

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



Letter from Chief Noel

As we reflect on 2024, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the extraordinary year we've had at the Knoxville Police Department. It's been a year marked by hard work, dedication and a collective effort to make our city safer, foster stronger connections within our communities and elevate the service we provide to new heights.

At the heart of everything we do are our four focus areas: crime, community, culture and career development. These values are the foundation of our mission, and they shape every decision we make and every action we take to protect and serve Knoxville.

Our highest priority is always reducing crime and improving the quality of life for those who live, visit or work in Knoxville. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our officers and professional staff, we made meaningful progress in 2024. We saw a significant reduction in violent crime, including fewer murders and a nearly 50-percent decrease in non-fatal shooting victims. This is a powerful testament to the hard work and dedication of our officers and staff, and a clear reflection of what we can achieve when we come together with a common purpose.

One of the year's standout achievements was Project TLC, a transformative crime reduction and community-building initiative that we embarked on in partnership with the City of Knoxville's Office of Community Safety. This project has had an immeasurable impact in an area that once saw the highest levels of gun violence in the city, proving that through collaboration and a relentless commitment to change, we can revitalize and rebuild even the most challenged neighborhoods.

But our work didn't stop there. Beyond crime reduction, I'm incredibly proud of the efforts our officers and staff put into building genuine relationships within our communities. Whether through outreach, charitable endeavors or just being there for those in need, we've shown time and again that the KPD is about more than enforcement—we are about people, care and service.

As a department, we are also committed to growth and continuous improvement. In 2024, we embraced the opportunity for self-assessment and progress by undergoing two major departmental evaluations as part of our participation in the National Public Safety Partnership. We also had the privilege of sending several members of our Command Staff to national training programs like the FBI's National Academy, the Police Leadership Academy at the University of Chicago and the DC Police Leadership Academy,

ensuring that we stay ahead of the curve and continue to lead with the best practices in law enforcement.

On the recruitment front, we made exciting strides. Thanks to a robust, focused marketing campaign, we're looking forward to the largest recruit class in recent memory with over 40 recruits entering the 2025-A Basic Recruit Academy. This is a pivotal moment for the future of the KPD and an exciting step toward strengthening our department for years to come.

This is just a snapshot of what we accomplished in 2024. Every success we celebrate is a direct result of the unwavering dedication, courage and sacrifice of the men and women of this department.

To our officers and staff—thank you for your service, your commitment and your belief in our mission. And to the Knoxville community—thank you for your support, your partnership and your trust.

As we move into 2025, I'm more confident than ever in our ability to face whatever challenges lie ahead. We will continue to innovate, collaborate and place an unrelenting focus on the details that matter most—ensuring that Knoxville remains a safer, stronger and more connected community for everyone.

