

Review of the Cleveland Division of Police's Homicide Investigation Process

**Findings and Recommendations
December 2016**

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Executive Summary

When a human life is lost due to violence, the devastating effects are felt throughout the entire community. This is why one of the most important functions of local police agencies is to thoroughly investigate homicide cases and bring justice to victims and their families.

Effective homicide investigations are also critical for protecting the overall safety and well-being of the community. Homicide detectives can play a key role in **preventing** future deaths by identifying and apprehending perpetrators and incapacitating offenders.¹ Additionally, by utilizing tools such as crime analysis, police agencies can understand ongoing crime patterns and trends regarding violence related to gangs and drugs. This can help police anticipate when retaliation killings are likely and intervene to prevent one homicide from sparking a series of killings.

Finally, by ensuring that homicide detectives are thoroughly trained and provided with the resources they need, police agencies can also help prevent the possibility of wrongful convictions caused by false eyewitness identification or other evidentiary problems.

Project Background

In 2014, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) was selected by the U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to implement and manage the Homicide Investigations Enhancement Training & Technical Assistance Project. As part of this project, PERF is conducting comprehensive assessments of the homicide investigation policies and practices within four police departments across the country, and is assisting each site with implementing strategies to strengthen its homicide investigation function. The project sites were chosen based on criteria that included: a recent rise in homicide rates, homicide clearance rates that are decreasing and/or below the national average, and a commitment of police department leaders to improving homicide investigation procedures.

In the City of Cleveland, Ohio, the number of homicides has steadily risen since 2013. In 2015 the city experienced 128 homicides, compared to 101 homicides in 2013. Furthermore, starting in 2013 the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) also experienced a significant drop in its homicide clearance rates. In 2012 the department cleared 71 percent of homicide cases; since that time, the CDP Homicide Unit's clearance rate has hovered in the 51-56 percent range, and in 2015 the clearance rate was 56 percent. This matches the national clearance rate for cities with Cleveland's population size, which was also 56 percent in 2015.² The CDP agreed to participate in this project with the goal of strengthening its homicide investigation process and bringing its clearance rate back to the higher levels of several years ago.

¹ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

² FBI, "2015 Crime in the United States." <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2015/crime-in-the-u.s.-2015/tables/table-25>

PERF began its review of the CDP's homicide investigation policies and practices in April 2016. This review was conducted by an assessment team comprised of law enforcement practitioners and researchers with expertise and experience in homicide investigations. The review included: onsite interviews with more than 50 CDP personnel from across the department; interviews with personnel from the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCME), the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO), and the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association (CPPA); a review of files from 114 homicide cases that occurred between January and October 2015; and a review of the CDP's written policies, homicide logs and data, organizational charts, and sample crime reports.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

This report summarizes the key findings and recommendations that emerged from PERF's review. At the outset, two important points should be noted.

First, though the CDP is facing extremely significant challenges with respect to staffing, equipment, technology, and other resources, PERF found that Homicide Unit personnel – along with CDP leaders and other personnel from throughout the department -- demonstrated a strong commitment towards solving homicides and improving the investigation process. **In many ways, they are doing the best job that can be expected given the limited resources available.** The recommendations provided in this report aim to ensure that these committed individuals have the support, guidance, and tools they need to better serve the City of Cleveland.

Second, many of the challenges faced by the CDP are not unique. Although the recommendations in this report are tailored to the CDP, many recommendations could apply to police agencies throughout the country. Like the CDP, many other police agencies are struggling with declining or stagnant homicide clearance rates, and many of these agencies share common problems – understaffed investigative units, a general lack of funding, gaps in training and supervision, etc. – that can have an impact on how cases are investigated.

Following are the key findings from PERF's review and recommendations for strengthening the CDP's homicide investigation processes and improving homicide clearance rates. These recommendations are based on existing research and best practices for conducting homicide investigations.

- 1) Written Policies and Procedures:** The CDP's existing written policies and procedures fail to provide meaningful investigative guidance or accountability.
 - **Recommendation – Update Written Policies:** The CDP should update the written policies and procedures that govern homicide investigations, including revising the existing Homicide Unit Manual. Policy revision should involve a department-wide focus on examining and updating the written policies for all CDP units involved in homicide investigations.
 - **Recommendation – Revise Policy Content:** Policies should include detailed, substantive direction on topics such as: detective duties and responsibilities; detective selection and supervision; training; performance evaluations and other

accountability mechanisms; and the steps that must be taken during each stage of the investigative process.

- **Recommendation – Disseminate Policies to Detectives:** All new Homicide Unit detectives should receive a copy of the revised Homicide Unit Manual. They should be trained on and held accountable for following the directives contained in the manual.
- **Recommendation – Incorporate Best Practices into Policies:** Revised policies should incorporate the recommendations in this report and the current research on best practices for homicide investigations.

2) Staffing and Caseload Management: Detectives in the Homicide Unit are currently carrying very large caseloads due to unit understaffing and its current shift structure. In 2015, each CDP Homicide Unit detective worked an estimated average of 10 new homicide cases during the year, which is twice the number that is recommended according to research on homicide investigation best practices.³ This is a key problem that the CDP must immediately address. Revisions to policies, training, and other areas discussed in this report will not have the desired impact unless the CDP commits to providing the Homicide Unit with necessary staffing resources.

- **Recommendation – Increase Homicide Unit Staffing:** The Homicide Unit ideally should be staffed so that each detective is the lead on an average of four to six new homicide cases per year.
- **Recommendation – Revise On-Call System:** PERF’s review of CDP homicide data found that more homicides occur during the overnight shift (12am-8am) than at any other time. However, the Homicide Unit does not have a full-time overnight shift, and its current on-call system contributes to detectives’ large caseloads and makes it difficult for detectives to respond to homicide scenes within the recommended 30-minute period. Research shows there is a relationship between case clearance and whether detectives arrive at the scene during this 30-minute window;⁴ however, PERF’s case review found documentation of detectives arriving at the crime scene within 30 minutes in only around 15 percent of the cases examined. The Homicide Unit should consider implementing a full-time overnight shift or, at a minimum, rotating the on-call detectives more frequently (the current on-call rotation is one month).
- **Recommendation – Review Homicide Data:** The Homicide Unit should review data to determine the times of day and days of the week when homicides are most likely to occur in Cleveland. This will help the unit assess the times when more detectives are needed to cover incoming cases.
- **Recommendation – Reduce Detective Caseloads:** When possible, the CDP should seek to maximize the amount of time that Homicide Unit detectives spend investigating homicide cases by limiting the time they spend performing other

³ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁴ Wellford, Charles and James Cronin, *Clearing Up Homicide Clearance Rates*, National Institute of Justice Journal (April 2000), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000243b.pdf>. See also the full report for a more comprehensive look at this study: *An Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multistate Study* (October 1999), http://www.jrsa.org/pubs/reports/homicides_report.pdf.

duties, such as investigating non-homicide cases, performing administrative work, and serving on departmental details.

- **Recommendation – Provide Updated Equipment:** The CDP should consider equipping Homicide Unit detectives with tablets, smartphones, or other devices that would enable them to perform tasks while in the field. This would help them perform their jobs more efficiently and reduce the amount of time spent going from the field to the office.

3) Detective Selection and Training: The CDP's current detective selection process is not based on a set of standard, objective criteria that will adequately ensure that Homicide Unit detectives are chosen based on their ability to investigate cases. This is especially problematic given a lack of consistent, formal, and in-depth investigative training provided to detectives in CDP investigative units, including the Homicide Unit.

- **Recommendation – Revise Selection Process:** CDP leaders should work with the CPPA to revise the bargaining agreement that governs detective selection. Detectives should be selected into the Homicide unit pursuant to a rigorous, formal process, using a set of established qualification criteria that are consistently applied to all candidates.
- **Recommendation – Require Basic Investigations Training:** New detectives in all investigative units should receive mandatory training on basic investigation skills and techniques, including case management and documentation, crime scene management, report writing, interview and interrogation skills, basic forensics, evidence collection (including digital evidence), managing witnesses, the use of technology, legal requirements, and departmental policies and procedures.
- **Recommendation – Require Advanced Training for Homicide Detectives:** Detectives in the Homicide Unit should receive training – both upon entering the unit and throughout their tenure in their unit – on advanced investigative techniques specific to conducting death investigations. In addition to the investigative skills taught to all new detectives, Homicide Unit detectives should receive training on conducting death investigations, constitutional law, advanced forensics and evidence collection, crime analysis, best practices for homicide investigations, and how to investigate specific types of cases handled by Homicide detectives, such as officer-involved shootings and child fatalities.
- **Recommendation – Strengthen On-the-Job Training:** The CDP should strengthen its on-the-job (OJT) training to ensure that new Homicide Unit detectives receive appropriate field training and mentoring. This includes developing an OJT guidebook and setting benchmarks that new Homicide Unit detectives must meet before they are assigned full time to the unit.

4) Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight: PERF found that detectives in the CDP's Homicide Unit are talented and committed to their work. However, the CDP should put mechanisms in place to ensure that detectives have the guidance and oversight they need to thoroughly and effectively investigate homicide cases.

- **Recommendation – Strengthen Documentation and Data Collection:** The CDP should take steps to ensure that cases are properly documented. This includes including directions on proper case documentation and reporting in the revised

Homicide Unit Manual, as well as strengthening the department's electronic records management system so that it can be fully leveraged by Homicide Unit detectives. The Homicide Unit should also collect and maintain consistent statistical data regarding measures such as detective clearance rates and caseloads.

- **Recommendation – Establish Investigative Plan and Checklist:** At the outset of each case, Homicide Unit supervisors should work with detectives to establish a detailed investigative plan and formal case checklist. Sample investigative plans and checklists should be included in the revised Homicide Unit Manual and should be part of the official case file.
- **Recommendation – Conduct Supervisory Case Reviews:** Supervisors should conduct mandatory, regular case reviews for the purpose of identifying potential new leads, addressing any gaps in the detective's investigative process, and updating the investigative plan. The review process should be outlined in the Homicide Unit Manual and should include reviews of the investigative plan and checklist, as well as the detectives' reports and case file documentation.
- **Recommendation – Strengthen Evaluation Process:** The Homicide Unit Manual should outline a formal process for evaluating Homicide Unit detectives. Evaluations should be designed to measure whether the detective is conducting thorough investigations, performing all necessary case follow up, and properly documenting all investigative tasks and findings. Evaluations should be conducted every six months and should include a review of each detective's case files, clearance rates, supervisor assessments, and detective self-assessments. The CDP should have a formal plan in place for providing additional training and assistance to underperforming detectives.
- **Recommendation – Establish a Cold Case Unit:** The CDP should explore establishing a Cold Case Unit whose mission is to clear unsolved homicide cases and provide a reliable quality assurance check on homicide investigations.

5) Internal and External Coordination: Successful homicide investigations rely on collaboration among various units within the CDP, as well as with external stakeholders such as prosecutors and crime lab technicians from the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office. PERF found that more coordination and communication between these units are needed.

- **Recommendation – Emphasize the Team Approach:** CDP leaders should prioritize improving cross-agency communication and collaboration and should emphasize the importance of taking a team approach to preventing and solving crimes. This message should be reinforced in written policies and training. The CDP should consider assembling a homicide investigations team to provide input on policy development, share ideas for strengthening the investigation process, and improve cross-agency information
- **Recommendation – Strengthen Information-Sharing Processes:** The CDP should coordinate regular training briefings, during which members of the various units could brief one another about their policies, protocols, capabilities, and missions. This would help units better understand how their missions, goals, and functions intersect.

- ***Recommendation – Provide Adequate Resources to CDP Units:*** The CDP should take steps to ensure that all units involved in homicide investigations have the staffing, training, equipment, and technology they need to successfully complete their missions.
- ***Recommendation – Prioritize Response to Non-Fatal Shootings:*** The CDP should make it a priority to immediately respond to and investigate all shootings, including non-fatal shootings, that occur in the City of Cleveland. The department should implement policies that require detectives from the District Detective Units to respond to the scene of a non-fatal shooting, and should take steps to improve ongoing collaboration between the Homicide Unit and DDU detectives.
- ***Recommendation – Expand Crime Analysis:*** The CDP should invest in the staffing, tools, and technology needed to expand its crime analysis capabilities. Research has shown that crime analysis can play a critical role in effective homicide investigations.⁵ Putting the mechanisms in place to better understand connections between crimes, suspects, victims, witnesses, locations, etc. could help greatly strengthen the CDP’s investigative process.
- ***Recommendation – Strengthen Coordination with External Agencies:*** CDP leaders should work with officials from the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor’s Office and the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner’s Office to establish strong information-sharing protocols and ensure that their policies and goals are aligned.

Moving Forward

The CDP must continue to demonstrate that **preventing and solving** homicides is a top priority for the department. Participating in this project is a good first step towards this goal, and the CDP must now build upon these efforts by ensuring that personnel have the guidance and support they need to conduct thorough homicide investigations, improve clearance rates, and better protect and serve the City of Cleveland.

PERF, with support from BJA, can provide ongoing technical assistance to help the CDP implement these reforms. In addition to providing the CDP with guidance on best practices, PERF will work with BJA to establish a consortium of experts comprised of practitioners, trainers, researchers, and others experienced in homicide investigations, to provide training and technical assistance. PERF will also help connect CDP leaders with other police agencies that can provide peer-to-peer assistance with training, policy development, and the implementation of effective homicide investigation strategies.

⁵ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

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Introduction

In 2014, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) was selected by the U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to implement and manage the Homicide Investigations Enhancement Training & Technical Assistance Project. As part of this project, PERF is conducting comprehensive assessments of the homicide investigation processes in four police departments across the country, recommending individualized strategies to improve homicide clearance rates, and offering ongoing technical assistance to help each site implement the recommendations.

This report summarizes PERF's review of the Cleveland, Ohio Division of Police (CDP) and provides recommendations for addressing gaps in policies and procedures in order to improve the CDP's homicide clearance rates.

Though the CDP is facing significant challenges with respect to staffing, equipment, technology, and other resources, PERF found that Homicide Unit personnel – along with CDP leaders and other personnel from throughout the department -- demonstrated a strong commitment to solving homicides and improving the investigation process. The recommendations in this report aim to ensure that these committed individuals have the support, guidance, and tools they need to better serve the City of Cleveland.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

PERF's recommendations are based on research and best practices for homicide investigations, and focus on the following key areas of concern that PERF identified during its review:

- ***Homicide Unit Policies and Procedures:*** The CDP's existing written policies and procedures, particularly the Homicide Unit Manual, fail to provide meaningful investigative guidance or accountability. It contains information that is outdated, unclear, and irrelevant to homicide investigations, and most of the Homicide Unit detectives and supervisors were unaware of the manual's existence or were unfamiliar with its contents. The Homicide Unit Manual should be revised to provide clear policy directives, and detectives should be trained on it and held accountable for using it.
- ***Detective Selection Process:*** The CDP's current detective selection process is not based on a set of standard criteria that will adequately ensure that Homicide Unit detectives are chosen based on their ability to investigate cases. The CDP should revise the detective selection process so that it is based on objective criteria for assessing investigative ability. This process should be outlined in the Homicide Unit Manual and consistently applied for all candidates.
- ***Investigations Training:*** Detectives in the CDP's investigative units, including the Homicide Unit, do not receive consistent, formal, and comprehensive investigations training. This training gap exists for both new and veteran detectives. All CDP

detectives should receive formal investigative training, and Homicide Unit detectives should receive specialized training related to investigating homicide cases.

