



The Research Bureau

Benchmarking Public Safety in Worcester: 2006

September 2006

CCPM: 06-03



Center for Community Performance Measurement



The Research Bureau

Dear Citizen,

This is the fourth annual report on the status of public safety in Worcester prepared by The Research Bureau's Center for Community Performance Measurement (CCPM). The CCPM was established with support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to measure municipal and community performance in the areas of economic development, municipal and neighborhood services, public safety, youth services, and public education.

The indicators in this report describe the performance of Worcester's police, fire, and ambulance/emergency medical services. We continue to monitor the same five indicators discussed in previous reports: crime rates, police-community relations, allegations of police misconduct, fire suppression and first responder services, and advanced life support/ ambulance services. We measure performance by asking "What has changed since last year, what have we accomplished, and what challenges remain?"

It is important to bear in mind that no single indicator should be considered in isolation. In other words, context is important, and the indicators included in this report are interrelated. For example, increased interaction and information sharing between residents and police officers (see Indicator 2) may lead to reductions in certain types of crime measured in Indicator 1.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We hope that it will encourage widespread discussion of public safety issues, serve as a basis for sound priority-setting and decision-making, and further the adoption of performance measurement practices at the municipal level. Finally, we wish to thank the Sloan Foundation for its continued support of the CCPM and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation for its sponsorship of this report.

Sincerely,

Eric H. Schultz, President

Roberta R. Schaefer, PhD, Executive Director

Kimberly A. Hood, MPA, Manager, CCPM

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Worcester Police Department

Department Overview and Input Indicators

The mission of the Worcester Police Department is to promote the highest level of public safety and quality of life in the City of Worcester through exceptional police services to the City's residents, businesses, and visitors.¹

The Worcester Police Department's FY06 budget of \$34.5 million (excluding capital expenditures and fringe benefits) comprised 7.7% of the City's annual operating budget.² As shown in the table below, the WPD's expenditures have increased by about 25% over the past six years, from \$27.4 million in FY01 (actual) to \$34.5 million (budgeted) in FY06. These annual budget increases are primarily the result of contractually obligated salary increases. In FY06, the department budget authorized funding for 51 civilian personnel positions, 17 (25%) fewer than it did from FY01 to FY02, when 68 civilian positions were funded. The FY06 budget funded 475 uniformed officer positions, the same number funded in FY05.

In 2004, the most recent year for which regional comparison data are available, the average number of police department employees (uniformed and civilian) in Northeast cities with populations of 100,000 to 249,999 was 3.3 per 1,000 residents, compared to 3.0 per 1,000 in Worcester. Uniformed officers averaged 2.8 per 1,000 residents throughout the Northeast region, compared to 2.7 per 1,000 residents in Worcester.³



Category	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	% Change FY01-FY06
Expenditures*	\$27,446,422	\$31,803,000	\$31,272,000	\$30,731,000	\$31,884,406	\$34,555,325	25.9%
Expenditures per capita	\$157.67	\$181.66	\$178.19	\$174.84	\$181.27	\$196.45	24.6%
Uniformed Positions	474	472	459	424	475	475	0.2%
Officers per 1,000 Population	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.7	-
Civilian Positions	68	68	60	43	48	51	-25.0%
Civilians per 1,000 population	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	-
Total Positions	542	540	519	467	523	526	-3.0%
Total Law Enforcement positions per 1,000 population	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.7	3.0	3.0	-

*Excluding capital expenditures and fringe benefits

Data Sources: Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, Office of the City Auditor (Actual expenditures for FY01-FY05) and City of Worcester Annual Budget (Recommended Appropriation for FY06). Uniformed and civilian positions reflect budgeted positions in the City of Worcester Annual Budgets for the years FY01 - FY06.

¹ City of Worcester Fiscal 2006 Annual Budget.

² This report examines FY06 budget and staffing levels; while the City's fiscal year is July 1 – June 30, the performance data are typically tracked on a calendar-year basis. The most recent performance data available for calendar year 2005 fall within the City's FY06.

³ Comparison data are reported in the FBI's annual *Crime in the United States* statistical summary; Worcester data reflect budgeted positions per 1,000 population for the July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005 period.



Why is it important?

Crime rates are basic indicators of public safety. Crime not only affects the quality of life of those who directly experience or witness it, but may also impact the lives of others in the community who feel threatened by it, undermining their sense of personal security. Low crime rates promote neighborhood stability, and increase a community's attractiveness as a place to live, work, and conduct business. Accurate and timely crime data are a tool that allow the police to identify trends in both types of crimes and geographic areas in which they occur. These data enable the police to deploy resources most effectively.

How does Worcester perform?

In 2005, the WPD responded to 97,645 incidents.⁴ As shown in **Table 1.1**, about three-quarters of these incidents were reported by citizens (primarily 9-1-1 emergency calls), and approximately one quarter were officer-initiated. The number of incidents police respond to annually has decreased in each of the years since 2000, declining by 16% overall. The arrest numbers included in **Table 1.1** show the number of incidents with at least one arrest upon initial police response (some incidents involve the arrest of more than one person).⁵

In 2005, 1,390 violent crimes and 6,078 property crimes were reported in Worcester.⁶ Aggravated assaults comprised 61% of the reported violent crimes, followed by robbery (28%), rape (10%), and murder (0.4%). Larceny

constituted the greatest proportion of property crimes reported in Worcester in 2005 (60%), followed by burglary (21%) and motor vehicle theft (19%). From 2000 to 2005, the number of reported violent crimes in Worcester fell by 6.6% overall.