Paul Noel
Chief of Police

Accomplishments in Core Focus Areas

Crime and Quality of Life

- In 2024, the number of non-fatal shooting victims was down an astonishing 45 percent, dropping from 77 in 2023 to 42 in 2024. That is down nearly 50 percent from the five-year historical average.
- Additionally, murders dropped from 24 in 2023 to 23 in 2024 - a four-percent reduction. That total is also well below the five-year historical average of 31.
- Most notably, there were eight murders in the East District in 2024, down from 11 in 2023 and 24 in that district in 2022.
- There were double-digit decreases in three noteworthy property crimes categories, including a 22-percent drop in car burglaries, a 15-percent decrease in burglaries and a 12-percent reduction in motor vehicle thefts compared to 2023.
- Of the 23 murders that occurred in 2024, only two remain open investigations. An arrest was made in 13 of those investigations. Eight were closed by exceptional means due to either the death of the offender or a prosecutorial declination by the District Attorney's Office.
- Project TLC - the holistic public safety partnership led by the Knoxville Police Department and the City of Knoxville's Office of Community Safety - proved tremendously successful.
 - The pilot TLC zone was a 7.5-block area of the East District, which was selected for extra care and attention based on an evaluation of five years' worth of fatal and non-fatal shooting data. The zone was stood up in November 2023 and since that time there have been no fatal or non-fatal shootings in that area.
 - Project TLC expanded in mid-2024, when zones were launched in Montgomery Village and Western Heights.
- To better manage and respond to crime, the KPD launched its Daily Crime Briefing in 2024. Every morning, Field Operations and Investigations Bureau staff meet to discuss crime that occurred over the previous 24 hours, improving situational awareness and providing a collaborative forum to address crime and quality of life issues.
- The department also started conducting weekly shooting reviews, collaborating with the Office of Community Safety and other stakeholders to regularly review recent shooting incidents and identify possible solutions to prevent further violence.
- As part of its comprehensive focus of preventing gun crimes, the KPD and its prosecutorial and federal law enforcement partners began conducting regular meetings to review gun crimes and arrests. The initiative is designed to accelerate information sharing and collaborate on the most effective strategies to prevent future gun violence.
- Knoxville's Co-Responder Program, which pairs a crisis intervention trained KPD officer with a McNabb Center behavioral health clinician, answered nearly 900 calls for service involving an individual experiencing a mental health crisis. The overwhelming majority of the subjects of those calls received treatment through the Crisis Stabilization Unit, BHUCC, EmPATH, area hospitals, or they remained in the community with a treatment referral.
- In October 2024, members of the KPD's Bomb Squad led the successful disposal of over 400 sticks of dynamite. The dynamite was found inside an old crate at CMC Recycling, prompting widespread

evacuations. The Bomb Squad and UAV team members were widely heralded for their heroism at the end of the nearly 48-hour event.

- The KPD took its first steps towards launching a Mounted Patrol Unit, a full-time unit that will patrol Downtown Knoxville and at special events. The department purchased two three-year-old Percherons with federal grant funding. Training will start in early 2025.
- A total of 14 KPD officers deployed to Carter County and Washington County in Northeast Tennessee to assist communities that were impacted by Hurricane Helene. Those officers assisted in water-based search and rescue efforts as well as ground search and recovery operations.
- In January 2024, the members of the Knoxville Police Department were in an extended severe weather response following Winter Storm Heather. The KPD activated its snow plan on January 15 and finally came off of the snow plan at 6 a.m. on January 24.

Community Engagement

- The KPD spearheaded numerous initiatives to engage directly with at-risk youth in 2024, including a kickball game and cookout at the Montgomery Village Boys & Girls Club and a whiffle ball game and cookout at the Western Heights Boys & Girls Club. Both of those clubs are within operational TLC zones.
- The KPD had a robust participation in the national Faith & Blue initiative. That included an “Ice Cream Social” resource fair at the Jacob Building, a cookout and Halloween-themed mystery game for children at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church and a touch-a-truck event at Meridian Baptist Church. Additionally, Management Services Bureau staff partnered with Callahan Road Baptist Church on an item drive to support those impacted by Hurricane Helene.
- Field Operations District Captains continued to host quarterly District Commander Forums, giving residents regular, recurring opportunities to meet with district and department leaders. Those forums are an opportunity for residents and police leaders to work together to solve public safety problems.
- In December, KPD officers led two initiatives to give back during the holiday season. On December 17, officers escorted over 50 kids from the Vestal Boys & Girls Club to the ice skating ring in downtown Knoxville for a fun-filled afternoon. The night before, KPD officers joined first responders from across the area to “shine their lights” for the kids at East Tennessee Children’s Hospital.
- KPD officers and professional staff continued to participate in the For the Love of Reading program in 2024, making regular visits to Christenberry Elementary to read to the kindergarten classes.
- In September, KPD officers joined up with Office of Community Safety staff, City service providers and leaders, and other stakeholders to conduct a neighborhood re-canvas of the East District TLC zone to seek community input on the results of the TLC initiative. That feedback was used to better inform strategies that are put to use in the TLC zone.
- Management Services participated in the City’s Parks and Recreation Department’s Secret Santa initiative, purchasing Christmas gifts for two different children.
- In 2024, KPD officers began participating in the Knox County Schools’ Real Talk Mentoring Program, which was founded by former UT basketball player Clarence Swearngen in 2008.

