actions Taken

- Zero sustained
- Eight dismissed/not sustained
- Three remain under investigation

### Service Investigations

In 2023, the Chief of Police directed five service investigations that involved the following allegations: deceit (1), discreditable conduct (6), insubordination (3), unlawful/unnecessary use of force (2)

### Disposition/Actions Taken

- Zero sustained
- Two dismissed
- Two remain under investigation
- One loss of jurisdiction

### Citizen Contacts

There were 50 citizen concerns resolved by way of Citizen Contacts

### Administrative Review

One Administrative Review was directed in 2023 related to an in-custody concern

### Compliments

In 2023, LPS received a total of 102 compliments



Email: [inquiries@lethbridgepolice.ca](mailto:inquiries@lethbridgepolice.ca)  
General Inquiries: 403-327-2210  
Non-Emergency Complaints: 403-328-4444

**\*EMERGENCY 911\***

135 1 Avenue South  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0A1



**CONNECT WITH LPS**  
[www.lethbridgepolice.ca](http://www.lethbridgepolice.ca)