Table 1.2 shows trends in reported property and violent crime rates for Worcester and several other Northeastern cities since 2000.⁷ Worcester has typically experienced lower crime rates than Bridgeport, Hartford, and Springfield. While violent crime rates in Providence and Lowell have generally been below Worcester's, Worcester's property crime rate has consistently been the second-lowest among the six cities. Additionally, as shown in **Table 1.3**, for the violent crimes specified, in 2004, the most recent year for which data are available, Worcester ranked between 8th and 14th among the 23 cities with populations between 100,000 to 300,000 in the nine Northeastern states. For the property crimes specified in **Table 1.3**, Worcester ranked between 9th and 12th among these 23 cities. In fact, aggravated assault was the only crime for which Worcester's rate was above the average rate when compared to the rest of these cities.

Finally, the preliminary 2005 FBI Uniform Crime Report data show that Worcester experienced a negligible increase (0.5%) in the number of reported violent crimes compared to 2004 (1,390 vs. 1,383). In contrast, violent crime in the Northeast region rose by 1.4%, while nationwide it increased by 2.5% during the same period.

Table 1.1: WPD Workload Measures

Incidents	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Change 00-05
Total Incidents	116,352	115,293	111,839	99,110	98,054	97,645	-16.1%
Citizen-Reported	84,926	86,380	85,013	83,279	77,863	74,608	-12.1%
WPD-Initiated	31,426	28,913	26,826	15,831	20,191	23,031	-26.7%
Arrests							
Incidents for which at least one arrest was made	6,888	6,863	7,688	5,858	6,920	7,679	11.5%

Source: Worcester Police Department, Crime Analysis Unit, *Police Incident Statistics*

⁴ Total incidents represent both criminal and non-criminal events to which the police respond and provide assistance. These figures do not represent actual crime rates since they include calls which were not substantiated (complaints which turned out not to be criminal), calls for general assistance, and calls to which the police respond but find no one there upon arrival. Additionally, a single incident may involve more than one crime.

⁵ These arrest data do not include arrests which were made at a later date (e.g., an arrest warrant may be taken out based on the original incident and served at a later date). For this reason, and due to the fact that the total incident count above includes police responses to non-criminal events, we cannot determine from these data what proportion of criminal incidents ultimately result in an arrest.

⁶ The violent crime category includes murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. The 2005 Uniform Crime Report Data presented here are preliminary.

⁷ The rates in Table 1.2 were calculated by The Research Bureau using FBI Uniform Crime Reports data and US Census Bureau Population Estimates for 2000 through 2005.



Crime Rates (continued)

Table 1.2: Reported Crimes per 10,000 Population

	Bridgeport, CT		Hartford, CT		Lowell, MA		Springfield, MA		Worcester, MA		Providence, RI	
	Violent	Property	Violent	Property	Violent	Property	Violent	Property	Violent	Property	Violent	Property
2000	142.2	495.7	122.6	800.3	70.1	310.2	181.6	632.3	86.2	425.1	67.4	672.2
2001	136.6	447.1	128.1	739.5	80.9	348.2	216.2	628.2	81.7	390.0	82.6	729.2
2002	121.4	491.0	124.3	749.4	81.3	326.3	204.1	736.2	NA	NA	74.0	713.7
2003	97.5	457.3	145.4	791.0	83.2	295.9	191.4	763.6	87.5	434.9	78.9	627.2
2004	101.4	445.9	121.3	878.6	95.4	309.8	183.7	655.7	78.6	371.4	60.7	583.9
2005*	107.8	508.8	115.5	762.0	97.3	317.9	176.9	572.2	79.0	345.4	67.8	512.2

* Data are preliminary

Source: Rates calculated by The Research Bureau using FBI Uniform Crime Reports data and US Census Bureau population estimates.

Table 1.3: Major Crimes in Worcester Compared to Similarly Sized Cities, 2004

		Reported Crime per 10,000 Population	Ranking Among 23 Cities in the Nine Northeastern States with Populations of 100,000 to 300,000
Violent Crime	Murder	0.6	14
	Aggravated Assault	46.7	8
	Robbery	24.2	12
Property Crime	Burglary	78.2	12
	Larceny	219.8	14
	Motor Vehicle Theft	74.7	9

Source: Worcester Police Department, Crime Analysis Unit

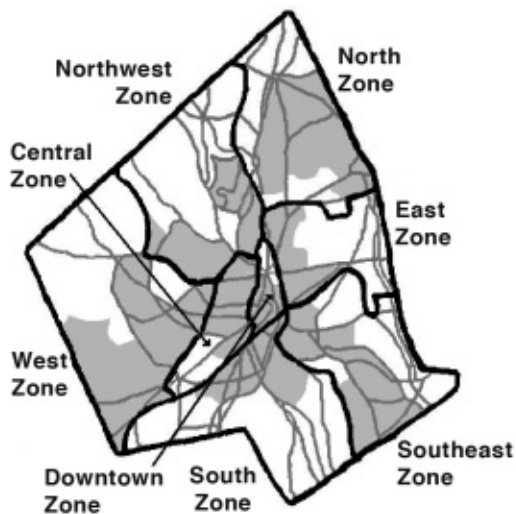


Table 1.4: Violations of Public Order, 2005

	Number	Percent of Total
Central Zone	6,176	33.41%
South Zone	2,693	14.57%
Downtown Zone	2,127	11.50%
Southeast Zone	2,146	11.61%
East Zone	1,590	8.60%
West Zone	1,557	8.42%
North Zone	1,479	8.00%
Northwest Zone	708	3.83%
Unknown	12	0.06%
Total	18,488	100.00%

Source: Worcester Police Department, Crime Analysis Unit



While the more serious crimes described above clearly threaten citizens' overall sense of safety and well-being, nuisance and disorder in a neighborhood (e.g., loud parties, fights, and disorderly conduct) also diminish residents' quality of life. **Table 1.4** shows the distribution of violation of public-order incidents to which WPD responded in 2005 by zone. The following types of incidents are included in this category: disorderly conduct; fights; trespassing; gun shots; illegal carrying of weapons; noise-related complaints; drugs, prostitution, other vice; and non-domestic disputes.⁸

The public often views arrests as a measure of law enforcement's effectiveness in responding to crime. In issuing crime statistics, the FBI cautions that arrest practices, policies and enforcement emphasis vary from police department to police department, and even within a single department arrest practices are likely to vary over time. **Table 1.5** shows that the total number of arrests in Worcester (for all ages) declined by 3.1 % from 2000 to 2005.