Culture, Training and Professional Development

- In its first full year as part of the National Public Safety Partnership (PSP), the KPD took part in two wide-ranging departmental assessments.

- That included a Non-Fatal Shooting Assessment, when subject-matter experts conducted a start-to-finish review of the KPD's processes when responding to and investigating a non-fatal shooting.
- That also included a Crime Analysis Capacity Assessment, which resulted in numerous actionable recommendations to improve how the department tracks, manages and uses its data.
- The KPD completed the installation of a brand-new VirTra training simulator. The state-of-the-art technology allows officers and recruits to take part in real-life training scenarios and hone de-escalation skills in a safe and controlled environment. The VirTra V-300 simulator was purchased through a federal grant.
- As part of its participation in the Public Safety Partnership (PSP), KPD staff took numerous site visits to other departments across the country, including to the Los Angeles Police Department in July. During that visit, KPD staff were able to observe and learn from the LAPD's COMPSTAT.
- In late 2024, KPD hired the department's first-ever Police Audits and Compliance Specialist as part of an ongoing commitment to continual evaluation and improvement. The Police Audits and Compliance Specialist works out of the Office of Professional Standards, conducting reviews of body-worn camera footage. The position is designed to improve quality control and identify issues that can be addressed through policy, training or other resources.
- West District Captain Tracy Hunter graduated from the prestigious DC Police Leadership Academy in November 2024. The course is one of the premier leadership development programs offered for law enforcement professionals anywhere in the country.
- Three members of the KPD – Lieutenants Brad Cox, Caryn Heitz and Adam Minner – completed the Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute for Police training course.
- East District Captain Nevin Long completed the FBI's National Academy in June 2024. The 10-week National Academy is widely considered the premier training program for law enforcement leaders.
- KPD staff helped spearhead the launch of the Tennessee Crisis Negotiators Association (TCNA), which hosted its inaugural conference in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee in November.
- In mid-2024, retired federal judge Bruce Guyton was named as the permanent Deputy Chief of the Office of Professional Standards. He had served in that role in an interim capacity since July 2023.
- In September 2024, KPD's Crisis Negotiations Unit hosted crisis negotiator training at the KPD Training Academy. That training was attended by over 50 officers from 17 different law enforcement agencies from across the state.
- The KPD continued its quarterly speaker series in 2024, bringing in outside speakers to engage with the members of the department. Guests in 2024 included Jim Haslam, Metro Nashville Police Department Commander Scott Byrd, former UT football player Todd Kelly Jr., and former Lakewood Colorado Police Department Officer Ashley Ferris.

Recruitment

- In late 2024, the KPD launched a robust recruitment marketing campaign that included billboards as well as advertisements that ran through social media, broadcast media, radio and podcasts.
- As part of that, the KPD contracted with a new digital marketing partner, All-Star Solutions, which specializes in law enforcement recruitment. Through that partnership, the KPD acquired a new customer relations management software to better manage the recruitment and application process.
- Those recruitment efforts appeared to pay dividends as the 2025-A Basic Recruit Class started with over 40 recruits, making it among the largest recruit classes in years.

- The KPD hosted three Basic Recruit Academy classes in 2024 with sessions that started in January, May and September. At various junctures in the year, the Training Academy staff was leading two separate classes concurrently.
- The Management Services Bureau continued to evaluate the department's on-boarding and hiring processes in an effort to make those processes more efficient and lead to more productive outcomes in recruitment.
- In 2024, the KPD brought on Phillip Brown, a certified public accountant and former Internal Revenue Agent, to assist in the department's hiring and mentorship initiatives.
- KPD onboarded 15 new Cadets in 2024, further strengthening its long-term recruiting pipeline.