- **Homicide Unit Staffing and Caseload Management:** Detectives in the Homicide Unit are currently carrying very large caseloads due to unit understaffing and the current shift structure. This is a key problem that the CDP must address immediately. Revisions to policies, training, and other areas discussed in this report will not have the desired impact unless the CDP commits to providing the Homicide Unit with necessary staffing resources. It is important for the CDP to implement strategies to relieve the current caseload burden on Homicide detectives.
- **Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight:** Detectives in the CDP's Homicide Unit are talented and committed to their work. However, the Homicide Unit lacks mechanisms for ensuring that detectives are properly supervised and evaluated, and there is no formal case planning or review system to ensure that cases are being investigated thoroughly and effectively. Implementing these accountability mechanisms is critical for strengthening the Homicide Unit.
- **Internal and External Coordination:** There is a significant lack of coordination and communication among the various CDP units. The department is highly fragmented; and units largely act independently of one another, even though their missions and functions often overlap. The CDP must take steps to improve coordination throughout the department and ensure that units have the staffing, training, and resources they need to complete their missions.
- **Homicide Unit Equipment and Technology:** The CDP's Homicide Unit is lacking many of the tools and technologies necessary to perform basic investigative functions. The CDP must review the resource needs of the Homicide Unit and develop a plan for addressing these needs, both presently and as its needs change moving forward.

PERF recognizes that many of the recommendations included in this report will require long-term planning and implementation, as well as significant investments in additional staffing and funding. The conclusion of this report provides suggestions for steps that the CDP can take now to immediately strengthen its homicide investigation process. Additionally, PERF and BJA will continue to provide ongoing technical assistance to the CDP as it works to implement the recommendations found in this report.

Preventing homicides: Research has shown that effective homicide investigations help bring perpetrators to justice, and can also help prevent future homicides by reducing retaliation killings and incapacitating repeat offenders.¹ Additionally, by utilizing tools such as crime analysis, police agencies can understand ongoing crime patterns and trends regarding violence related to gangs and drugs and develop comprehensive strategies to address these issues. And by ensuring that homicide detectives are thoroughly trained and provided with the resources they need, police

¹ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

agencies can also help prevent against the possibility of wrongful convictions caused by false eyewitness identification or other evidentiary problems.²

It is therefore critical that homicides be investigated thoroughly, that investigators have the tools they need, and that investigations incorporate practices that research has found to be promising for solving homicide cases.

Methodology

This review was conducted by an assessment team of two PERF researchers and four subject matter experts. The subject matter experts included a former police chief of two major city police departments; a former homicide commander from a large police department; a current deputy police chief with more than 20 years of policing experience; and a criminologist with more than 40 years of research experience, including extensive research regarding homicide investigations.³

Interviews: The assessment team conducted site visits to the CDP in April and June 2016. During the course of the two visits, the team members interviewed more than 50 CDP personnel, including members of the executive command staff; all Homicide Unit lieutenants and sergeants; Homicide Unit detectives; patrol officers and supervisors; crime analysts; crime scene technicians; video and cell phone evidence technicians; forensic technicians; dispatchers and 911 call takers; and district commanders and detectives.

PERF also interviewed personnel from the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (which houses the County's forensics lab), the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, and the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association (CPPA), which represents CDP police officers and detectives up to the rank of sergeant. Each person interviewed was forthcoming, cooperative, open to new ideas, and clearly passionate and dedicated to improving homicide investigations and serving the people of Cleveland.

Case Review: During the site visits, PERF's Senior Research Criminologist reviewed the files of 114 homicide cases that occurred between January and October of 2015. Of the 114 cases reviewed, approximately 52 percent were cleared.⁴ (For more information about the CDP's clearance rates and a comparison of these rates to the national average, see the section "Homicide Unit Staffing and Caseload Management" later in this report.) The purpose of

² For example, the Innocence Project recently provided training to New Orleans Police Department investigators regarding the steps that detectives should take during an investigation to avoid the potential for a wrongful conviction. "In groundbreaking partnership, Innocence Project new Orleans trains NOPD detectives," *The New Orleans Advocate* (Nov. 6, 2016), http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/crime_police/article_80a8334a-a2ab-11e6-a99f-ff72cb52ad66.html. Although PERF saw no evidence that Cleveland has a problem with wrongful convictions, PERF recommends that detectives in CDP and other agencies receive similar training and be provided with resources on how to prevent false eyewitness identifications. See PERF, *A National Survey of Eyewitness Identification Procedures in Law Enforcement Agencies*. (March 8, 2013). http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Eyewitness_Identification/a%20national%20survey%20of%20eyewitness%20identification%20procedures%20in%20law%20enforcement%20agencies%202013.pdf

³ See Appendix B for a list of the PERF assessment team members.

⁴ This includes clearances by arrest or by exceptional means.

PERF's case file review was to collect data to help understand the nature of homicides and homicide investigations in Cleveland, as well as to identify any obstacles to clearing cases. The case files were evaluated using metrics that have been found to be associated with homicide case clearance, including the existence and cooperation of witnesses, the collection and examination of physical evidence, case file organization and documentation, and indications of supervisory case review.⁵ The full list of review metrics, along with complete findings from the case review, can be found at Appendix A.

Policy Review: The assessment team reviewed the CDP's Homicide Unit Manual and written policies and procedures that govern crime scene and evidence preservation and processing. The team also reviewed CDP's homicide logs, sample intelligence reports, organizational charts, sample crime reports, and staffing and clearance data.

Homicide Unit Policies and Procedures

Finding: The CDP's written policies and procedures, particularly the Homicide Unit Manual, fail to provide meaningful investigative guidance or accountability. The manual contains information that is outdated, unclear, and irrelevant to homicide investigations, and most of the Homicide Unit detectives and supervisors were unaware of the manual's existence or were unfamiliar with its contents.

Homicide Unit Manual Contents

The CDP Homicide Unit Manual, which was revised in April 2015, contains nearly 300 pages of information, including: organizational charts and position descriptions; General Police Orders (GPOs) covering matters such as death investigations and evidence and crime scene processing; training guides; and sample reports and investigative checklists.

Though some of the information included in the manual is useful, much of the information is outdated, unclear, or irrelevant to homicide investigations, and the manual provides little meaningful direction regarding supervision, accountability, and case review.

For example, the Homicide Unit Manual includes a training guide on death investigations that was developed by the National Medicolegal Review Panel in 1999. This guide contains valuable information, but it is unclear whether the CDP intends for the guide to be official department policy that detectives will be trained on and held accountable for following.

⁵Wellford, Charles and James Cronin, *Clearing Up Homicide Clearance Rates*, National Institute of Justice Journal (April 2000), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000243b.pdf>. See also the full report for a more comprehensive look at this study: *An Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multistate Study* (October 1999), http://www.jrsa.org/pubs/reports/homicides_report.pdf.

The manual also includes two different checklists for file management, and a number of sample reports. These documents are presented without context, and it is unclear whether they represent required protocols or merely guidance for detectives.

Additionally, the manual includes sections that do not directly pertain to homicide investigations, such as procedures governing agencies that are not part of the CDP. To the extent that these policies are important for homicide detectives to know, they should be located elsewhere in CDP policies; their inclusion in the Homicide Unit Manual is unnecessary and creates confusion.

Homicide Unit Manual Usage

Even the strongest policies will be rendered meaningless if personnel are not properly trained on their use and held accountable for following the requirements they contain.

PERF found that the majority of Homicide Unit detectives and supervisors had never received the Homicide Unit Manual, and most did not even know that it existed. Personnel are not automatically given the manual upon joining the unit; they do not receive training on the manual's contents; and they are not held accountable for following the policies and procedures contained in the manual.

This absence of strong policy guidance is an issue that the CDP must address immediately. Clear policies and procedures are critical for ensuring that detectives are aware of their duties and responsibilities and for ensuring that important investigative steps are not missed. The Homicide Unit should have a set of standard protocols to govern case assignments, crime scene response, evidence collection and submission, reporting and documentation, case reviews, and other critical components of a homicide investigation. These protocols should be made clear to Homicide Unit detectives, and they should provide the basis for evaluating detective performance and ensuring that cases are investigated thoroughly and consistently.

Homicide investigations involve personnel from across the CDP, including patrol officers, crime analysts, forensic technicians, and detectives from other units. **Therefore, a department-wide focus to improve homicide clearances will require updating and revising the policies and procedures governing not just the Homicide Unit, but also any other CDP unit that is involved in homicide investigations.** The effort to update these policies should be coordinated and collaborative across the department. Specific policy recommendations for other units can be found in Recommendations 32-72 of this report.

Recommendations: Homicide Unit Policies and Procedures

- ***Recommendation #1:* The Homicide Unit Manual should be revised so that its primary purpose is to provide clear and comprehensive guidance on the duties and responsibilities of Homicide Unit personnel. It should include a set of standard policies and protocols for conducting homicide investigations, and should prominently feature a detailed, step-by-step description of actions to be taken at each stage of the investigation process. The manual should also include mechanisms**

to ensure that Homicide Unit personnel are held accountable for the following policy requirements:

- The Homicide Unit Manual should include detailed guidance and direction regarding the following topics:
 - The specific duties and responsibilities for Homicide Unit lieutenants, sergeants, and detectives.
 - The process for selection into the Homicide Unit, including the qualifications that candidates must meet, the application and hiring process, and the criteria used for selection. (See Recommendations 8-10)
 - Training requirements for both newly-assigned and veteran Homicide detectives. (See Recommendations 11-15)
 - The process for assigning cases to detectives. (See Recommendations 16-20)
 - Policies regarding how shifts will be organized and staffed. (See Recommendations 16-20)
 - Personnel leave policies.
 - Overtime policies, including how overtime is authorized.
 - Crime scene response, including who will respond and the required timeframe for responding.
 - Each step that must be taken while at the crime scene, including securing and managing the scene, conducting the initial canvass for witnesses, identifying and collecting evidence, and communications between detectives, supervisors, and other personnel at the scene. The manual should clearly state who is responsible for each task and should provide detailed information regarding how each task should be completed. (See Recommendation 26)
 - Protocols on who should attend autopsies.
 - Protocols for securing witnesses, transporting witnesses from the scene to the Homicide Unit, and interviewing witnesses.
 - Protocols for submitting evidence for forensic analysis, including chain of custody requirements, the process for requesting forensic testing, and procedures for following up on results.
 - The required reports that must be completed throughout the duration of the investigation, and a detailed description of when each report must be submitted, what it must include, and who is responsible for completing and reviewing the report. (See Recommendations 22)
 - A list of all forms and reports that must be included in the case file. (See Recommendation 22)
 - The process for securing and accessing case files and case information
 - The procedure for supervisory case review, including the timeframe for each review, a checklist of items for review, and how the review should be documented. (See Recommendations 25-27)
 - Requirements for case follow up, and how the follow up will be documented.

- The process for detective and supervisor evaluations, including when evaluations will be conducted, the criteria used for evaluation, and how evaluations will be documented. (See Recommendations 28-30)
 - Protocols for handling special cases, such as an officer-involved shooting or a mass casualty event.
 - Any other topics as identified by CDP leaders.
- **Recommendation #2: The revised Homicide Unit Manual should be organized so that information is presented clearly and in a way that is easy to follow.**
- The manual should be divided into clearly-marked sections and include a detailed Table of Contents.
 - The homicide investigation checklist should be featured prominently and not “buried” within the manual.
 - Sample checklists and reports should be presented with context so that detectives understand their relevance and how to complete them.
- **Recommendation #3: The Homicide Unit Manual should only include CDP policies and procedures that are directly related to homicide investigations.**
- The current Homicide Unit Manual includes external training guides. If there are procedures in these external training guides that the CDP would like to adopt, these procedures should be put into a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the Homicide Unit.
 - Policies and procedures that are only indirectly related to homicide investigations should be removed from the Homicide Unit Manual and presented to personnel in a separate format.
- **Recommendation #4: All current Homicide Unit personnel should be given a copy of the Homicide Unit Manual, and new personnel should be given a copy of the manual upon their arrival to the unit. Supervisors should review the manual with Homicide Unit detectives, and detectives should be held accountable for following the policies and procedures contained in the manual as part of their performance evaluations.**
- **Recommendation #5: The CDP should review the current written policies and procedures for each CDP unit involved in homicide investigations, and draft or update the policies as needed. Specific policy recommendations for the various units can be found in Recommendations 32-72.**

- **Recommendation #6: The revised policies and procedures should reflect the current best practices for homicide investigations. When developing policies, the CDP should look to research-based practice guides and consult with police agencies that have demonstrated successful investigative practices.**
 - Appendix C includes a list of resources that detail best practices for homicide investigations and other investigative policies and practices. The CDP should consult these resources when developing its policies.
 - In addition to this list, PERF can help the CDP identify further resources as part of its ongoing technical assistance efforts. PERF can also provide sample policies from other police agencies and connect CDP leaders to leaders in other agencies who can provide peer-to-peer assistance with policy development.

- **Recommendation #7: The CDP should assemble a team to provide input on policy development, share ideas for strengthening the investigation process, and discuss strategies and next steps.**
 - This team should include leaders from units that are involved in homicide investigations, such as:
 - The Homicide Unit (the team should invite sergeants, in addition to the commander and lieutenant)
 - Patrol Unit
 - Crime Analysis Unit
 - District Detective Units
 - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office
 - Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office
 - Other personnel as identified by CDP leaders.

Detective Selection Process

Finding: The CDP's current detective selection process is not based on a set of standard, objective criteria that will adequately ensure that Homicide Unit detectives are chosen based on their ability to investigate cases.

One of the most important steps in building a successful homicide unit is ensuring that the unit is staffed with qualified, dedicated personnel.⁶ While police agencies take several different approaches to choosing homicide detective and supervisors, the most effective approaches all involve a formal selection process and clear criteria for selection.⁷

⁶ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁷ Ibid.

The first step in staffing a qualified homicide unit is to develop a formal job description that clearly outlines the duties and responsibilities of a homicide detective or supervisor. This description should be included in the written homicide SOP and should be posted when vacancies become open.

Next, the agency must develop the set of criteria that it will use for selecting homicide detective and supervisor candidates. The criteria should be clearly stated in written policy. Candidates should be ranked according to the criteria, which may include factors such as years of service, past performance (assessed by reviewing candidates' case folders and performance reviews), history of disciplinary issues, writing and computer skills, a desire and commitment to work homicide cases, and a willingness to work flexible hours and be on call.⁸

Many agencies also require candidates for the homicide unit to have prior investigative experience, usually as a detective in another unit that investigates crimes against persons.⁹ The BJA's best practices guide states that the optimum training and preparation for the position of homicide investigator is at least three years as a patrol officer, and at least two years as an investigator with general investigative experience.¹⁰

Candidates for the homicide unit should undergo a formal application process that includes submitting a resume, demonstrating writing abilities (through written tests and/or the submission of writing samples), and being interviewed by homicide unit supervisors.¹¹ The application process should be consistent for all potential candidates and formalized in written policy.

The CDP Homicide Unit Detective Selection Process

The PERF assessment team found that the CDP's current process for selecting Homicide Unit detectives does not follow the basic steps listed above to ensure that the unit is staffed with the most qualified, experienced candidates.

In Cleveland, the detective selection process is governed by a bargaining agreement with the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association (CPPA). Per the agreement, detective vacancies in all CDP units, including the Homicide Unit, are filled through a process that alternates between a "seniority pick" and a "management pick." This process seeks to ensure that there is an even balance between detectives chosen based on seniority, and those chosen based on the recommendation of CDP management.

Seniority Picks

When a vacancy is filled through the seniority pick, CDP leaders consult a list of personnel from throughout the department who have expressed an interest in joining the Homicide Unit. The candidate with the most seniority who meets the minimum qualifications for the position is automatically chosen for the assignment, regardless of the candidate's current position or prior

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

investigative experience. For example, it is possible for someone to go directly from being a patrol officer to being a Homicide Unit detective, as long as the person has more seniority than others on the list.