In 2005, 6.7% of all arrests made by the WPD involved youth under the age of 17. Since 2000, the number of youth arrests has declined by 25%, from 699 to 524. As shown in **Table 1.6**, the majority of charges against juveniles arrested in Worcester were for disorderly conduct, aggravated assault, drug violations, and shoplifting.⁹ In 2005, although disorderly conduct was the charge that occurred most often, with 96 arrests, the number of disorderly conduct arrests has dropped by almost a quarter since 2000. While still constituting the majority of charges brought against juveniles, aggravated assault, shoplifting, and drug violations have all declined over the years, though the number of charges for motor vehicle theft increased from 5 in 2000 to 42 in 2005.¹⁰ Liquor law violations and larceny were two other categories of charges that increased from 2004 to 2005.

Table 1.5: Summary of WPD Arrests, 2000-2005

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Change 2000-2005
Total Arrests (All Ages)	8,108	7,759	8,033	6,482	7,014	7,853	-3.1%
Individuals Arrested	6,081	5,938	6,041	5,154	5,366	5,916	-2.7%
Total Arrests with this Charge:							
Drug-related	2,122	2,403	2,792	1,611	1,638	1,560	-26.5%
Assault and Battery/Aggravated Assault	na	na	na	1,446	1,326	518	na
Disorderly Conduct, Disturbing Peace	1,563	1,654	1,679	1,357	1,351	1,071	-31.5%
Prostitution and Related	152	204	230	195	234	232	52.6%
Sexual Assault, Including Rape	34	43	59	23	22	33	-2.9%
Armed Robbery	48	54	52	73	73	57	18.8%
Murder, Manslaughter, Attempted Murder	26	33	46	24	46	7	-73.1%

Source: Worcester Police Department

⁸ Vice crimes may be thought of as comprising the "high end" of the category of public order violations, and as among the most injurious to the spirit and well-being of a neighborhood.

⁹ The 524 arrests in 2005 led to 803 charges being filed (an single arrest may result in multiple charges).

¹⁰ An increase in the number of charges of motor vehicle theft does not necessarily mean that the number of motor vehicle thefts also increased as multiple individuals may be charged for a single incident.



Table 1.6: Summary of WPD Juvenile Arrests, 2000-2005

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Change 2000-2005
Total Arrests: Youth under 17 years of age	699	694	647	568	573	524	-25.04%
Total Youth Arrests with this Charge:							
Disorderly Conduct, Disturbing Peace	126	141	132	127	90	96	-23.8%
Assault and Battery/Aggravated Assault	na	na	na	100	121	55	na
Shoplifting	102	97	90	54	56	34	-66.7%
Drug Violations	47	77	70	73	62	46	-2.1%
Vandalism	70	49	47	40	30	22	-68.6%
Breaking & Entering	55	45	51	28	13	21	-61.8%
Larceny (except motor vehicle)	15	18	18	25	18	29	93.3%
Liquor Law Violations	24	13	8	3	4	18	-25.0%
Firearms (discharge and other related violations)	18	9	12	31	20	3	-83.3%
Motor Vehicle Theft	5	3	16	9	13	42	740.0%

Source: Worcester Police Department, Crime Analysis Unit

What does this mean for Worcester?

Annual data for the six-year period from 2000 to 2005 show that the number of incidents (criminal and non-criminal) entailing police response dropped by 18,707 (16.1%), though in 2005, WPD still responded to an average of 268 incidents per day. Reports of violent crime in Worcester decreased by almost 7% during the five-year period from 2000 to 2005, while nationally these figures dropped by just 4%. In conformity with national trends, aggravated assault has been the most frequently reported violent offense in Worcester since 2000 (on average, almost two-thirds of violent offenses reported to the WPD).

Since his appointment in late 2004, the Police Chief has implemented a department restructuring designed to meet one of the primary goals of the WPD: to work more closely with the City's residents to address both crime and quality-of-life issues. Additionally, the Chief is committed to evaluating the department's performance as evidenced by the expansion of the Department's Crime Analysis Unit in the past year to ensure that officers have timely and accurate data to aid in solving crime and quality-of-life issues. WPD is also sharing its data with the community, and with the reorganization of its community policing efforts, is working systematically with neighborhood

groups to combat identified problems and to develop tactics that anticipate problems rather than simply reacting to them. The community policing approach also includes efforts to better coordinate WPD's activities with those of other municipal departments and community services such as Code Enforcement, Public Works, and neighborhood associations.

Why is it important?

Public perceptions and the regard in which police are held by the citizens they serve can have an impact on overall police effectiveness in preventing and responding to crime. Regular interaction, cooperation, and information sharing between the police and the citizens they serve are important components of effective policing. If citizens distrust or lack faith in police operations, they may be hesitant to report crimes or assist in police investigations. Therefore, the quality of each of the thousands of police-citizen interactions can shape both perceptions and outcomes. “If police services are offered courteously and responsively, then those who receive the services will presumably value the police more than they would if police services were rude and/or ineffective.”¹¹ Continued improvement in, and strengthening of, police-community relations forms the foundation of the Worcester Police Department’s (WPD) community policing initiative.

How does Worcester perform?

The Center for Community Performance Measurement surveys two populations annually to evaluate police-community relations in Worcester. The City of Worcester 2005 Citizen Survey, mailed to 10,000 randomly selected households in the City, measures Worcester residents’ satisfaction with municipal services provided by a number of City departments, including the Worcester Police Department. Among the 2,128 survey respondents in 2005, 22.4% reported that they or a member of their household had received assistance from the WPD within the past 12 months. Of those who had contact with the police during the past year, 78.6% were satisfied with the department’s response time, 83.9% were satisfied with the professionalism of staff, and 79.7% were satisfied with the quality of services provided by the WPD.

The CCPM also surveys residents who participate in the more than 50 neighborhood associations/Neighborhood Watch groups meeting throughout the City. The majority of these groups meet on a monthly basis to discuss a variety of neighborhood issues, including public safety and quality-of-life concerns. During the winter of 2005-2006, 192 participants from 25 of the neighborhood associations responded to a survey which measures participants’

perceptions of neighborhood safety, their assessment of WPD performance, and quality-of-life issues. Among respondents, 83% have participated in their neighborhood groups for two or more years and almost two-thirds have lived in their neighborhoods more than ten years. Both surveys asked respondents whether they thought crime in their neighborhoods had increased, decreased or stayed the same during the past year. As shown in Chart 2.1, 29% of Neighborhood Watch participants judged that the level of crime in their neighborhood had decreased during the last 12 months, while citywide only 6% of the respondents had the same perception.

However, when asked if they felt safe walking alone in their neighborhoods during the daytime, 94% of respondents citywide said they felt safe, compared to 84% of Neighborhood Watch participants.¹² When looking at how safe people feel at night walking alone in their neighborhoods, percentages decrease by about 30 points. About 63% of respondents citywide said they felt safe walking alone in their neighborhoods at night, compared to 52% of Neighborhood Watch participants.

Table 2.1 shows Neighborhood Watch respondents’ assessment of WPD performance regarding overall quality of services provided, officers’ interactions with citizens, officers’ responsiveness to quality-of-life concerns, and WPD’s responsiveness to the community’s overall policing needs over the past two years.¹³ About 60% of respondents felt that the quality of services provided in their neighborhoods and WPD’s responsiveness to the community’s overall policing needs were “good” or “very good.” Officers’ attitudes and behavior towards citizens received the highest rating, with 72% of respondents offering a rating of good/very good, 20% offering an average rating and 7% offering a poor rating (only two individuals offered a response of “very poor”).

¹¹ Moore, Mark with Anthony Braga. 2003. *The Bottom Line of Policing: What Citizens Should Value (and Measure!) in Police Performance*. Police Executive Research Forum.

¹² The question wording was identical on both surveys; however, the answer scale varied slightly. The 84% of neighborhood watch respondents includes those who reported feeling “very safe,” “safe,” or “somewhat safe,” while the 94% of Citizen Survey respondents includes those who reported feeling “very safe” or “somewhat safe”.

¹³ Caution is urged when comparing only two years of data; it is difficult to make definite statements about changes or trends using only two years of data. This information will continue to be collected in the coming years for further trend analysis.

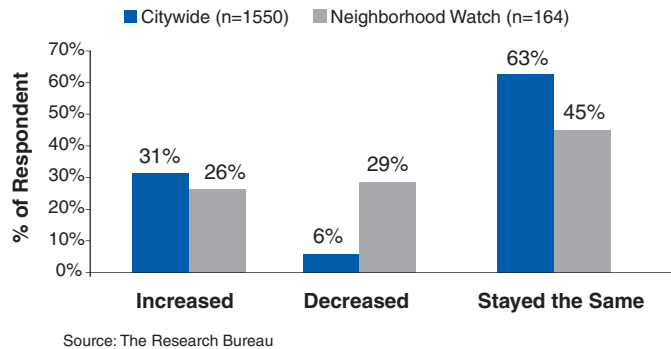


Table 2.1: Neighborhood Watch Respondent Ratings of WPD Performance

	Year	n	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Quality of services provided by WPD in your neighborhood	2005	129	1.6%	10.1%	33.3%	41.1%	14.0%
	2006	183	1.6%	9.3%	28.4%	40.4%	20.2%
WPD officers' attitude and behavior toward citizens	2005	125	0.8%	7.2%	20.8%	42.4%	28.8%
	2006	182	1.1%	6.6%	20.3%	38.5%	33.5%
WPD's responsiveness to quality-of-life issues in the community (neighborhood disputes, loud noise concerns, graffiti, etc.)	2005	121	5.8%	10.7%	28.1%	38.0%	17.4%
	2006	179	3.4%	13.4%	30.2%	32.4%	20.7%
WPD's responsiveness to the community's overall policing needs	2005	126	0.8%	11.1%	27.8%	45.2%	15.1%
	2006	175	3.4%	6.3%	30.9%	39.4%	20.0%

Source: The Research Bureau

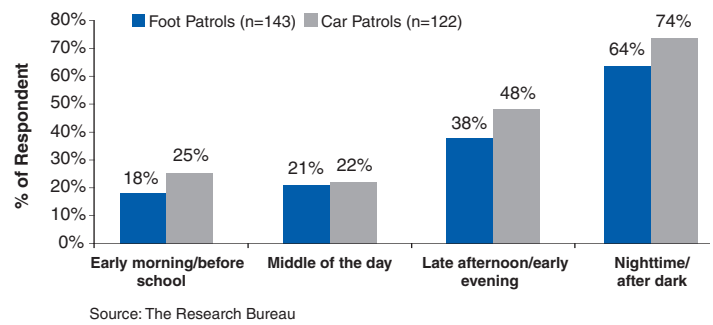
Chart 2.1: Crime in Neighborhood



Overall, 85% of respondents perceived WPD foot patrol activities in their neighborhood to be inadequate, a slight decrease compared to 91% last year. As shown in Chart 2.2, when asked to identify specific times of day when foot patrols are needed, respondents said the greatest need was “nighttime/after dark” (64%) followed by “late afternoon/early evening” (38%). Similarly, 73% of neighborhood watch respondents perceived WPD car patrols to be inadequate (a decrease of about six percentage points from 2005), and almost three-quarters of these individuals desired more car patrols at “nighttime/after dark.”