Management Picks

When a vacancy is filled through a management pick, the Homicide Unit commander and lieutenant interview applicants and submit their top three choices to the Chief of Police, who makes the final decision. There are no formal, objective criteria used during this process, but the PERF assessment team was told that candidates with prior investigative experience are typically preferred.

Detective Probationary Period

All new Homicide Unit detectives undergo a 120-day probationary period within the unit. This timeframe, which was recently changed from 90 days, is also mandated by the CPPA bargaining agreement. During the probationary period, Homicide Unit supervisors periodically evaluate new unit detectives based on their performance. If a person is removed from the Homicide Unit prior to the end of the probationary period, the vacancy is filled using the same type of “pick” (e.g., if a person who was chosen based on seniority is removed within the 120-day period, the unit must select a replacement based on seniority). Additional details about the probationary period are discussed in the “Investigations Training” section later in this report.

The Impact of the Current Detective Selection Process

PERF found that the current detective selection process is problematic for a number of reasons. First, regardless of whether a vacancy is filled based on seniority or through a management pick, the candidate’s selection is not based on a set of formal, objective criteria that measure the person’s ability to investigate homicides. As a result, it is possible that the most qualified candidates may be overlooked, and that candidates may be chosen based on subjective criteria that are irrelevant to their investigative capabilities.

Second, the selection process means that personnel may join the Homicide Unit without having any prior investigative experience. This can be detrimental to the quality of homicide investigations, especially in agencies like the CDP that lack robust investigator training programs. (The CDP’s training programs are discussed in more detail in the section “Investigations Training” later in this report.) Some personnel told PERF that the 120-day probationary period does not provide enough time to fully learn how to conduct effective homicide investigations.

Third, PERF learned that often, candidates chosen through a seniority pick were nearing the end of their careers and retired within one to two years after joining the Homicide Unit. This short turnover time can make it difficult to gain adequate homicide investigations experience and can reduce continuity within the unit. Choosing candidates based on seniority can also mean that younger detectives – who may have more knowledge of things like technology, social media, and

other tools critical to modern homicide investigations – may have few opportunities to join the Homicide Unit.

Finally, the current selection process may make it difficult to staff the Homicide Unit with detectives who reflect the diversity of the community. It is important that women and people of color be granted opportunities to join the unit, which PERF found may not always be the case when candidates are chosen based on seniority. At the time of this report, the Homicide Unit's three supervisors represented a mix of genders and races that reflects the diversity of the community. However, of the unit's detectives, 71 percent were male, and 64 percent were white. Ensuring diversity in the Homicide Unit is especially important given that PERF's case review found that, of the 114 homicide incidents reviewed from January – October 2015, 86 percent of the cases involved victims of color.

Recommendations: Detective Selection Process

- ***Recommendation #8:*** The CDP should establish a formal process for selecting detectives into the Homicide Unit that is based on a set of standard, objective criteria based on merit, rather than solely on seniority or management preference. This process should be outlined in written policy and consistently applied for all candidates.
 - Revising the detective selection process will require making changes to the bargaining agreement with the CPPA. PERF understands that there have been prior attempts to renegotiate the agreement to allow for more flexibility in the detective selection process. Though these attempts to date have been unsuccessful, PERF believes that it is critical for CDP leaders to revisit this issue.

- ***Recommendation #9:*** The revised detective selection process should include the following steps, which are based on best practices outlined by BJA and the experiences of PERF's subject matter experts:
 - Developing a formal job description for Homicide detectives that clearly and comprehensively states the required duties and responsibilities. This description should be formalized in the written policy and should be posted when vacancies occur.

 - Developing a set of standard criteria for candidate selection. Candidates should be ranked based on this criteria, which should include:
 - Prior investigative experience, either as a patrol officer or as a detective in another unit. Many successful homicide units select detectives from an applicant pool of detectives in other units, with a preference for candidates with experience investigating crimes against persons (aggravated assaults, shootings, robberies, etc.)¹²
 - Past performance conducting investigations, as assessed through reviewing the candidates' case files and performance evaluations

¹² Ibid.

- A desire and commitment to working homicide cases
 - No prior disciplinary issues or improper use of sick leave
 - Demonstrated writing and oral communication skills
 - Demonstrated computer skills
 - A good performance record
 - Ability to work flexible hours and be on call
 - Willingness to be a team player and assist others
 - Recommendations from supervisors
 - Other criteria as determined by CDP leaders.
- Implementing a formal, rigorous application process that may include:
 - Submission of a resume
 - Demonstration of writing ability, through submission of writing samples and/or written tests
 - An oral interview with a diverse panel that includes Homicide Unit supervisors and leaders outside the Homicide Unit
 - A review of the applicant’s current case files.
 - Candidates should be ranked on the above criteria and selected through a formal process based on this ranking.
 - Criteria for selection to detective should be clearly stated in written policy.
- **Recommendation #10: The CDP should ensure that the 120-day probationary period for newly-selected Homicide detectives is enforced, and that new detectives are thoroughly evaluated before they are assigned full time to the Homicide Unit.**
- In addition to a probationary period for newly-selected Homicide detectives, some police agencies have also provided opportunities for patrol officers and investigators in other units to be temporarily detailed to the Homicide Unit to assist with investigations. This strategy gives personnel outside the Homicide Unit an opportunity to gain homicide investigation experience, and it also allows members of the unit to evaluate whether the person may someday be a good fit as a Homicide detective.¹³
 - For example, the San Diego Police Department has a “Homicide Relief” program, through which detectives in other units are placed on an on-call list to assist in a homicide investigation when the homicide unit is short on personnel. The detailed detective works with a homicide detective through the duration of the case.¹⁴
 - In San Diego and Denver, whenever there is a drug- or gang-related homicide, an investigator from the appropriate drug or gang unit is assigned to the homicide investigation team on the case for up to 72 hours, depending on the status of the case and the facts.¹⁵ Or if it appears that a

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

homicide is the related to a previous non-fatal shooting, it could be useful for the District Detective Unit (DDU) detective who investigated the shooting to assist homicide detectives in the investigation.

- In another example, the Baltimore County Police Department assigns the initial responding patrol officer at a homicide scene to the homicide investigation team for the first 48-72 hours of the investigation. The officer is able to provide local knowledge that can assist homicide detectives, and the assignment can help give insight into whether the officer would make a good homicide detective.¹⁶

Investigations Training

***Finding:* Detectives in the CDP’s investigative units, including the Homicide Unit, do not receive consistent, formal, and comprehensive investigations training. This training gap exists for both new and veteran detectives.**

All detectives, particularly those investigating homicide cases, must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to conduct thorough investigations.¹⁷ Police agencies must ensure that detectives acquire these tools through comprehensive formal investigations training, along with rigorous on-the-job (OTJ) training.

Formal Investigations Training

Best Practices for Formal Investigations Training

All new detectives assigned to any investigative unit (not only the Homicide Unit) should receive basic investigations training. This training gives detectives the knowledge and skills they need to work general investigations, and ensures that detectives selected into a homicide unit are well-versed in basic investigative techniques.¹⁸ This training should cover departmental policies and procedures, investigative techniques, case management and documentation, interrogations and interviews, report writing, the use of databases and other technology, basic forensics, legal requirements for obtaining warrants, how to testify in court, and other investigative responsibilities that are applicable to all crimes.¹⁹

Detectives who have been newly assigned to a homicide unit should receive additional formal training relevant to conducting homicide investigations. This training should include courses on topics such as death investigations, advanced interview and interrogation techniques, advanced

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid. For example, the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, DC requires all new detectives to attend a two-week investigations training course, with classes being taught by MPD investigators, forensic analysts, and local prosecutors.

evidence collection and forensics, preparing cases for court, and best practices for conducting homicide investigations.²⁰ It may also be helpful if training for newly-assigned homicide detectives includes refresher courses on basic investigation techniques, particularly if investigations training is not consistently provided to new detectives.

In addition to the training they receive when joining a homicide unit, homicide detectives should also receive regular, ongoing training that covers legal updates, new technologies, new policies and procedures, and specialized courses such as the recovery of digital evidence.²¹

Formal Investigations Training for CDP Detectives

PERF found that the CDP has no systematic strategy for ensuring that detectives receive consistent, comprehensive, and standardized investigations training. The CDP does not currently mandate or offer investigations training for any of its detectives, and the department's required in-service training is not geared towards investigative topics.

The only formal investigations training that the CDP's Homicide Unit detectives receive is through outside courses that detectives must identify – and often pay for – on their own.²² Detectives said that the CDP typically grants their requests to attend these trainings; however, the detectives must take the initiative to seek out courses, make the request, and arrange travel and logistics for attending. Due to a lack of department resources, in many cases detectives' requests to attend trainings are denied unless they can cover the costs themselves. Many detectives are unable to take advantage of these outside training opportunities because they do not have the time to research training courses or the personal funds to attend.

Because the CDP does not require or offer investigations training, the level of training varies widely among the Homicide Unit detectives. Some have never received investigations training at all. Those who have attended outside courses have not been trained on investigative policies, practices, and issues that are specific to Cleveland and the CDP. **The lack of formal, consistent investigations training is particularly problematic given that some Homicide Unit detectives joined the unit without any prior investigative experience.**

Basic investigations training for new detectives assigned to investigative units, and additional death investigations training for all Homicide Unit detectives, should be required as part of a comprehensive training program.

On-the-Job Training

In its report on best practices for homicide investigations, BJA recommends that detectives who are new to a homicide unit be assigned to a seasoned investigator for field training and

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² For example, at least one Homicide detective was authorized to attend a week-long investigations course offered by the Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy, and another detective attended a homicide training course in Las Vegas.

mentorship for a period of at least three months.²³ BJA stresses that this on-the-job training (OJT) should go beyond a new detective merely “shadowing” a veteran detective. Instead, OJT should be a true mentorship in which the veteran detective provides direction and advice, and reviews the new detective’s notes and reports to ensure they meet quality standards.²⁴

Due to the lack of formal investigations training, nearly all training for CDP detectives is through OJT. In the Homicide Unit, this OJT takes place during the 120-day probationary period for new Homicide Unit detectives. During this period, new detectives are paired with a team of veteran Homicide Unit detectives, and some detectives said that they rotated to different teams each month.

PERF learned that the OJT that occurs during this period is largely informal. There is no official training curriculum or formal evaluation process, and supervisors do not have procedures in place to ensure that new Homicide Unit detectives have accomplished necessary milestones before taking on cases of their own.²⁵

Relying on this type of informal OJT as the sole means for investigative training is problematic. Because there is no formal curriculum or set of evaluation metrics, there are no assurances that training is consistent across the unit or that detectives are learning proper protocols. The lack of formal training also makes it difficult to track what new detectives are taught, or to assess whether they are ready to investigate cases on their own.

Recommendations: Investigations Training

- ***Recommendation #11: All new detectives assigned to investigative units should receive a formal course in basic investigations.***
 - Training should be mandatory, consistent for all detectives, and focused on establishing skills and techniques needed to conduct effective investigations.
 - This course should cover the following topics:
 - Departmental investigative policies and procedures
 - Case management and documentation
 - Crime scene management
 - Report writing
 - Interrogation and interview skills
 - Basic forensics, including DNA, ballistics, fingerprints, and trace analysis
 - Evidence collection and submission
 - Cell phone, computer, and internet investigations
 - Surveillance techniques

²³ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The process for removing detectives out of the unit during the probationary period is discussed in more detail in the chapter, “Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight.”

- Managing witnesses and informants
 - Interactions with crime victims' families
 - Constitutional law and the legal requirements involved with investigations (e.g., obtaining warrants, *Brady* requirements, evidentiary rules)
 - How to testify and present cases in court
 - Steps detectives can take to prevent the potential for wrongful convictions, such as how to properly record witness statements and assess and utilize eyewitness testimony and other evidence
 - Case review processes
 - The roles and responsibilities of various investigative units
 - The use of technology to further investigations (e.g., tracking social media for investigations; eTrace, NIBIN, and other firearms tracking technologies; smartphone and computer forensics; “Stingray” cellphone tracking technology; license plate readers; facial recognition software and other video-related issues; cybercrime investigative tools; and other technologies)
 - Crime analysis, including the use of any electronic crime analysis programs
 - Other basic investigative techniques.
- As part of ongoing technical assistance, PERF can help the CDP identify existing training courses, sample curricula, industry guidelines, and outside experts to serve as trainers. PERF can also help connect CDP leaders to other police agencies to provide peer-to-peer assistance in developing in-house training courses and identifying outside programs. Attendance at training courses should be funded by the CDP.
- **Recommendation #12: Upon first being assigned to the Homicide Unit, all new Homicide detectives should be required to receive formal training on topics related to homicide investigations.**
 - Training should be mandatory, consistent for all detectives, and focused on establishing skills and techniques needed to conduct effective homicide investigations.
 - All Homicide detectives should also receive the basic investigations training described in Recommendation 11. If they have not had such training prior to joining the Homicide Unit, they should receive it as soon as possible after joining the unit.
 - Additional advanced training that new Homicide detectives should receive should include courses on:
 - Advanced interview and interrogation techniques
 - Updates on legal requirements for searches and seizures
 - Advanced forensics and evidence collection
 - Advanced computer and cell phone forensics
 - How to prepare homicide cases for court

- Steps detectives can take to prevent the potential for wrongful convictions, such as how to properly record witness statements and assess and utilize eyewitness testimony and other evidence
 - Investigating specific types of cases handled by Homicide detectives, such as officer-involved shootings, child deaths, in-custody deaths, mass casualty scenes, infant deaths, arson deaths, etc.
 - Best practices for conducting homicide investigations.
- Advanced training for new Homicide Unit detectives should take place within the detectives' first year in the unit. For example, the Houston Police Department requires all new detectives to complete 186 hours of investigations training within their first year of assignment, and the San Diego Police Department requires new homicide detectives to complete five weeks of advanced training within a year of joining the homicide unit.²⁶
 - As part of ongoing technical assistance, PERF can help the CDP identify existing training courses, sample curricula, industry guidelines, and outside experts to serve as trainers. PERF can also help connect CDP leaders to other police agencies to provide peer-to-peer assistance in developing in-house training courses and identifying outside programs.
- ***Recommendation #13:* All Homicide Unit detectives should receive regular, ongoing training relevant to conducting homicide investigations.**
- Ongoing training should include updates on topics that are evolving, such as technology, forensic analysis, legal standards and requirements, and the policies and protocols of other CDP units and external agencies involved in homicide investigations.
 - Training should also include refresher courses for trainings that detectives may have previously received.
 - As part of ongoing technical assistance, PERF can help the CDP identify existing training courses, sample curricula, industry guidelines, and outside experts to serve as trainers. PERF can also help connect CDP leaders to other police agencies to provide peer-to-peer assistance in developing in-house training courses and identifying outside programs.
- ***Recommendation #14:* To strengthen the expertise of the Homicide Unit, the CDP should ensure that there is additional training made available to detectives that covers specialized areas (e.g., blood spatter analysis, conducting infant death investigations, the use of a particular type of technology, etc.).**

²⁶ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.
http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

- As part of ongoing technical assistance, PERF can help the CDP identify existing training courses, sample curricula, industry guidelines, and outside experts to serve as trainers. PERF can also help connect CDP leaders to other police agencies to provide peer-to-peer assistance in developing in-house training courses and identifying outside programs.
- ***Recommendation #15:* The Homicide Unit should strengthen its on-the-job training (OJT) to ensure that new Homicide Unit detectives receive appropriate and comprehensive field training and mentoring.**
 - The CDP should develop an OJT guidebook, similar to the field training officer (FTO) guidebook used with new recruits, which contains standardized policies and procedures for OJT. The guidebook should contain a checklist of the duties required by the OJT trainer, including requirements for reviewing new detectives' reports and notes for quality assurance. The guidebook should also include benchmarks that new Homicide Unit detectives must meet before they are assigned full time to the unit.