Most of the survey respondents indicated that their neighborhood group meets monthly, and 70% indicated that a police officer always attends the meeting (23% indicated that an officer attends “most of the time” and 4% stated “sometimes.”) In addition, 60% indicated that the same police officer attends each meeting. Almost all respondents (96%) indicated that they were given enough opportunities to express their opinions, while 81% judged

Chart 2.2: Are there certain times of the day when more patrols are needed?



that their opinions and suggestions were taken seriously by the WPD. Only 8% of Neighborhood Watch participants felt they were uninformed about WPD projects, programs, activities, and services.

What does this mean for Worcester?

While the survey data above provide generally favorable ratings of police-community interaction, the data also highlight a number of citizen concerns including perceptions of inadequate foot patrols in some neighborhoods and a lack of information about WPD projects, programs and activities. These are the very issues that WPD’s community policing model seeks to address. Additionally, having information about citizens’ perceptions of crime provides the WPD with an opportunity to compare perception to reality, as tracked by the Department’s expanded use of neighborhood-level crime data, and to respond to citizen concerns appropriately.



Allegations of Police Misconduct

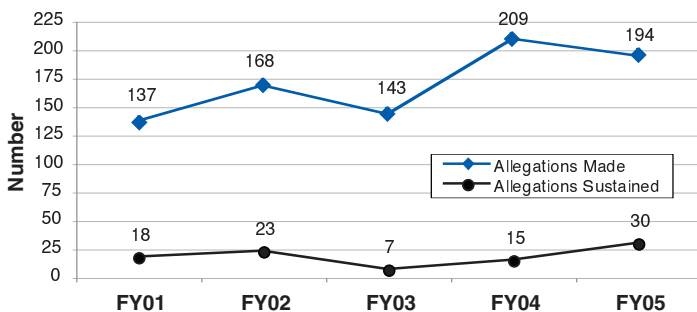
Why is it important?

Police departments are obligated to ensure that their personnel are performing their duties in accordance with the law, professional standards, and established internal procedures. The Worcester Police Department’s complaint investigation procedure provides a venue for citizens to express concerns about police conduct. The review process holds officers accountable for improper behavior, but also protects police officers against unwarranted criticism while fulfilling their duties. Citizen trust in the fairness of police conduct is essential to effective policing.

How does Worcester perform?

The Internal Affairs Division (IAD) of the Worcester Police Department reviews and investigates all citizen complaints alleging misconduct. In FY05, there were 115 complaints against the WPD containing 194 allegations.¹⁴ As shown in **Chart 3.1**, after the number of allegations of misconduct increased substantially from 143 in FY03 to 209 FY04 (a 46% increase) it decreased slightly in FY05 to 194 (a 7% decrease from FY04 to FY05). Thirty allegations in FY05 were sustained following an investigation, indicating that there was sufficient evidence supporting the charge of misconduct.¹⁵ As shown in **Chart 3.2**, almost half of all allegations in FY05 (42%) were determined to be unfounded or resolved at intake. However, despite the reduction in total allegations in FY05, the number of sustained allegations doubled between FY04 (15) and FY05 (30) and comprised 15.5% of total allegations—the highest proportion during the five-year period from FY01 to FY05.

Chart 3.1: Allegations of Police Misconduct



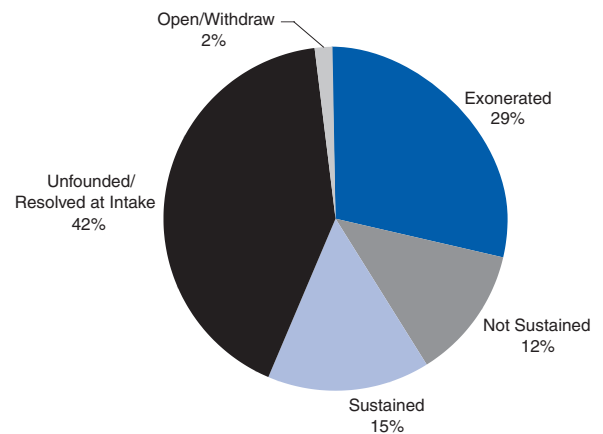
Source: Worcester Police Department, Internal Affairs Division

¹⁴ A single complaint may contain multiple allegations of misconduct.

¹⁵ In cases where evidence supports improper conduct, disciplinary action is determined by the Chief of Police.

Allegations are deemed unfounded/resolved at intake if the investigation indicates that the act or acts complained of did not occur, or they did not involve police department personnel. Allegations are not sustained if there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the charge, and exonerated indicates that the actions taken by the officer were found to be justified, lawful, and proper. Sustained allegations are those in which the investigation discloses sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegations made in the complaint. Sustained-Other indicates that the investigation revealed that the officer committed a violation other than the one named in the complaint, and policy failure means that the allegation was true, but the officer was acting in a manner consistent with policy, which indicates a policy revision is required.

Chart 3.2: Disposition of Citizen Allegations, FY05 (N = 194)