Homicide Unit Staffing and Caseload Management

***Finding:* Detectives in the Homicide Unit are currently carrying very large caseloads due to unit understaffing and the current shift structure. This is a key problem that the CDP should address immediately. Revisions to policies, training, and other areas discussed in this report will not have the desired impact unless the CDP commits to providing the Homicide Unit with necessary staffing resources.**

PERF's review found that the Homicide Unit's current staffing and scheduling structures have contributed to heavy caseloads for unit detectives. This section first discusses the Homicide Unit's staffing, responsibilities, and shift structures, and then examines the unit's current caseload levels and the impact that caseloads have on investigations. Recommendations for addressing issues related to staffing and caseloads are found at the end of this section.

Homicide Unit Staffing and Responsibilities

The CDP's Homicide Unit has an authorized capacity of 16 detectives. At the time of PERF's review, there were 14 detectives in the unit – 13 detectives who investigate cases, and one detective who handles the unit's administrative duties. Detectives work in dedicated teams of two. Each detective on a team is equally responsible for the team's cases, rather than one detective taking on the role as "lead" investigator. If one team member is out sick or on vacation, another detective fills in to provide backup assistance. The unit's supervisor is responsible for assigning the teams, but detectives can request to change teams if there is a conflict or other issue.

The Homicide Unit also includes two sergeants, a lieutenant, and a social worker who is employed by a nonprofit organization and is embedded in the Homicide Unit through a grant to provide victim advocacy and assistance. PERF was told during interviews that the social worker's services are very valuable to the unit, both in terms of victim advocacy and in freeing up detectives to focus on investigations.

Detectives in the Homicide Unit are responsible for investigating the following types of cases:²⁷

- **All homicides**
- **Child fatalities**
- **Cases involving use of deadly force by CDP officers:** The lieutenant who oversees the Homicide Unit also oversees the CDP's Use of Deadly Force Team, and multiple Homicide Unit detectives are assigned to the team. The team investigates use of deadly force by CDP officers and in-custody deaths, including deaths at the jail.
- **Dead body investigations:** Cases in which violence is the suspected, but not confirmed, cause of death. Homicide Unit detectives respond to the scene and investigate to determine whether a homicide occurred.
- **Medical Examiner investigations:** Cases in which a homicide is not initially suspected, but upon further review or after receiving new information, the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCME) requests Homicide Unit detectives to investigate.
- **Felony investigations:** Any felonies that are attached to a homicide case (e.g., robberies, sexual assaults).
- **Other requests:** Cases that are investigated by the Homicide Unit at the request of the Chief of Police. Once recent example of this is a case involving two small children who were feloniously shot, but not killed.

The table below depicts the number of new cases per year investigated by Homicide Unit between 2013 and 2015, broken down by the type of case:

	Homicides	Child Fatalities	Officer Use of Force	Dead Body Investigations	ME Investigations	Felony Investigations	Other Requests
2013	101	23	14	33	17	28	62
2014	112	17	13	19	3	39	18
2015	128	27	14	7	8	41	*
**2016	113	23	8	2	12	46	3

*Number not provided.

**Through November 16, 2016

As this table indicates, the Homicide Unit investigates a fairly significant number of cases each year in categories other than known homicides. This was especially true in 2013, when the

²⁷ The category names and descriptions were provided by the CDP.

²⁸ Data provided by the CDP.

combined number of dead body investigations, ME investigations, and “other” requests totaled 112, which was more than the 101 cases known to be homicides.

Homicide Unit Shifts and Case Rotation

Homicide Unit Shift Schedule

CDP Homicide Unit detectives work five days per week, on various shifts that provide service every day of the week. The table below illustrates the Homicide Unit’s shift schedule:

Homicide Unit Shift Schedules

Shift	Hours	Number of Teams Working	Length of Rotation	Schedule
First Shift	8am-4pm	4 teams of 2	2 months	2 teams have Friday/Saturday off 2 teams have Sunday/Monday off For one of the two months that a team is on the first shift, that team is also on call for the overnight shift
Second Shift	11am-7pm 4pm – 12am	2 teams of 2	1 month	One team with Friday/Saturday off One team with Sunday/Monday off One team works 11-7, one works 4-12, switch every week
On-Call Shift	12am – 8am	1 team of 2 on call	1 month	The on-call team is also working the first shift during the month it is on call There is a sign-up sheet for other detectives to volunteer to fill in when the on-call detectives have a day off

As this table illustrates, four teams of two detectives work the first shift (8am-4pm) for a two-month rotation. Two teams of two detectives work the second shift for a one-month rotation, alternating each week between working 11am-7pm and 4pm-12am.

The unit does not have a full-time overnight shift; rather, one team of two detectives is assigned to be on call between 12am-8am. The on-call team rotates each month. **During the month that a team is on call, that team is also working a day shift. Therefore, the on-call team works its usual 8am-4pm shift and then is also responsible for responding to all homicides that occur between midnight and 8am during that month.**

The Homicide Unit uses a sign-up sheet for detectives to volunteer to be on call when the regularly-scheduled on-call team has the day off. PERF learned that detectives who frequently volunteer tend to carry heavier caseloads than others. Detectives who respond to a homicide

during the on-call shift, whether they are scheduled to be on call or filling in for someone else, are paid overtime.

Case Rotation and Assignment

Homicide Unit sergeants are responsible for assigning new cases to detectives. There is not a formal case assignment system or case rotation schedule. PERF learned that although sergeants generally attempt to avoid assigning new cases to a team that received another case within the previous one or two days, current Homicide Unit staffing levels do not always allow this. Thus, a team of detectives may be assigned several new cases within a short time period.

When a call comes in about a new homicide, the Homicide Unit personnel who respond to the scene typically include the team of detectives assigned to the case and the supervisor on duty. The Commander of the Bureau of Special Investigations and/or a District Commander also typically respond to homicide scenes. At the scene, the responding Homicide detectives gather information from the responding patrol officers and work with the crime scene technician to identify and collect evidence. The responding Homicide detectives also identify witnesses, who are typically transported back to police headquarters by a patrol car to wait for the detectives to return from the scene and question them.

Other than the two-person team of detectives assigned to the case, it is somewhat rare for the other on-duty Homicide detectives to respond to a scene or to assist with tasks such as interviewing witnesses who have been brought back to headquarters. **Although it would be beneficial for detectives to take a more collaborative approach and provide greater assistance to one another, PERF learned that the unit's current staffing levels make this difficult.** For the most part, detectives only have time to work on the cases they are assigned.

Homicide Unit Caseloads

According to the BJA's guide on best practices for homicide investigations, research has found that **a homicide unit is optimally staffed when each detective is the lead investigator on an average of three to four cases per year**, though this number may vary depending on the solvability of the case (e.g., a detective may be able to handle more cases of types that are typically quicker to solve, such as a murder-suicide).²⁹ This number is recommended to allow detectives to thoroughly investigate new homicide cases, while still giving them time to perform other duties, such as following up on cases from prior years, acting as a secondary investigator on other homicide cases, investigating non-homicide cases, testifying in court, attending training, and performing administrative duties.³⁰

²⁹ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf. It is important to note that this recommendation is not an empirically established number, but rather a guidepost. The actual number will depend on the nature of the homicide involved, and whether it is a case that can be cleared quickly.

³⁰ Ibid.

In 2015, 13 detectives in the CDP’s Homicide Unit were responsible for investigating 128 new homicide cases. **Thus, each detective worked an estimated average of 10 new homicide cases during the year (or 20 new cases per team).**³¹ **This is more than twice the caseload recommended in the BJA best practices guide.** This figure, which aligns with what PERF learned during interviews with CDP personnel, does not include the non-homicide or suspected homicide cases that also make up detectives’ caseloads, or cases that carried over from previous years.

The table below shows the number of new homicide cases, the number of detectives in the Homicide Unit, and the unit’s overall clearance rate from 2008 to 2015. The CDP did not provide data on individual detective caseload or clearance rates.

Number of New Homicide Cases and Detective Clearance Rates, Per Year³²

Year	Homicide Cases	Number of Detectives in the Homicide Unit	Overall Homicide Clearance Rate (for the unit)	National Homicide Clearance Rate (cities with population size 250,000 to 499,999) ³³
2008	102	16	76%	54%
2009	122	19	77%	59%
2010	80	17	73%	59%
2011	100	14	67%	61%
2012	109	16	71%	55%
2013	101	15	56%	55%
2014	112	14	51%	57%
2015	128	13	56%	56%

As this table illustrates, the number of detectives has steadily declined since 2012, even as the number of homicides has remained steady or increased. This table also shows that in 2013 there was a significant drop in the unit’s overall clearance rate. Prior to 2013, the clearance rate was consistently in the 70 percentile range, which was well above the national clearance rate for cities the size of Cleveland. Since 2013, the CDP’s clearance rate has remained in the low-to-mid 50 percent range, which is similar to national clearance rate levels. In 2015, the CDP’s clearance rate (56 percent) matched the national clearance rate for cities of a similar size.

The reason for the sudden drop in the CDP’s clearance rate in 2013 is unclear. The CDP was unable to point to any known factors that would explain this drop, and it cannot be explained by changes in the homicide rate or number of detectives, which were fairly steady between 2012

³¹ This figure is just an estimated average, as the CDP did not provide data for actual individual detective caseloads. Actual caseloads varied, with some members of the Homicide Unit working more than 10 new homicide cases during 2015, and others working fewer than 10 cases.

³² Data provided by the CDP. The CDP did not provide data for individual detective clearance rates or caseloads.

³³ Data in this column provided by the FBI in its annual “Crime in the U.S.” reports, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s>. Percentages have been rounded up. These figures represent the overall clearance rate, by arrest or by exceptional means, for cases involving murder or non-negligent homicide in cities with a population of 250,000 to 499,999 people. The U.S. Census estimated population for Cleveland in 2013 (the most recent year reported) was 390,113. <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

and 2013. It could be due to a number of factors – changes in the difficulty level of cases, turnover of veteran detectives, etc. – but these explanations are only speculative.

Regardless of why the CDP Homicide Unit's overall clearance rate has dropped in recent years, it is clear that if homicide rates continue to rise, and the number of detectives in the unit continues to decline, then Homicide Unit detectives will continue to carry larger caseloads going forward.

Factors Contributing to Current Caseload Levels

According to CDP personnel, two primary factors contribute to the large caseloads currently experienced in the Homicide Unit.

First, as illustrated in the table above, in recent years the number of detectives in the Homicide Unit has declined while the number of homicides has trended upwards. This is especially true in 2015, which had 16 more homicides than the prior year, with fewer detectives working cases.

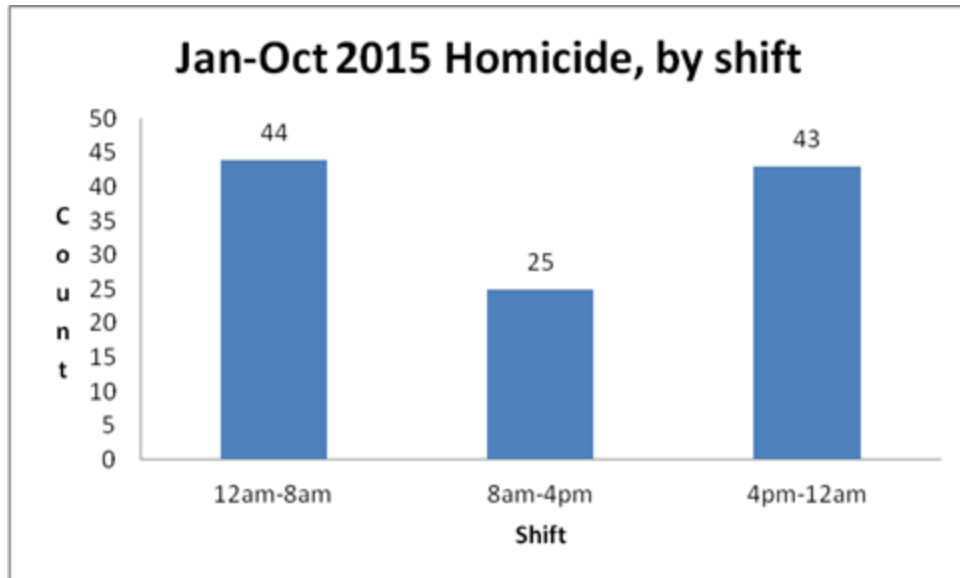
Second, many people PERF interviewed said that the on-call system, and the lack of a more balanced case assignment and rotation schedule, also contribute to detective workload burdens. During the month that a team is on call, that team is responsible for investigating *all* new homicides that occur between midnight and 8am. This can create a significant burden on the on-call team, which is also continuing to receive new cases while working a day shift.

For example, PERF learned that one team of two detectives was assigned to three new homicide cases during a five-day span, while another team received nine new homicides in one month during the on-call shift alone.

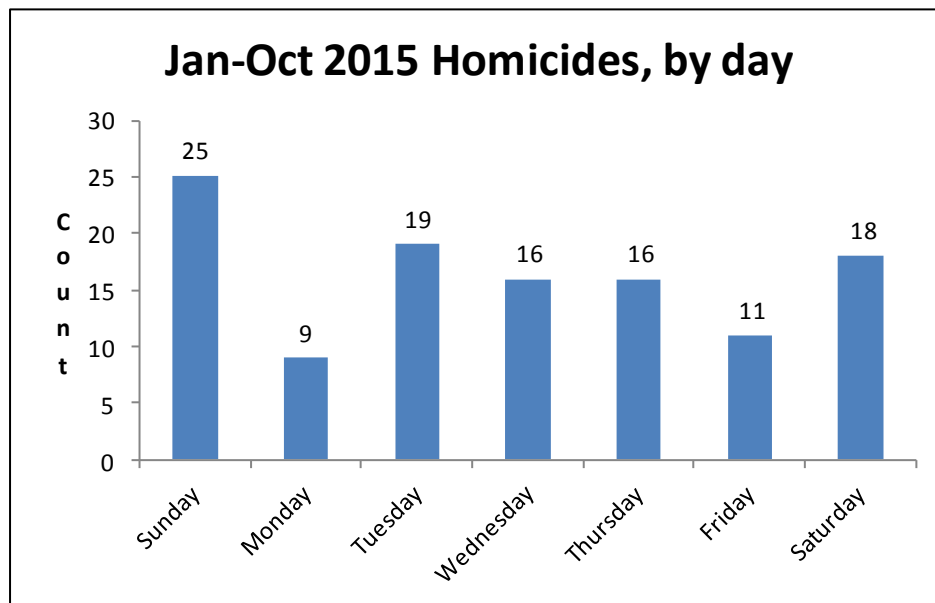
PERF learned that the Homicide Unit sergeants do try to mitigate the burden caused by the on-call system. For example, if a new case comes in during the day shift, the sergeants may try to avoid assigning it to the day-shift team that is also on call at the time. The supervisors also attempt to monitor how many new cases the on-call team is receiving, and will try to bring in a secondary team to help if the workload becomes too great.

Despite these efforts, however, PERF found that the on-call system – which exists due to the lack of a full-time overnight shift – continues to create a heavy workload burden on detectives.