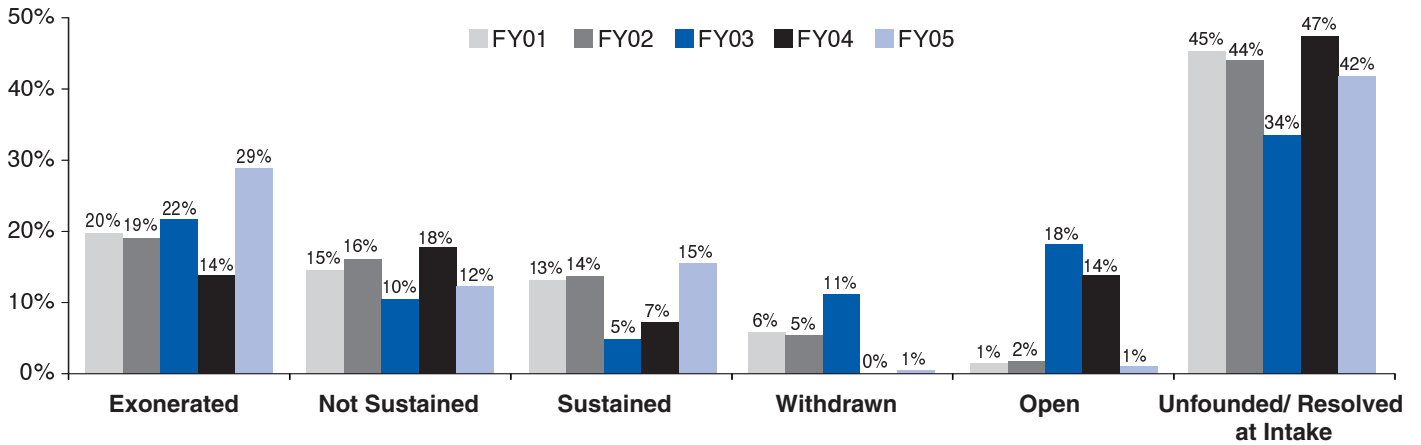


Source: Worcester Police Department, Internal Affairs Division

Chart 3.3 shows the disposition of allegations from each of the past five years. From FY04 to FY05, the percentage of allegations resulting in exoneration about doubled, from 14% to 29%, and reached the highest level during the five-year period. In FY03 and FY04, a substantial number of allegations remained open (18% and 14%, respectively), but by FY05 only 1% of the cases remained open. Additionally, the greatest proportion of allegations (about four out of every ten in FY05) continue to be those that are determined to be unfounded or are resolved at intake.



Chart 3.2: Disposition of Citizen Allegations, FY01-FY05



Source: Worcester Police Department, Internal Affairs Division

What does this mean for Worcester?

While citizen complaints of police misconduct decreased slightly in FY05, the number and percentage of sustained allegations reached a five-year high. The data also reveal a slight decrease from FY04 to FY05 in the overall proportion of allegations that were either unfounded or resolved at intake, i.e., complaints in which the alleged behavior was not unlawful or in violation of departmental policy, or in which the behavior complained of was outside the scope of WPD’s responsibility. However the number of open allegations dropped considerably, perhaps reflecting a more expeditious review of cases by the WPD’s Internal Affairs Division.

WPD’s Internal Affairs Division and its Training Division play an important role in ensuring that the department is able to hold complaints to a minimum, and that when complaints do occur, they are dealt with promptly. The importance of ongoing training of officers and a continuous review of the Department’s standards of practice have been recognized as elements critical to the success of the Chief’s reorganization initiative. For example, citizen support of community policing will likely be strongest if citizens perceive a fair and timely review of complaints that are made, and feel that the process is transparent. Questions

regarding citizen awareness of the IAD process and outcomes may be added to future citizen satisfaction surveys (see Indicator 2: Police-Community Relations). Additionally, further monitoring of the average length of time it takes to complete an investigation ought to be considered. This may be especially useful when describing the trends of open allegations, since a significant decline in these numbers occurred during the past year. We do not know whether these open allegations represent complaints received at year end (which may then be resolved in a timely manner early the next year), or whether they represent investigations which have not been completed in a timely manner.



Worcester Fire Department

Department Overview and Input Indicators

The mission of the Worcester Fire Department is to protect the lives and property of the visitors and citizens of Worcester from the adverse effects of fire, medical emergencies, and other hazardous conditions both man-made and natural.¹⁶

The Worcester Fire Department's (WFD) FY06 budget of \$28.7 million (excluding capital expenditures and fringe benefits) comprised 6.4% of the City's total operating budget.¹⁷ The budget authorized funding for 418 firefighters and 11 civilian personnel who are assigned to 23 fire companies located in 11 fire stations throughout Worcester. The City's land area encompasses 39 square miles, supporting densely populated residential areas containing single- and multi-family dwellings, an urban core containing high rise and office buildings, industrial and manufacturing complexes, and several hospitals and colleges, all of which are served by the WFD. The Fire Chief has management oversight of the department and its daily operations.

Firefighters respond to all fire and hazardous-materials situations occurring within the City, and they may also be dispatched as first responders in medical emergencies. All

fire companies are equipped with semi-automatic external defibrillators which allow firefighters to provide early critical care to cardiac-arrest patients. The WFD provides basic life-support training (first aid and CPR) to the community and is one of the largest first aid and CPR certifying agencies in central Massachusetts. The Department also sponsors numerous fire prevention and fire safety programs, and firefighters perform inspections to ensure that commercial and retail establishments comply with fire safety standards, as well as regular inspections of warehouses and vacant buildings within the City.

As shown in the table below, the WFD's budget increased from \$26.8 million in FY01 to \$28.7 million in FY06 (a modest 6.7% increase), and during the same period, staffing levels declined by more than 10% (from 479 to 429 positions). During FY01, there were 2.7 budgeted firefighter positions per 1,000 Worcester residents; by FY06, this ratio was 2.4 per 1,000.



	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	% Change FY01-FY06
Expenditures*	\$26,878,364	\$30,491,000	\$29,373,000	\$28,961,000	\$29,082,192	\$28,668,073	6.7%
Expenditures per capita	\$154.40	\$174.16	\$167.37	\$164.77	\$165.34	\$162.98	5.6%
Total Positions (Budgeted)	479	479	449	411	446	429	-10.4%
<i>Total per 1,000 population</i>	<i>2.75</i>	<i>2.74</i>	<i>2.56</i>	<i>2.34</i>	<i>2.54</i>	<i>2.44</i>	
Firefighter Positions (Budgeted)	463	466	438	401	436	418	-9.7%
<i>Firefighters per 1,000 population</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>2.3</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>2.4</i>	
Civilian Positions (Budgeted)	16	13	11	10	10	11	-31.3%
<i>Civilian positions per 1,000 population</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	

*Excluding capital expenditures and fringe benefits
 Data Sources: Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, Office of the City Auditor (Actual expenditures for FY01-FY05) and City of Worcester Annual Budget (Recommended Appropriation for FY06). Firefighter and civilian positions reflect budgeted positions in the City of Worcester Annual Budgets for the years FY01 - FY06.

¹⁶ City of Worcester Fiscal 2006 Annual Budget.

¹⁷ This report examines FY06 budget and staffing levels; while the City's fiscal year is July 1 – June 30, the performance data are typically tracked on a calendar year basis. The most recent performance data available for calendar year 2005 fall within the City's FY06.



Why is it important?

The number of fire suppression responses, first responder calls, inspections, and fire safety and prevention activities are an indicator of the workload of a fire department. The ability of emergency personnel to respond quickly to a fire or other emergency situations may be the difference between minimal and total property loss, or even life and death. Therefore, fire response time is a critical measure when assessing the overall safety of a community, and it is important that fire departments be able to assess and identify factors that delay response time, including resource allocation. Additionally, tracking both the frequency and location of fires and emergency situations to which fire personnel respond enable the Chief and City officials to examine coverage so as to ensure that appropriate protection is provided to all areas. Finally, continued efforts to promote awareness of fire prevention and fire safety are important functions of any fire department.

How does Worcester perform?

In 2005, the Worcester Fire Department (WFD) responded to 22,070 calls for service, an increase of about 1.3% (292 calls compared to 2004). As shown in **Table 4.1**, in 2005, WFD responded to 749 structure fires.¹⁸ (Caution is needed as these numbers are not directly comparable to prior years. Many situations which were previously counted as “fire; other” are now being more accurately coded as struc-

ture fires or false alarms.) From 2004 to 2005, the number of false alarms to which WFD responded appears to have increased by about 82%, from 1,705 to 3,102, though again, this is largely reflective of a more accurate description of the incidents, which were previously included in the “fire; other” category. First responder/rescue calls continue to represent the largest proportion of calls to which WFD responds, comprising nearly two-thirds (14,558) of all incidents in 2005.¹⁹

In 2005, the Worcester Fire Department’s average response time from dispatch to arrival on scene for all calls was 3 minutes 59 seconds, and represents a marked (49 second) decrease in response time compared to 2004. Improvements in call processing and the closing of fewer fire companies compared to prior years may have contributed to reduced response times.

In addition to responding to the emergency calls for fire and emergency medical services described above, the WFD performs a range of preventive functions through its fire prevention division. In 2005, the fire prevention division conducted 8,135 fire safety inspections, reviewed 950 building plans, issued over 6,000 permits, and conducted fire safety education programs at 177 locations (excluding schools) which in total reached over 11,000 individuals (a 25% increase from 2004). Additionally, 1,900 students attended the Department’s S.A.F.E. (Student Awareness of Fire Education) program which is presented in schools.

Table 4.1: Worcester Fire Department Incidents and Response Times

	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Change 2002-2005
Total Incidents/Dispatched Calls	29,350	22,839	21,778	22,070	-24.8%
First Responder/Rescue Calls	14,624	16,038	15,383	14,558	-0.5%
Structure Fires	716	454	417	749	4.6%
Arson	43	42	31	29	-32.6%
Vehicle Fires	360	334	287	184	-48.9%
Hazardous Conditions without a Fire (e.g., chemical spills, natural gas leaks, electrical equipment)	805	901	804	726	-9.8%
Good Intent	3,658	1,019	1,149	1,322	-63.9%
False Alarms	1,591	1,542	1,705	3,102	95.0%
Average Response Time	4:07	4:11	4:48	3:59	-8 seconds

Source: Worcester Fire Department

¹⁸ Statewide data for Massachusetts show that the number of structure fires increased by 3% from 2004 to 2005.

¹⁹ Worcester firefighters are dispatched to medical emergencies as first responders to provide basic life support services (CPR, first aid, and early defibrillation). Their role is to begin emergency medical care and/or stabilize the patient until the ambulance service arrives. Worcester’s police officers are also first responders, and in 2005, WPD responded to 5,224 911 medical emergency incidents. For a further discussion of Worcester’s First Responder System, see Research Bureau Report 06-03 available at www.wrrb.org.



What does this mean for Worcester?

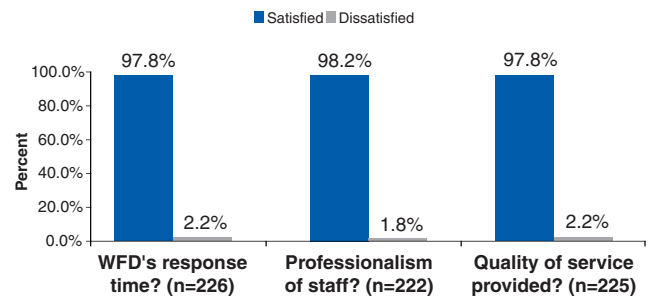
In 2005, the WFD responded to about 25% fewer calls compared to just three years earlier (22,070 calls in 2005 vs. 29,350 calls in 2002). During that period, the Department also saw a shift in the type of incidents to which it responded. By 2005, fire suppression incidents represented a minority (about 35%) of all incidents, with first responder/rescue incidents comprising the majority (about 65%) of all incidents. The reduction in structure fires may be due in part to the Fire Prevention Division's outreach, education, and inspection activities, as well as to changes in construction materials and the installation of smoke detectors and sprinkler systems.