To better understand the impact of the on-call system on detective caseloads, PERF reviewed CDP data regarding the times of day and days of the week when homicides occurred between January and October 2015. **As the graph below indicates, of the homicides that occurred during this period, 44 (or 40%) took place during the on-call shift (between midnight and 8am). More homicides took place during the on-call shift than during any other shift.** The first shift (8am-4pm), during which the most number of teams are on duty, saw far fewer homicides than the other shifts.



The CDP Homicide Unit provides coverage seven days a week. Of the cases PERF reviewed, most homicides occurred on Sunday (25), though this number may include incidents that occurred late Saturday night and were not ruled a homicide until the following day. Monday had the lowest number of homicides (9), and homicides were fairly evenly distributed across Tuesday through Saturday.



PERF recommends that the CDP do a comprehensive review of its homicide data to determine the days of the week, and the times of day, that homicides most often occur. As described in more detail in Recommendations 16-17, the CDP should use this data to inform its staffing levels and shift schedules to ensure that there are an adequate number of detectives on duty during the days and times when homicides are likely to take place.

Impact of Caseloads on Investigations

The CDP was unable to provide data for individual detective caseload and clearance rates, thus it is difficult to determine the actual impact that caseloads have had on detective clearance rates in Cleveland. However, interviews with CDP personnel, along with knowledge gained through PERF's prior work regarding homicide investigations, reveal ways in which heavy caseloads can negatively impact the quality of an investigation.

First, being assigned so many cases within such a short timeframe, which often occurs in Cleveland due to staffing levels and the on-call system, means that detectives cannot thoroughly investigate any single case for very long period. When detectives have to stop investigating a current case to start investigating a new one, they can lose the opportunity to be proactive and quickly follow up on important investigative leads.

Second, large caseloads make it difficult for detectives to assist on investigations to which they are not directly assigned. If Homicide Unit detectives instead had the opportunity to help each other on investigations, it could mean that tasks would be completed more thoroughly and efficiently. Improved collaboration could also help improve the quality of investigations by ensuring that each case is regularly seen by a fresh set of eyes.

Third, heavy caseloads, along with the on-call system, may contribute to PERF's finding that detectives rarely respond to homicide scenes within a 30-minute period. **Research shows that there is a relationship between case clearance and whether detectives arrive at the scene during this 30-minute window;**³⁴ however, PERF's case review found documentation of detectives arriving at the crime scene within 30 minutes in only around 15 percent of the cases examined.³⁵ In at least one case, PERF found that Homicide Unit detectives *never* responded to the scene, as the scene was cleared before the detectives were able to arrive.

Going forward, it is critical that the Homicide Unit begin maintaining consistent and accurate data regarding individual detective caseload and clearance rates (see Recommendation 24). This is the only way in which the actual impact of caseloads on clearance rates can be determined.

Recommendations: Homicide Unit Staffing and Caseload Management

- **Recommendation #16: The Homicide Unit ideally should be staffed so that each detective is the lead on an average of four to six new homicide cases per year. This recommendation is based on best practices³⁶ and on concerns that an increase in detectives' caseloads may be related to a decline in clearance rates.**

³⁴ Wellford, Charles and James Cronin, *Clearing Up Homicide Clearance Rates*, National Institute of Justice Journal (April 2000), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000243b.pdf>. See also the full report for a more comprehensive look at this study: *An Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multistate Study* (October 1999), http://www.jrsa.org/pubs/reports/homicides_report.pdf.

³⁵ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

³⁶ Ibid.

- If homicide rates in Cleveland continue at current levels or increase, this would mean staffing the Homicide Unit to full capacity and possibly also hiring additional detectives.
 - The assessment team members understand that budget limitations may make it challenging to increase staffing in the Homicide Unit. However, as BJA’s best practices guide notes: “While every unit in the law enforcement agency can make a legitimate argument for resources, the homicide unit is responsible for investigating the most serious criminal act to mankind . . . ***If there is an inadequate number of [homicide] investigators to fully handle each case, then the number of clearances and successful prosecutions will fall.***”³⁷
- In 2015, the CDP entered into a settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice which requires the CDP to make a number of changes to its policies, practices, procedures, training, and use of data.³⁸ The settlement agreement required the CDP to conduct a staffing study, a draft of which was completed in June 2016. This staffing study recommends that the Homicide Unit be staffed with two sergeants and 19 detectives. If the homicide rate in Cleveland continues at the current levels, and if all 19 detectives actively work cases, this would result in average of 6.7 new homicides per detective each year, which is at the high end of BJA’s recommended caseload. **PERF agrees that the CDP should increase staffing in the Homicide Unit to at least this level, if not higher.** For example, an optimal staffing level for Homicide Unit’s like the CDP might consist of four squads of six detectives, with each squad led by a sergeant.
- If the Homicide Unit hires additional detectives, it should also hire additional sergeants and lieutenants to ensure that detectives receive adequate supervision and guidance. (See Recommendation 21 for recommended supervisor:detective ratios.)
- PERF has completed a number of staffing reviews for investigative divisions in other police departments. Based on this work, PERF has developed a process to help departments determine the accurate number of detectives needed to thoroughly investigate cases. This process looks at factors that are specific to each department, including the number of hours necessary for investigating the types of cases handled by a particular unit. As part of ongoing technical assistance efforts, PERF can share this staffing review process with the CDP and help the department use this process to determine the number of detectives needed to thoroughly investigate homicide cases in Cleveland.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *U.S. v. City of Cleveland*, Settlement Agreement (May 2015), <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5651f9b5e4b08f0af890bd13/t/567d81b6df40f3468f637fc0/1451065782167/doj-cleveland-police-consent-decree.pdf>.

- If the CDP does not have the resources to increase Homicide Unit staffing, it should explore other ways to reduce detectives' caseloads. Suggestions for doing so are found below in Recommendations 17-20.
- **Recommendation #17: The Homicide Unit should restructure its current shift and case rotation design to help relieve the detective caseload burden. The new system should be structured to help evenly distribute cases among detectives, and there should be room for flexibility as situations change.**
 - Before restructuring its shift and case rotation design, the CDP should first review data to determine the times of day and days of the week when homicides are most likely to occur in Cleveland. This will help the unit assess the times when more detectives are needed to cover incoming cases.
 - PERF's preliminary review of this data found that most homicides occur during the second shift (4pm-8pm) and overnight shift (12am-8am). The day of the week when most homicides occur is on Sunday. Given the high number of homicides that occur during the overnight shift, it is critical that the Homicide Unit ensure that this shift is adequately and consistently staffed.
 - One way to implement this recommendation is to consider doing away with the on-call system and creating a full-time overnight shift (12am-8am). This step would require hiring additional detectives and possibly renegotiating the bargaining agreement with the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association.
 - If the CDP determines that it is unable to staff a full-time overnight shift, the department should implement strategies to relieve the considerable caseload burden created by the current on-call system. Examples of how the on-call system could be revised to achieve this goal include:
 - Shortening the duration of the on-call rotation from one month to one week. One month is too long for a two-person detective team to be on call, as highlighted by PERF's finding that one team received nine new homicides during its on-call month (in addition to the cases the team caught during its normal day shift).
 - Maintaining the one-month rotation, but have two teams assigned to be on call at a time and alternating which team responds to a new call. This could help ensure that one team does not catch multiple new cases in a row.
 - Assigning a back-up on-call team to provide coverage when the regularly scheduled on-call team has the day off. Currently, the Homicide Unit uses a sign-up sheet for detectives to volunteer to provide back-up coverage; however, PERF learned that detectives who frequently volunteer tend to carry heavier caseloads than others.
 - In addition to revising the on-call system, the Homicide Unit should implement and maintain a formal case rotation schedule. The goal of the schedule should be

to ensure that cases are distributed evenly among detectives and prevent any one detective from being assigned several new cases within a short time period. The schedule should be set in advance (e.g., at the beginning of each year) and should be managed by supervisors.

- **Recommendation #18: The Homicide Unit should consider designating one member of a two-person detective team to serve as the primary detective on a case, and this designation should alternate between cases. This system ensures that there is one point person on each case who is responsible for coordinating and delegating tasks, ensuring that tasks are completed, and reporting to supervisors. This helps to further promote accountability in the investigation.**
 - Additionally, when possible detectives in the Homicide Unit should take a team approach to investigating new cases. Other detectives who are on duty when a new homicide case comes in should assist the primary detective(s) with tasks such as interviewing witnesses, retrieving video footage, etc. in order to help ensure that these tasks are completed promptly. This team approach would be more likely to occur if detectives' caseloads were smaller and the unit's staffing levels were higher.

- **Recommendation #19: When possible, the CDP should seek to maximize the amount of time that Homicide Unit detectives spend investigating homicide cases by limiting the time they spend performing other duties, such as investigating non-homicide cases, performing administrative work, and serving on departmental details.**
 - For example, CDP officials should review the "other requests" category of cases investigated by Homicide Unit detectives in order to determine if any of these types of requests could be handled by another CDP investigative unit.

 - The CDP should also consider detailing a patrol officer or a new detective from a District Detective Unit (DDU) to the Homicide Unit to *assist* Homicide detectives on questionable death investigations. Not only would this help relieve the burden on Homicide detectives, but it would also give patrol officers and new DDU detectives opportunities to obtain investigative experience. ***Although the Homicide detective would be the primary investigator and in charge of leading the case***, the assigned patrol officer/DDU detective could provide support to the extent that his or her training and experience allow. (See Recommendation 10 for a similar strategy taken by the San Diego Police Department)

 - The Homicide Unit currently has one detective whose role is to perform administrative duties. PERF agrees that it is important to have someone in the unit dedicated to performing administrative duties and recommends that the CDP continue to ensure that this role is filled. This role could also be filled by a civilian aide.

- **Recommendation #20: The CDP should explore creating a specialized unit whose full-time function is to locate witnesses and other persons of interest in violent crime investigations, including homicides. Having a specialized unit to serve this function is considered an effective use of personnel and a good practice for homicide investigations.**³⁹
 - PERF learned that currently the CDP does not have a unit to assist with locating witnesses, serving warrants, etc. Instead, this function is largely served by the Violent Fugitive Task Force, which is comprised of personnel from the FBI, U.S. Marshals Service, Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department, parole/probation agencies, and the CDP. PERF learned that, although CDP Homicide detectives can request witness location assistance from the Task Force, the Task Force does not have the time or resources to assist with every request.
 - According to the BJA report, while it is important for case detectives to take an active role in locating witnesses and suspects for their cases, it is considered useful to have a specialized unit dedicated to tracking down witnesses and suspects in homicide cases.⁴⁰ The BJA report found that these types of units are often very successful, are heavily relied upon by homicide detectives, and are an effective use of personnel because they allow investigators more time for case development and case management.⁴¹

Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight

Finding: Detectives in the CDP's Homicide Unit are talented and committed to their work. However, the Homicide Unit lacks the mechanisms for ensuring that detectives are properly supervised and evaluated, and there is no formal case planning or review system to ensure that cases are being thoroughly and effectively investigated. Implementing these accountability mechanisms is critical for strengthening the Homicide Unit.

CDP's homicide detectives are generally highly motivated and dedicated to working cases; however, detectives and other officers in any police department always should be properly supervised and have a clear set of standards to follow.⁴² For example, BJA guidance states: "Having and maintaining a system (e.g., standard operating practices, case management system,

³⁹ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.
http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Cronin, James M., Gerard R. Murphy, Lisa L. Spahr, et al. (2007) *Promoting Effective Homicide Investigations*, Washington, DC: The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Police Executive Research Forum,
http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Homicide/promoting%20effective%20homicide%20investigations%202007.pdf.

case file checklist, etc.) that supports these factors is paramount to quality homicide investigations. Without such, it becomes a subjective, inconsistent process open for additional criticism and skepticism.”⁴³

PERF’s review found that the CDP’s Homicide Unit is staffed with talented detectives who, on the whole, appear to investigate cases as thoroughly as possible, given the significant limits on staffing and resources that they face. For example, PERF’s review of the Homicide Unit’s case files found that in 87 percent of the cases, physical evidence was documented and sent for analysis, and that in 78 percent of the cases there was documentation of multiple witnesses being developed. Both of these measures are indicators of thorough investigations.

However, PERF found that there is room for improvement with respect to how detectives are supervised and evaluated. Additionally, the CDP currently lacks an adequate process for reviewing cases to ensure that they are being thoroughly and effectively investigated.

Detective Supervision

The Homicide Unit is led by a lieutenant and two sergeants. One sergeant is assigned to the first shift (8am-4pm), one is assigned to the second shift (4pm-12am), and they rotate shift assignments periodically. The sergeants also rotate on-call duty for the overnight shift (12am-8am). At least one sergeant responds to all homicide scenes. PERF found that the sergeants act in a supervisory capacity rather than investigating cases themselves.

During interviews, PERF heard conflicting reports regarding the Homicide Unit’s chain of command structure. Some personnel told PERF that each sergeant is assigned to supervise specific teams of detectives, while others said that the sergeants are responsible for supervising all detectives in the unit equally. Adding to this confusion is the fact that the sergeants’ and detectives’ shift rotations do not necessarily align, meaning that the sergeants may be working with different teams of detectives each day.

This suggests that there is no clear chain of command within the unit, which can create problems for detective supervision and accountability. A lack of a clear chain of command also makes it difficult for detectives to know where to turn when they have questions or need assistance with a case. For example, PERF learned that under the current system, the sergeants are not always familiar with the cases being investigated by the detectives under their direct supervision, and PERF found little evidence that sergeants are actively leading detectives in the development of case strategies or monitoring their work.

Despite these challenges, there appears to be relatively good informal communication between the Homicide sergeants and detectives. Many detectives told PERF that the Homicide sergeants are always willing to answer questions and share ideas. Usually this is done informally, rather

⁴³ International Association of Chiefs of Police (2013), *10 Things Law Enforcement Executives Can Do To Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcome*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, http://www.iir.com/Documents/IACP_Homicide_Guide.pdf.

than through a systematic case review process. The detectives also generally respect their supervisors and appreciate their investigative abilities.

Case Documentation and Review

Thorough case planning, documentation, and review are critical for ensuring that cases are being properly investigated. PERF found that, although the CDP's Homicide detectives generally document their cases thoroughly, the case files are poorly organized, case management is inconsistent, and there is no formal and substantive supervisory case review.

Case Documentation

Personnel at all levels told PERF that members of the Homicide Unit are very responsible when it comes to thoroughly documenting their casework. PERF's review of the Homicide Unit case files confirmed this. **The case files contain comprehensive information about the investigative steps taken by detectives, and they indicate that detectives are conducting very thorough case documentation and follow-up.**

For example, PERF found that 87 percent of the case files reviewed included documentation of physical evidence being collected and submitted for analysis, and that 78 percent of the files included a copy of the victim's autopsy report. PERF also found that the average length of case documentation is 187 days, which indicates that detectives are continuing to document their work through the duration of an investigation. The case files included items such as weather reports from the day of the homicide (which can be important in terms of providing context to the condition of physical evidence or the availability of witnesses at the scene) and background investigation reports on nearly everyone connected to a case (e.g., witnesses, persons of interest, people interviewed). In the experience of the PERF assessment team, this level of documentation is more extensive than what is often seen in homicide units.

Although Homicide Unit detectives appear to be documenting cases very thoroughly, PERF found several key areas for improvement.

Case File Organization. First, the case files PERF reviewed were severely lacking in organization and standardization. When reviewing homicide case files in other police agencies, PERF has found that there is a relationship between highly-organized case files and case closure. Therefore, this is an area in which the CDP Homicide Unit should work to improve. None of the Homicide Unit's case files that PERF reviewed met the level of organization needed to allow for adequate case review by supervisors. There was no standard template or checklist for what must be included in the file, and the documents were not ordered in a way to provide a meaningful narrative of the case.

Electronic Documentation. Second, there are significant gaps in the Homicide Unit's use of electronic case documentation and databases. The Homicide Unit's electronic files are saved locally or to external hard drives, and that they are not linked to any department-wide databases or electronic records management systems. This means that detectives cannot easily conduct

electronic searches to identify pertinent names, locations, or crime patterns that might help them solve cases.

The CDP recently transitioned to a new electronic records management system, the Law Enforcement Records Management System (LERMS), which went fully operable in October 2015. PERF learned that many existing records have not yet been transferred to LERMS. PERF also learned that LERMS does not segregate public and non-public information, and so some investigators are hesitant to put notes and other documents in the system out of concern that it would be subject to public disclosure and thus compromise the investigation. Furthermore, LERMS does not contain an investigations module that could be used by the Homicide Unit. As a result, the electronic records management system is not being fully utilized in a way that would assist Homicide detectives with case documentation and review.

Statistical Data. Finally, PERF found that the Homicide Unit does not collect or maintain consistent statistical data for measures such as detective clearance rates or caseloads. This kind of information is critical for effective supervision and evaluation of personnel.

Case Planning and Review

In addition to case documentation, consistent and formal supervisory case review should be a standard part of the homicide investigation process. The following are general components that should be included in a case review process. These steps are discussed in more detail in Recommendations 25-27.

- **Investigative Plan:** To start, as soon as possible after a detective receives a new homicide case, the detective should work with his or her supervisor to develop an investigative plan. The plan should include items such as a to-do list for steps that need to be taken and a rough timeline for completing them.
- **Case Checklist:** Each case file should also contain a standard case checklist form. The checklist should include basic investigative tasks that are applicable to most homicide investigations, and detectives should be required to note on the form whether they completed the task, the date it was completed, and the reason for not completing any unfinished tasks.
- **Supervisor Case Review:** Supervisors should use the case checklist form as the primary basis to conduct case reviews at specified intervals throughout the investigation. Supervisors should also be trained to ensure that they are conducting substantive reviews, rather than simply marking items off of the checklist.

PERF found that the CDP Homicide Unit does not have a formal, consistent case review process. There is no evidence that detectives and supervisors create or adhere to formal investigative plans, and though the Homicide Unit Manual includes sample case checklist forms, it does not appear that they are used consistently, and there is no documentation of completed checklists in the case files.

PERF also found that none of the case files contained documentation of formal supervisory review. This finding could be due to supervisors not formally reviewing cases, or to the review not being properly documented in the case file. Homicide Unit personnel told PERF that the sergeants do routinely review their daily case reports, and that they will leave notes on the report to identify items for follow-up or return the reports to detectives if there are errors or items missing. However, this process is largely informal and does not reflect the kind of consistent, robust case review process needed to ensure that investigations are moving forward effectively.

The lack of formal supervisory review is made even more problematic by the fact that the CDP does not currently have a Cold Case Unit. Unsolved cases are deemed cold after an unspecified period of time, and they are only revisited when new information is brought to a detective's attention. Thus, there is no system for ensuring that cases are thoroughly reviewed and that new leads are identified and followed past the initial investigation.

Performance Evaluation and Accountability Mechanisms

The CDP's Homicide Unit detectives are evaluated annually by their supervisors pursuant to the standard CDP employee evaluation process. Under this process, there are separate evaluation forms for patrol officers and investigators, and the forms include measures that are ranked on a scale of 1-5, as well as a section for supervisor comments. Employees are given the opportunity to review and sign off on the evaluations before they are submitted up the employee's chain of command.

PERF found that this current evaluation process is not adequate for assessing the investigative performance of Homicide detectives. First, annual evaluations are not frequent enough to proactively identify and address performance issues that may arise. Second, the standard evaluation forms are not designed to measure a detective's investigative skills or ensure that detectives are conducting thorough, effective investigations. Finally, the evaluations are not based on a set of standard and objective criteria. This makes it difficult to fact-check evaluations and can create the perception that evaluations merely reflect a supervisor's personal or subjective beliefs.

Additionally, several personnel told PERF that the evaluation process is not rigorous, and that as a result, there is little accountability for underperforming detectives. During interviews, several veteran employees said that they could not recall a Homicide detective ever being removed from the unit due to poor performance past the initial 120-day probationary period, even when circumstances may have warranted it.

PERF learned that supervisors are required to create a work plan if they rank an employee at a one or two on the evaluation form's five-point scale, but there is little evidence this actually occurs or that the evaluation process is used to identify and address underperforming detectives.

Recommendations: Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight

- ***Recommendation #21:*** **The CDP should establish a clear chain of command within the Homicide Unit. Homicide sergeants should be assigned to directly supervise specific teams of detectives, and these assignments should be made clear to the sergeants and the detectives.**
 - One way to establish a clear chain of command is to ensure that sergeant shift schedules are aligned with the schedules of the detectives they supervise. This way, sergeants will respond to the same homicide scenes as their direct reports, which will enable them to provide better guidance and supervision.
 - The CDP should ensure that there are an adequate number of sergeants to effectively supervise and guide detectives. The CDP's 2016 staffing study recommends a 1:6 ratio of supervisors to subordinates. Though the Homicide Unit's current staffing levels meet this ratio, more sergeants will be needed if additional detectives are added to the unit as recommended in Recommendation 16.

- ***Recommendation #22:*** **The Homicide Unit Manual should include directions on proper case documentation, file organization, and required reporting.**
 - The importance of case documentation and organization should be highlighted during training, with an emphasis on the link between case file organization and case clearance. PERF found that although the Homicide Unit's case files contained extensive documentation, they largely lacked organization.
 - The Homicide Unit manual should include a case file checklist that directs which documents must be included in the file and the order in which they should be filed. Supervisors should periodically review case files to ensure that detectives are adhering to the checklist, and this review should be part of the detectives' evaluations.
 - At a minimum, homicide case files should include the following completed documents:
 - Case file index
 - Investigative plan (See Recommendation 25)
 - Case checklist form (See Recommendation 26)
 - Initial incident report
 - 24-hour report
 - 5-day supplemental report
 - 10-day supplemental report
 - 30-day supplemental report
 - Supervisor case review sheets (completed by detective's supervisor)
 - Autopsy report and other communications/reports from the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office
 - Copies of submissions for forensic tests

- Forensic test results
 - Witness statements
 - A log of contacts with the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office
 - Intelligence reports
 - Any other forms or reports required by the department
 - Documentation of all other investigative tasks completed
- **Recommendation #23: The CDP should explore ways to ensure that its electronic records management system can be fully leveraged by the Homicide Unit to strengthen case documentation and investigations. Personnel should be fully trained on all electronic records management systems and databases.**
- The CDP should take all steps necessary to fully transition all existing records to LERMS.
 - The CDP should examine whether items in LERMS can be segregated between public and non-public documents, so that detectives are able to upload their notes and other non-public documents into the system.
 - The Homicide Unit needs access to a secure database and electronic storage so that documents can be searched and utilized by authorized personnel. Once these tools are established, policies should clearly state who has access to them and under what circumstances they may be accessed.
 - The CDP should explore creating an investigations module within LERMS for use by the Homicide Unit and other investigative units.
- **Recommendation #24: The Homicide Unit should collect and maintain accurate and consistent statistical data regarding measures such as detective clearance rates and caseloads.**
- Homicide Unit supervisors should work with the CDP's crime analysts to develop relevant data points and methods for collecting the data.
- **Recommendation #25: The Homicide Unit Manual should require that Homicide Unit detectives, working with their supervisors, develop a written investigative plan for each new homicide case.**
- The plan should be developed by the lead case detective, along with the detective's sergeant and lieutenant. It should be developed as quickly as possible after the detective is assigned a new case.
 - The plan should include items such as:
 - A to-do list for steps that need to be taken
 - A summary of existing leads, evidence, suspects, etc.
 - A list of people and items for follow-up

- A rough timeline for completing each task.
 - The plan should be put in writing and become part of the case file. It should be updated as needed.
- **Recommendation #26: The revised Homicide Unit manual should include a standard case checklist form. The checklist should include basic investigative tasks that are applicable to most homicide investigations, and detectives should be required to note on the form whether they completed the task, the date it was completed, and the reason for not completing any unfinished tasks.**
- The checklist should include a detailed list of steps that detectives should take during each phase of the investigation. It should cover items such as:
 - Steps taken at the crime scene (e.g., witness canvass, evidence collection)
 - Notifications made (to supervisors, other CDP units, external agencies, victims' families)
 - Attendance at the autopsy and collection of evidence from the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office
 - Reporting (initial report and all supplemental reports)
 - Submission of evidence to evidence control and to the Forensic Services Division for forensics testing
 - Witness interviews
 - Suspect interviews
 - Follow-up on forensic test results
 - Follow-up with intelligence units (computer forensics, cell phone forensics, criminal analysts, etc.)
 - Other investigatory tasks, as outlined in the Homicide Unit manual and in best practices guides.
- **Recommendation #27: Homicide Unit policies should mandate that supervisors conduct formal periodic case reviews. The policies should outline the case review process in detail, and should include template supervisor review forms. The supervisor should use the review process as an opportunity to identify potential new leads or avenues for investigation, to address any gaps in the detective's investigative process, and to update the investigative plan as needed.**
- The reviews should take place at specific intervals that are consistent in each case. (For example, after 24 hours, five days, 10 days, two weeks, one month, three months, and every 30 days after until the case is solved or all leads exhausted.)
 - Items that supervisors should review as part of the process include:
 - The investigative plan (See Recommendation 25)
 - The case checklist (See Recommendation 26)
 - All reports filed
 - Witness statements and interviews
 - Suspect statements and interviews

- Tips received and results from tips
- All evidentiary findings and forensic test results.
- Supervisory case reviews must be properly documented in the case files using standardized review forms.
- ***Recommendation #28:*** **The CDP should establish a formal process for evaluating Homicide Unit detectives. The evaluations should be designed to measure whether the detective is conducting thorough investigations, performing all necessary case follow up, and properly documenting all investigative tasks and findings.**
 - Formal evaluations should be conducted every six months. The detective's sergeant should conduct the evaluation, and it should be reviewed by the Homicide Unit lieutenants and commander.
 - The detective's evaluation should be based on the following:
 - A review of the detective's case files, including all reports, investigative plans, case checklist forms, witness statements, etc. The sergeant should ensure that all documentation is complete, up to date, and reflects thorough investigation and follow up.
 - The detective's clearance rates.
 - The sergeant's personal assessment of the detective's skills and abilities, based on the sergeant's interactions and observations.
 - A self-assessment written by the detective, which may include items such as: accomplishments during the review period, challenges faced during the review period, areas for improvement, goals, etc.
 - Data on taking excessive leave, any disciplinary actions taken against the detective, any complaints filed against the detective, etc.
 - The CDP should develop a standard Homicide Unit detective evaluation form, which should be attached to the Homicide Unit manual.
- ***Recommendation #29:*** **The CDP should establish a formal process for evaluating Homicide Unit sergeants. The evaluations should be designed to measure whether the sergeant is properly supervising detectives, conducting regular case reviews, and providing appropriate guidance and direction to members of the squad.**
 - The evaluations should be conducted every six months. The detective's lieutenant should conduct the evaluation, and it should be reviewed by the unit's commander.
 - The sergeant's evaluation should be based on the following:
 - A review of the case files from the detectives on the sergeant's squad, including all reports, investigative plans, and case checklist forms. The lieutenant should ensure that all documentation is complete, up to date, and reflects thorough investigation and follow up. This will serve not only

as a check on whether sergeants are conducting thorough case reviews and working with detectives, but it will also serve as an additional check on the detectives.

- The sergeant's squad's clearance rates.
 - The case distribution among detectives on the sergeant's squad.
 - The lieutenant's personal assessment of the sergeant's skills and abilities, based on the lieutenant's interactions and observations.
 - A self-assessment written by the sergeant, which may include items such as: accomplishments during the review period, challenges faced during the review period, areas for improvement, goals, etc.
 - Other employee evaluation criteria, such as taking excessive leave, any disciplinary actions taken against the detective, any complaints filed against the detective, etc.
- The CDP should develop a standard Homicide Unit sergeant evaluation form, which should be attached to the Homicide Unit manual.

➤ **Recommendation #30: The CDP should ensure there is a formal process for addressing underperforming detectives. If a detective's evaluation indicates a performance problem (e.g., poor case documentation, poor interrogation skills, lack of follow-up, etc.), the CDP should consider implementing the following general process:**

- The detective's sergeant should work with the lieutenant to identify the problem and create a plan for addressing it. At this phase, absent any obvious disciplinary issues (untruthfulness, insubordination, etc.), the focus of the plan should be on offering guidance and direction, not discipline. The plan may include:
 - Additional training courses
 - Counseling, when appropriate
 - Mentoring or additional on-the-job training.
- The sergeant should then discuss the issue and the proposed plan with the detective.
- If the problems continue, or if the detective refuses to follow the proposed plan, the detective should be removed from the Homicide Unit.
- This process should be applied consistently for every detective.

➤ **Recommendation #31: The CDP should consider establishing a Cold Case Unit whose mission is to clear unsolved homicide cases and provide a reliable quality assurance check on homicide investigations.**

- The Cold Case Unit should be staffed with top Homicide Unit detectives who have demonstrated outstanding performance and who express a desire to investigate cold cases. Written policies should establish a formal system for

determining when cases are subject to Cold Case Unit review and how these reviews will be conducted. PERF can help the CDP identify sample policies and protocols for establishing a Cold Case Unit.

- PERF understands that resource limitations may make it difficult for the CDP to establish a Cold Case Unit. The CDP should explore grant funding for this purpose, as research has shown that this is a common source of funding for cold case units, and that the level of funding dedicated to a cold case squad can have a significant impact on the number of cases that the squad clears.⁴⁴
 - One potential source of grant funding is through the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which funds initiatives for DNA testing and other programs related to cold case investigations. The National Clearinghouse for Science, Technology, and the Law (NCSTL) provides a list of DOJ resources for cold case units, including funding opportunities.⁴⁵
 - Some police agencies, such as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, also use civilian review teams comprised of retired law enforcement personnel, forensics lab technicians, professors, etc. to conduct the initial case screening and review.⁴⁶
 - PERF can assist the CDP with identifying additional funding resources.

Internal and External Coordination

***Finding:* There is a significant lack of coordination and communication among the various CDP units. The department is highly fragmented, and units largely act independently of one another, even though their missions and functions often overlap. More collaboration throughout the department is needed, especially between the Homicide Unit and the CDP's District Detective Units, whose cases are often connected. Units throughout the CDP also face significant staffing, training, and resource limitations that make it difficult to complete their missions.**

⁴⁴ Davis, Robert C., Carl Jensen, and Karin E. Kitchens (2011), *Cold-Case Investigations: An Analysis of Current Practices and Factors Associated with Successful Outcomes*, Washington, DC: RAND Corporation & the National Institute of Justice, available at

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2011/RAND_TR948.pdf

⁴⁵ National Clearinghouse for Science, Technology and the Law at Stetson University College of Law, NIJ/DOJ Resources, <http://www.ncstl.org/education/Cold%20Case%20NIJ%20Resources>.

⁴⁶ Cronin, James M., Gerard R. Murphy, Lisa L. Spahr, et al. (2007) *Promoting Effective Homicide Investigations*, Washington, DC: The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Police Executive Research Forum, available at

http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Homicide/promoting%20effective%20homicide%20investigations%202007.pdf.