Given these shifts in activities, what are the implications for the organization of the Department, the deployment of its resources, and apparatus? As it has on several previous occasions, The Research Bureau again suggests that the WFD consider changes to its organizational and operational structure. Based on the new priorities of the Department, this could allow the WFD to better balance its budgetary bottom line with its new responsibilities in keeping with its mandate to protect the lives and property of the citizens and visitors of Worcester. For example, reducing the number of fire companies could enable the WFD to redeploy firefighters and better meet the NFPA standard of staffing fire apparatus with a minimum of four firefighters. In recent years, the WFD has made better use of data and technology, and these tools can be used to help decide where and how its resources are allocated in the future. In FY06, the WFD's budget of \$28.7 million supported 50 fewer positions compared to its \$26.8 million budget in FY01. Instead of supporting additional firefighter positions during this period, budget increases were consumed by contractually obligated increases in firefighter salaries and benefits. Given this reality, and the likelihood that the Department will continue to face fiscal constraints, changing the structure of the organization may result in greater operational efficiencies, and further improvements in performance.

Satisfaction with Fire Department

The Center for Community Performance Measurement's fourth annual survey of citizen satisfaction with municipal services measured Worcester residents' satisfaction with services provided by the Worcester Fire Department.²⁰ A mail survey was sent out to a random selection of 10,000 Worcester citizens during the summer of 2005, and findings are based on the 2,128 surveys that were returned. Only those households that received services from WFD during the preceding 12 months were asked more detailed questions about the quality of the services they received. Eleven percent of the households surveyed reported contact with the WFD for reasons ranging from reported fires to emergency medical services. Respondents who had contacted the WFD were then asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their experience. As shown in Chart 4.1, high levels of satisfaction were reported for the quality of service they received (97.8% satisfied), the professionalism of the staff (98.2% satisfied), and the amount of time the WFD took to respond (97.8% satisfied).

Chart 4.1: Satisfaction with the Fire Department



Source: The Research Bureau

²⁰ See CCPM publication 06-02, Citizen Satisfaction with Municipal Services and Quality of Life in Worcester:2005 Survey (available at www.wrrb.org) for a complete discussion of the survey findings.



Why is it important?

An ambulance is dispatched to respond to each 911 call for medical assistance. In Worcester, ambulance services are provided by UMass Memorial EMS. The all-paramedic, hospital-based service operates a fleet of six ambulances staffed by 50 full-time and 25 part-time paramedics. Since 1991, UMass Memorial has operated the ambulance service at no cost to the City.²¹

Speed of response in treating those who are seriously ill or critically injured can improve the patient’s odds of survival. Therefore, the average response time from the receipt of a call to a provider arriving on the scene is a key industry standard by which EMS performance is measured.

How does Worcester perform?

As shown in **Table 5.1**, the number of 911 emergency calls to which UMass Memorial EMS responded increased from 21,836 in 2000 to 26,498 in 2005 (a 21.4 % increase). During this period, the number of calls resulting in the transport of a patient to a hospital increased by nearly one third, from 15,028 (about 69% of all calls) to 19,687 (about 74% of all calls).

During 2005, UMass Memorial EMS’s response time for all calls maintained its all-time low at 5 minutes 56 seconds, the same as 2004 and 15 seconds less than in 2000. While average response times for life-threatening injuries or illnesses (Priority 1 responses) have consistently been shorter than the average response time for all calls, Priority 1 average response time was 43 seconds higher in 2005 compared to 2000. Worcester has consistently demonstrated response times that are better (lower) than the industry standard of 90% of paramedic responses arriving on scene within 8 minutes.

Satisfaction with UMass Memorial EMS

The Center for Community Performance Measurement’s fourth annual survey of citizen satisfaction with municipal services, distributed to 10,000 included questions regarding

respondents’ experiences with ambulance/paramedic services provided by UMass Memorial EMS. Among the 2,128 citizens responding, 13.4 percent stated that they or a member of their household had received assistance from UMass Memorial EMS during the preceding 12 months. These individuals were then asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their experience. High levels of satisfaction were reported for the quality of service they received (97.8% satisfied), the professionalism of the staff (98.1% satisfied), and the amount of time the ambulance took to respond (97.0% satisfied).

What does this mean for Worcester?

Worcester has a somewhat unique structure for providing emergency medical services. Among 200 cities surveyed by the Journal of Emergency Medical Services, approximately 7.4% utilize hospital-based EMS services; and Worcester was the only northeastern city providing such a service. As a hospital-based EMS service, UMass Memorial EMS provides those it serves with the benefits of clinical oversight provided by UMass Medical Center’s Department of Emergency Medicine, and ongoing training and professional development programs available to its staff. Additionally, a full time medical director oversees UMass Memorial EMS operations, providing quality assurance and clinical oversight expertise. Highly trained paramedics are qualified to perform advanced medical procedures in the field that could otherwise be performed only in a hospital setting.

It should be stressed that UMass Memorial EMS provides this service at no charge to the City. Under this arrangement, the City does not have to purchase or maintain ambulances, or provide advanced life support training to other City personnel. Thus, not only does the current structure perform better than industry standards, it saves Worcester’s taxpayers the expense of operating a municipally run ambulance service.

Table 5.1: UMass Memorial EMS Responses

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Change 2000-2005
Responses	21,836	23,620	24,690	26,024	24,671	26,498	21.4%
Transports	15,028	16,022	17,108	18,865	17,040	19,687	31.0%
Average Response Time	6:11	6:06	6:11	6:05	5:56	5:56	-0:15
Average Priority One Response Time	5:08	5:13	5:07	5:13	5:46	5:51	+0:43

Source: UMass Memorial EMS

²¹ In July 1977, ambulance service was transferred from the Worcester Police Department to Worcester City Hospital. With Worcester City Hospital’s closing in 1991, ambulance services were taken over by UMass Medical Center, which became UMass Memorial Health Care in 1997.



Mission Statement:

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The Research Bureau

Worcester Regional Research Bureau
319 Main Street, Worcester, Massachusetts
Telephone: 508 799 7169 Facsimile: 508 799 4720
www.wrrb.org

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