Overall Coordination and Communication

The BJA guide on best practices for homicide investigations states: “The homicide unit should have an open and strong working relationship with other units within the agency . . . The most successful homicide investigators realize the value provided in a team approach to investigations and practice it regularly.”⁴⁷

According to the best practices guide, homicide detectives should work as an investigative team alongside forensic scientists, crime analysts, prosecutors, patrol officers, and detectives from specialized units, such as gangs or narcotics.⁴⁸ To promote better collaboration, some police agencies, like the Jacksonville (Florida) Police Department, have instituted formally-defined homicide investigations teams.⁴⁹

PERF found that, on the whole, this type of strong cross-agency coordination is lacking within the CDP. Although members of the various units PERF examined are generally talented and committed to their work, these units are largely insular and operate as independent entities.⁵⁰ There are few formal communication or information-sharing mechanisms in place, and as a result, it can be difficult for investigators to share intelligence and identify important links between cases, suspects, victims, and witnesses. Additionally, PERF found that units throughout the CDP lack the staffing and resources they need to perform their own tasks, let alone assist each other on investigations.

Personnel from across the CDP recognize this lack of coordination and believe it is a significant barrier to effectively conducting investigations and addressing crime throughout the city. PERF also learned that a lack of cross-agency coordination makes it difficult for the CDP to fully realize its renewed focus on community policing, as there is little information-sharing between investigators and the officers who are working in the neighborhoods.

The remainder of this section discusses PERF’s findings and recommendations regarding coordination between the Homicide Unit and other CDP units, as well as with external agencies such as the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner’s Office and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor’s Office. The PERF assessment team interviewed personnel from each of these units during its review.

⁴⁷ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ This appears to be a problem that is common in many police agencies. BJA’s *10 Things Law Enforcement Executives Can Do To Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcomes* states: “Collaboration can improve success throughout the agency, but it may require serious efforts to overcome entrenched subcultures of guarding information, isolation, and insulation. The benefits of such collaboration are limitless, including information that could prevent a homicide such as in a case of retaliation.” IACP (2013),

http://www.iir.com/Documents/IACP_Homicide_Guide.pdf.

Recommendations: Improving Overall Coordination and Communication

- **Recommendation #32: CDP officials and unit leaders must continuously emphasize the value of cross-department collaboration and a team approach to preventing and solving crimes. This is especially true for homicide investigations, which require the skills and expertise of a variety of units across the department.**⁵¹
 - This message should be reinforced in written policies, including the Homicide Unit Manual. Policies should include procedures for sharing information with patrol officers, all investigative units, analysts, and multi-jurisdictional task forces.⁵²
 - The CDP should coordinate regular training briefings, during which members of the various units could brief members of other units about their policies, protocols, capabilities, and missions. This would help units better understand how their missions, goals, and functions intersect.

- **Recommendation #33: The CDP should consider formalizing the team approach when it comes to homicide investigations. BJA has found that this is an effective way to encourage collaboration and communication, which can lead to more successful investigations.**⁵³
 - For example, the Jacksonville (Florida) Police Department has a defined investigations team for every homicide that includes homicide detectives, prosecutors, crime analysts, forensic analysts, patrol officers, and personnel from the department's Operation Safe Streets, Gun Buy Back, and Crime Stoppers programs.⁵⁴
 - The CDP could institute a similar approach that involves the following general steps:
 - For each case, the team would be led by the primary Homicide detective assigned to the case, and would include other Homicide detectives working the case, a criminal analyst, the CDP crime scene detective, the prosecutor assigned to the case, and a designated representative from the Patrol Unit (e.g., the responding officer), the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's office, the District Detective Unit, and any other units relevant to the case.

⁵¹ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁵² International Association of Chiefs of Police (2013), *10 Things Law Enforcement Executives Can Do To Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcome*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, http://www.iir.com/Documents/IACP_Homicide_Guide.pdf.

⁵³ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

- At the beginning of the investigation, the team could meet to discuss the investigative plan, prioritize tasks, and discuss next steps.
 - Throughout the investigation, the team members would be the points of contact for their respective units, ensuring that information flows more consistently.
 - The team could meet at regular intervals throughout the investigation to provide updates and discuss any concerns.
- **Recommendation #34: The CDP should take steps to improve the flow of information across all units within the department. These steps could include:**
- Requiring all personnel to check their CDP email accounts at least once per shift.
 - Developing an electronic information-sharing system that would allow all CDP personnel to see and share information across the department. PERF can provide the CDP with resources on information-sharing systems.
 - Ensuring that all personnel in investigative units receive access to the daily “items of interest” report, which outlines recent crimes that occurred throughout the city, to determine whether there is connectivity between crimes from different districts.
 - Holding regular conference calls between CDP command staff and lieutenants from investigative units to discuss critical incidents and deployments.
 - Holding regular crime briefings attended by the Chief of Police, all District commanders, and lieutenants from investigative units to discuss specific crimes and trends.
 - Holding regular in-person meetings between leaders from investigative units and DDUs to discuss specific crimes and trends.
 - Holding quarterly briefings by the Homicide Unit to command officials. This will help the CDP stay abreast of investigations and determine what resources are needed to improve the investigative process.
- **Recommendation #35: Homicide Unit detectives should be required to document any request they submit to another unit, whether those requests were followed up on, and the results of such requests. Supervisors should review this documentation to ensure that detectives are soliciting input and assistance on cases from others outside of the Homicide Unit.**

District Detective Units

PERF found that there is very little coordination between the CDP Homicide Unit and the District Detective Units (DDUs), even though there is often a great deal of overlap between homicides and the types of incidents that DDU detectives investigate.

DDU Structure, Responsibilities, and Resources

The City of Cleveland is divided into five patrol districts. Each district has a Support Section that includes the DDU, Vice Unit, Traffic Unit, Community Response Unit, and Community Engagement Unit. The DDUs are responsible for investigating non-fatal shootings, felonious assaults, missing persons cases, auto thefts, burglaries, and all other crimes that occur in their districts and are not handled by a specialized unit.

PERF learned that the DDUs are largely lacking in the staffing, training, and resources they need to conduct thorough investigations, especially of non-fatal shootings. Most DDUs are comprised of 10-18 detectives, though not every district is staffed to this capacity. Like the Homicide Unit, DDUs have an on-call system for the overnight shift (12am-8am). DDU detectives work cases on their own, rather than in teams, and the DDU lieutenant is responsible for case assignment.

Personnel told PERF that the DDU detective caseloads are often overwhelming; for example, one detective received 175 new cases during the first six months of 2016.

DDU detectives are selected into the unit by the same process as Homicide Unit detectives (i.e., alternating between seniority and management picks). DDU detectives receive no formal investigations training upon becoming detectives; instead, they receive the bulk of their training from on-the-job (OJT) training. PERF learned that many DDU detectives are willing to attend outside training – and are even willing to pay for it on their own – but that they do not have time to attend because of their heavy caseloads.

Personnel told PERF that the DDU facilities lack many basic resources, such as adequate interview rooms and even heating and air conditioning. PERF also learned that the DDUs are typically short on vehicles, and that the vehicles they do have are old and in disrepair. The DDUs also lack up-to-date technology such as wireless capabilities and access to computers while in the field, and many DDU detectives do not have access to tools that could assist them in investigations, such as CDP databases or citywide video footage. The CDP does not employ gunshot detection technology, which is a tool that many police departments use to triangulate and record the sound of gunfire, in order to alert police immediately when a gun is fired and provide the location where it was fired.

DDU Response to Non-Fatal Shootings

One of the most troubling findings from PERF's review is that DDU detectives are not required to respond to the scene of non-fatal shootings, and in fact, it is not standard practice for DDU detectives to immediately respond to these incidents.

Instead, when a call comes in regarding a shooting, a patrol officer is dispatched to the scene and conducts the preliminary investigation. The DDU is usually not even notified about the incident until after the patrol officer conducts the preliminary investigation and files a report. In practice, this notification typically does not occur until the day after the shooting, especially if the shooting takes place during the overnight shift when DDU detectives are not on duty. The DDU is occasionally notified of a shooting earlier if the patrol officer identifies a pressing lead or there are other extenuating circumstances (e.g., there was also an abduction), but PERF learned that these cases are rare. Instead, DDU detectives typically do not begin investigating shooting cases until the day after the shooting occurs.

PERF learned that DDU detectives do not immediately respond to non-fatal shootings because of three primary factors:

Staffing: Many people told PERF that the DDUs lack the staffing needed to respond to every shooting, especially the ones that occur during off-duty hours.

Policies: PERF learned that the CDP has no clear policies requiring DDU detectives to respond to shootings. In fact, PERF learned that patrol officers are often instructed to *not* call the DDUs when shootings occur, an informal practice that has been passed down over time.

Communication: PERF found that there is a lack of communication between patrol officers and the DDUs. Detectives said that sometimes the only way they become aware of a shooting is if they are closely monitoring their portable radios. Even then, PERF learned that some DDU supervisors will instruct detectives to not respond to the scene but to instead wait until the patrol officer files a report.

The lack of consistent and urgent DDU response to non-fatal shootings is a serious problem that must be addressed. Not all patrol officers are adequately trained to conduct the type of investigation at the scene that is necessary for identifying crucial evidence and leads, so this information may be lost if a detective does not also respond.

A lack of urgent response to shootings can also negatively impact homicide investigations, as victims who are critically wounded may eventually succumb to their injuries. A consistent and urgent response to non-fatal shootings is also important for preventing future homicides. Someone who commits a non-fatal shooting may very well commit a homicide if not apprehended, as oftentimes the only thing that differentiates a non-fatal shooting from a homicide is poor marksmanship, better medical care, or some other chance factor.

PERF learned that there have been some attempts on the part of the CDP to ensure that DDU detectives respond to all shootings; however, these attempts have largely failed, due to a lack of DDU staffing and a failure to enforce the practice. PERF also learned, however, that the CDP is in the process of implementing specialized teams and units within some of the districts that may be able to help respond to non-fatal shootings. For example, the CDP recently implemented a Major Crimes Investigation Unit in at least one district, which is responsible for responding to reports of shots fired. The CDP is also working to implement dedicated “gun suppression teams”

within the districts. These teams, which are comprised of CDP detectives who work with ATF agents, are responsible for looking at recent shootings and working with other CDP units (e.g., the Gang Impact Unit) to identify patterns and connections across shooting incidents. PERF learned that these teams will handle a majority of felonious shootings, even though this is typically the purview of the DDU detectives.

These are important steps towards improving the response to non-fatal shootings. In order to be effective, however, this type of unit should be implemented in all districts, should be fully staffed and trained, and should be governed by clear policies.

Coordination between the Homicide Unit and DDUs

PERF found that the Homicide Unit and the DDUs largely operate independently, and they do not collaborate or regularly share information that might be critical to investigations. The reasons for this include an absence of formal communication protocols within the CDP, the tendency for personnel to “stay in their lanes” and focus exclusively on their own missions, and a lack of understanding about each other’s capabilities and needs.

Often, the only time that Homicide and DDU detectives interact is if a DDU detective is investigating a case in which the victim dies, at which point the case is turned over to the Homicide Unit. PERF was told that occasionally DDU detectives will also contact Homicide detectives if they receive information about a homicide. However, these interactions largely involve the DDU detective simply typing up a report and submitting it to the Homicide detective, and there is no ongoing collaboration, follow-up, or discussion of case strategy. PERF also learned that Homicide and DDU detectives do not receive regular updates or briefings on each other’s cases.

Poor coordination between Homicide and DDU detectives can result in critical information falling through the cracks. This is especially true because the types of crimes that DDU detectives investigate – non-fatal shootings, felonious assaults, etc. – often involve suspects, victims, and witnesses who may also be involved in homicide cases. Sharing information would help Homicide and DDU detectives better identify patterns and connections between their cases, thus enabling them to more effectively prevent and respond to crime throughout the city.

Recommendations: District Detective Units

- **Recommendation #36: The CDP should make it a priority for DDU detectives to immediately respond to and investigate all shootings that occur in the City of Cleveland. Currently there are no policies requiring DDU detectives to respond to the scene of non-fatal shootings, and in fact, it is not standard practice for DDU detectives to immediately respond to these incidents. This deficiency must be immediately addressed.**
 - The CDP must first institute a formal policy requiring DDU detectives to respond to the scene of all shootings, regardless of whether the shootings result in injuries or death. Personnel should be trained on these policies and held accountable for following them.

- Patrol officers should be instructed to immediately notify the DDUs when a shooting occurs, rather than waiting until after a preliminary investigation is conducted and a report is filed.
 - Upon learning of a shooting, DDU supervisors should immediately assign the case to a detective and dispatch the detective to the scene. The DDU detective should promptly begin the investigation at this time.
- **Recommendation #37: The CDP should ensure that the DDUs have the staffing, equipment, and technology necessary to thoroughly respond to and investigate all shootings.**
- **Staffing:** The CDP should review staffing levels in each DDU to determine whether additional detectives are needed in order to meet this goal.
- One promising option is to create a small team of detectives within each DDU that is solely dedicated to investigating shootings and shots fired. PERF learned that the CDP is working to implement this approach through the creation of Major Crimes Investigation Units and specialized gun suppression teams. The CDP should continue developing these models and expanding them to all districts.
- **Equipment:** The CDP should consider equipping DDU detectives with computers that they can use while in the field to access databases and other tools to assist them with investigations. For example, many police agencies give district detectives access to laptops or tablets that can connect to the agency's databases via cellular capabilities or through wireless hotspots created by agency-issued smartphones.
 - **Technology:** The CDP should also explore using gunshot detection technology, which a tool used by many police departments to detect when and where shots are fired, so that police may immediately respond, even if no one calls the police to report shots being fired.
- **Recommendation #38: The CDP should ensure that there is a formal process for selecting DDU detectives that is based on a set of standard, objective criteria. This process should be outlined in written policy and consistently applied to all candidates.**
- This selection process should follow the general selection process for Homicide Unit detectives outlined Recommendations 8-10.
- **Recommendation #39: The CDP should ensure that all DDU detectives receive a formal training course in basic investigations.**

- This training should include the topics outlined in Recommendation 11 and should be provided to detectives upon joining the DDU.
- ***Recommendation #40:*** **The CDP should take steps to improve coordination between the Homicide Unit and DDUs. Leaders must emphasize the importance of coordination to Homicide Unit and DDU detectives. There is often a great deal of overlap between the cases investigated by these two units, and detectives must be aware of any relationships between their cases, suspects, victims, and witnesses.**
 - The CDP should ensure that there are formal information-sharing protocols in place to improve communication between the Homicide Unit and DDUs. Some suggested options are outlined above in Recommendations 32-34.
 - Following up with DDU detectives should be included as a step in the Homicide Unit investigation checklist (see Recommendation 26). Homicide Unit supervisors should hold detectives accountable for completing this step.
 - PERF learned that the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office has also recently implemented an effort to improve collaboration among law enforcement agencies within the region, a step that some CDP personnel feel will promote better information sharing across districts. The CDP should ensure that Homicide Unit personnel are also involved in these and other information-sharing efforts.
 - In addition to formal information-sharing protocols, Homicide Unit and DDU detectives should be instructed to informally contact each another and share information on a regular basis through email, telephone calls, and text messages.

The Gang Impact Unit

The CDP's Gang Impact Unit, or Gang Unit, conducts targeted enforcement efforts to reduce gang-related activity in the City of Cleveland. Research shows that specialized gang units can be a valuable resource for homicide investigators, especially in places such as Cleveland, where many homicides involve gang members.⁵⁵

For example, the Gang Unit regularly uses social media and confidential informants to gather intelligence about gangs and gang members' involvement in crimes, information that would often be useful for Homicide detectives. Due to a lack of formal information-sharing protocols, however, PERF found little indication that Homicide Unit detectives regularly receive this information. Though it appears that there is generally a good relationship between the Homicide Unit and the Gang Unit, better coordination and communication between these units are needed to fully leverage the Gang Unit as a resource in homicide investigations.

⁵⁵ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.
http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

Cell Phone Data Extraction

The Gang Unit is also the sole CDP unit with the training and capabilities to extract data from cell phones for use in investigations. Prosecutors and CDP personnel told PERF that cell phone evidence plays a key role in many homicide cases, so coordination between the Homicide Unit and Gang Unit on this issue is particularly critical.⁵⁶

Data Extraction Process: When a Homicide detective needs data retrieved from a cell phone, the detective obtains a search warrant and then submits the request to the Gang Unit. There are two detectives in the Gang Unit who are trained to extract cell phone data using one of the CDP's two Cellebrite machines, both of which are housed in the Gang Unit. The Gang Unit detectives can extract data from cell phones (e.g., retrieve call logs, contact lists, smartphone data), but they do not analyze the extracted data or track cell phone locations.

Once the extraction is complete, the Gang Unit detectives save the data to a disc and give it to the requesting detective. If the Gang Unit is unable to extract the data, it will notify the requesting detective and may seek assistance from the U.S. Secret Service, which has the ability to perform complex extractions.

The Gang Unit conducts cell phone extractions for all CDP units and for a few outside agencies. PERF learned that the Gang Unit receives an average of 10-20 extraction requests per week. The Gang Unit strives to complete all requests within three days, but it prioritizes requests in homicide cases and tries to have those completed within one day. The Gang Unit maintains a database of all extraction requests and completions.

Data Extraction Policies: PERF learned that the CDP has no written policies that specifically address the recovery and processing of cell phones recovered as evidence.

Training and Certification: The Gang Unit detectives who perform cell phone data extraction have had some outside training on digital forensics and how to use extraction tools, and are certified to use the Cellebrite machine. There are additional outside training courses available that would help detectives stay abreast of new technological developments in this field; however, the CDP's budget restrictions limit the detectives' ability to attend these courses. PERF was also told that the CDP's data extraction capabilities could be improved with updated equipment, including an additional Cellebrite machine and equipment that allows extraction from newer cell phone devices.

⁵⁶ See Goodison, Sean E., Robert C. Davis, and Brian A. Jackson (2015), *Digital Evidence and the U.S. Criminal Justice System: Identifying Technology and Other Needs to More Effectively Acquire and Utilize Digital Evidence*, Washington, DC: RAND Corporation, the Police Executive Research Forum, RTI International, and the University of Denver, available at http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR890/RAND_RR890.pdf.

Aside from the Gang Unit detectives who perform data extractions, CDP detectives do not receive formal training on the legal and technical issues surrounding cell phone evidence (e.g., what information to include in search warrants, how to properly handle cell phones collected as evidence, how to preserve data, the process for submitting extraction requests). Several CDP personnel told PERF that it would be useful for all CDP detectives to be trained on these topics.

Recommendations: The Gang Impact Unit

- ***Recommendation #41:*** The CDP should take steps to improve overall coordination between the Homicide Unit and the Gang Impact Unit. There is often overlap between the cases they investigate, and improving coordination could help investigators solve current cases and prevent future incidents.
 - These CDP should institute formal information-sharing protocols between these two units, as outlined in Recommendation 32-34.
 - Homicide Unit detectives should also work with the Gang Impact Unit to learn how to access social media sites used by gang members. This will help Homicide detectives gain intelligence on people potentially involved in homicide cases.

- ***Recommendation #42:*** The CDP should develop written policies to govern the recovery and processing of all cell phones recovered as evidence.
 - These policies should be applicable to any CDP personnel who seize and analyze cell phones, including patrol officers, investigators, and forensic technicians. Policies should direct personnel how to handle cell phones prior to submitting them for analysis, and personnel should be trained on this topic.⁵⁷
 - Written policies should include:
 - Directives on which CDP unit is responsible for cell phone evidence processing (at present, this is the responsibility of the Gang Impact Unit)
 - The procedure for requesting cell phone extraction services
 - Standard departmental policies for collecting cell phones recovered as evidence
 - Standard departmental policies for extracting data from cell phones, including evidence located in a cloud database
 - Legal standards for searching and seizing cell phone evidence.
 - When developing policies governing cell phone evidence, the CDP should consult best practices guides and policies from other police agencies. PERF can help identify such resources and connect the CDP with police agencies to provide

⁵⁷ Goodison, Sean E., Robert C. Davis, and Brian A. Jackson (2015), *Digital Evidence and the U.S. Criminal Justice System: Identifying Technology and Other Needs to More Effectively Acquire and Utilize Digital Evidence*, Washington, DC: RAND Corporation, the Police Executive Research Forum, RTI International, and the University of Denver, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR890/RAND_RR890.pdf.

sample policies and peer-to-peer assistance. (See Appendix C for a list of resources.)

- **Recommendation #43: The CDP should provide Homicide Unit detectives with the training and equipment needed to perform cell phone data extractions.**
 - Currently, two members of the Gang Impact Unit are the only CDP personnel who have the capability to perform cell phone data extractions. Providing Homicide Unit detectives with this capability could help expedite cell phone processing.

- **Recommendations #44: The CDP should ensure that personnel who are involved in cell phone evidence collection and extraction receive updated training and certifications.**
 - Training should include:
 - How to properly use the specialized equipment for cell phone data extraction, including Cellebrite. Trainings should lead to certification when applicable.
 - Constitutional law and the legal standards for obtaining and analyzing digital evidence.

 - Potential training sources include the U.S. Secret Service, which offers training for computer and cell phone analysis, along with the companies that make the equipment used by the CECU. The CDP should consider exploring grant funding and other alternative funding sources so that personnel do not have to pay for their own training. PERF can help the CDP identify training and funding resources.

- **Recommendation #45: All CDP investigators should receive training to understand the technical and legal issues surrounding cell phone data extraction, even if they do not directly perform this function.**
 - PERF learned that Homicide Unit detectives, as well as investigators in other units, do not receive formal training on how to collect and preserve cell phone evidence.

 - Training should include the protocol and legal standards for requesting extraction services, obtaining search warrants or court orders for digital evidence, and steps that should be taken to preserve cell phone evidence.

 - Trainings could be conducted by trained personnel from the Gang Impact Unit and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office.

- **Recommendation #46: The CDP should ensure that the department has the proper equipment to effectively conduct cell phone data extractions.**

- The CDP currently has two Cellebrite machines, both of which are located in the Gang Impact Unit. PERF learned that the CDP's current machines are unable to extract data from some newer cell phone models and that having only two machines can create delays in the extraction process.
- Given the importance of cell phone evidence in modern homicide investigations, the CDP should consider investing in updated Cellebrite machines.

Video Forensics Unit

The CDP's Video Forensics Unit (VFU) is responsible for collecting and processing video evidence for all CDP investigations, including homicides. The VFU technician responds to crime scenes, collects videos from cameras in the area (e.g., surveillance cameras operated by a private business), and then transfers the footage to a DVD or external drive for detectives to review. The VFU technician can also perform video enhancements and prepare the footage for presentation in court.

Video analysis is increasingly critical to investigations. PERF found that while the VFU is competent and well-respected within the CDP, the unit's capabilities could be greatly improved with additional staffing and resources.

VFU Staffing

The VFU handles approximately 140 to 150 cases per year, and the average amount of time spent processing videos for one case is between 30 and 60 hours. There is currently only one VFU technician primarily responsible for collecting and processing all video footage for CDP investigations.

Personnel from the CDP and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office told PERF that this large caseload contributes to critical delays in video evidence being collected and processed. For example, in one case a homicide was captured on video, but it took more than a week for the footage be collected, processed, and turned over to the case detective. Furthermore, the sole VFU technician may not always be able to promptly respond to a crime scene, meaning that video evidence may not be collected until the following day.

VFU Equipment

PERF learned that the VFU only has enough equipment to process one video at a time, which can further contribute to processing delays. Additionally, the VFU does not presently have the equipment to access digital videos from all camera manufacturers. PERF learned that VFU personnel have purchased their own equipment in order to help them conduct the required analyses.

CCTV Footage

PERF found that footage from the city's closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras is not being effectively utilized for CDP investigations. Most of the video evidence collected by the VFU comes from cameras operated by private businesses and organizations, rather than the city's CCTV cameras. CDP personnel said that they have problems gaining access to city CCTV footage in a timely fashion; furthermore, when they are able to access the videos, they often find that the cameras were not turned on or otherwise were not working.

Recommendations: Video Forensics Unit

- **Recommendation #47: The CDP should ensure that the Video Forensics Unit (VFU) has the policies, staffing, training, and equipment necessary to process video evidence in a timely and thorough fashion.**
 - Written policies for the VFU should include:
 - The duties and responsibilities of unit personnel
 - The procedure for requesting services from the unit
 - Standard departmental policies for recovering and processing video footage
 - Legal standards for recovering and processing video footage/
 - Currently, there is only one person who is responsible for collecting and processing video footage for the entire CDP. PERF learned that this has created a significant delay that can impact investigations. The CDP should staff the VFU with an additional person who is trained in performing this task.
 - The CDP should consider investing in additional equipment so that the VFU can process more than one video at a time. This equipment should be update to allow the processing of footage from newer-model camera systems.
- **Recommendation #48: The CDP should ensure that all investigators receive training to understand the VFU's capabilities, limitations, services, policies, and technologies.**
 - Training should include the protocol and legal standards for recovering video footage from a crime scene.
 - Trainings can be taught by personnel from the VFU and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office. PERF can help the CDP identify additional training resources.
- **Recommendation #49: The CDP should take steps to improve the utilization of citywide closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras in criminal investigations.**
 - CDP leaders should work with Cleveland city officials to ensure that CDP investigators are able to gain timely access to CCTV footage. Leaders should also explore ways to improve the reliability and quality of the city's CCTV cameras.

- The CDP should develop written policies to govern the recovery of videos from CCTV cameras. Currently, the extent to which CCTV footage is collected and utilized is dependent upon individual detectives, rather than standard department policy. Policies should provide guidance on the steps that investigators should take to identify CCTV cameras at a scene and how to recover and process the footage.

Crime Analysis Unit

According to the BJA's best practices guide, crime analysis can play an important role in effective homicide investigations.⁵⁸ For example, successful homicide units use crime analysis for "investigative support, ongoing threat definition, and/or pattern analysis of homicide trends."⁵⁹

Crime analysis in the CDP is conducted by the department's Crime Analysis Unit (CAU), which is part of the Intelligence Section.⁶⁰ The CAU is staffed with a sergeant, a lead criminal analyst, a missing persons detective, a computer operator, and another detective who performs some analysis work.

Coordination between the Homicide Unit and the CAU

The CAU performs several functions that could potentially be valuable to homicide investigations. For example, the CAU can provide intelligence upon request about suspects, witnesses, locations, and crimes. It can also analyze extracted cell phone data, track and search social media activity, and collect data from license plate readers. The CAU also generates daily and weekly crime reports for the command staff and can disseminate information regarding wanted suspects or missing persons.

PERF learned, however, that Homicide Unit detectives do not regularly use the CAU as a resource on homicide cases. Given the value that the CAU could provide to investigations, this is a deficiency that must be addressed.

Many detectives interviewed by PERF were not fully aware of the CAU's function and capabilities. Though some Homicide Unit detectives have occasionally worked with the CAU

⁵⁸ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The CAU is co-located with the Northeast Ohio Regional Fusion Center; however, the CAU and Fusion Center are separate entities and perform different functions. The Fusion Center is a regional information-sharing hub whose primary function is to collect public safety information and push it out to law enforcement agencies, private sector groups, and first responders throughout a five-county area. PERF found that, due to the nature of its work and its structure, the Fusion Center does not play a role in CDP homicide investigations.

and found the crime analysts to be helpful, other detectives had little understanding of how the CAU could assist them with homicide investigations.

There are several ways to promote better utilization of the CAU by Homicide Unit detectives. First, the revised Homicide Unit Manual should include specific protocols for utilizing CAU during homicide investigations. Second, detectives must be made aware of the CAU's capabilities, how and when to request information from the CAU, and the important role that crime analysis plays in homicide investigations. Third, the CAU should work with the Homicide Unit to determine its operational needs, and should provide information that best meets those needs. Fourth, information produced by the CAU should be operationalized before it is given to detectives, because raw, unanalyzed data may not be particularly useful to people who are not trained analysts. For example, a report that displays crime incidents geographically, rather than in a spreadsheet of data, would likely be more actionable for detectives. Finally, it would be useful for the CAU to generate regular reports that identify crime trends and "hot spots," and to distribute these reports to all CDP investigators.

CAU Staffing and Resources

The CDP must also ensure that the CAU has the staffing, equipment, and technology that it needs in order to provide the most up-to-date, comprehensive data and analysis.

Staffing: Currently, there is only one person who conducts the bulk of crime analysis for the CDP. According to personnel throughout the department, this is not enough to keep up with the volume of information that comes in, nor does it allow for much proactive analysis. Many police agencies assign a criminal analyst directly to the Homicide Unit to work primarily on homicide investigations, and this is considered a best practice by BJA.⁶¹ PERF learned that the CDP has previously considered assigning a criminal analyst to each district, which would go a long way toward helping the CAU achieve its mission.

Equipment & Technology: PERF learned that when the CDP switched to the new Law Enforcement Records Management System (LERMS), much of the crime data was lost in the transition.⁶² Additionally, at the time of PERF's review, LERMS did not communicate with the CDP's crime mapping and analysis software. As a result, the CDP was unable to generate and analyze useful crime data for several months, and PERF learned that some personnel were using push-pins on a map to indicate where incidents occurred. The CDP must ensure that these issues with LERMS are addressed.

The CDP also lacks the technology to conduct social networking analysis, which is playing an increasingly critical role in homicide investigations.⁶³ Social networking analysis involves

⁶¹ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁶² See the section, "Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight" in this report for a more detailed discussion about LERMS.

⁶³ See National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College, <https://nnscommunities.org/our-work/innovation/social-network-analysis>; Papachristos, Andrew V., David Hureau, and Anthony A. Braga (2013),

applying a mathematical method to analyze existing law enforcement data, such as arrests and field stops, in order to identify the structures, dynamics, and linkages between people in criminal street groups and develop more effective and targeted interventions.⁶⁴ PERF learned that the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) recently hired a crime analyst to do network analysis and is willing to fulfill CDP detectives' requests for this service. Homicide Unit detectives should be encouraged to utilize this resource, and the CDP should also strengthen the social networking analysis abilities within the CAU.

Analyzing communications that are conducted via social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) is also increasingly important for criminal investigations. CAU analysts should be trained on how to conduct this type of analysis, and intelligence that is pertinent to homicide cases should be provided in an actionable report to Homicide Unit detectives.

Recommendations: Crime Analysis Unit

- **Recommendation #50: The CDP should prioritize expanding its crime analysis capabilities. Research has shown that crime analysis is an extremely valuable tool for preventing and solving violent crimes.⁶⁵ Putting the mechanisms in place to better understand connections between crimes, suspects, victims, witnesses, locations, etc. could strengthen the CDP's investigative process.**
- **Recommendation #51: The CAU should be staffed with enough trained crime analysts to provide the CDP's investigative units with up-to-date, comprehensive information.**
 - Currently, there is only one person who conducts the bulk of crime analysis for the CDP. PERF learned that the CDP has previously considered assigning a crime analyst to each district, a step which would go a long way towards helping the CAU achieve its mission.
 - The CDP should consider assigning a crime analyst to the Homicide Unit to work primarily on homicide investigations, which is considered a best practice by BJA.⁶⁶ In many agencies, the crime analyst assigned to the homicide unit responds to crime scenes, observes interviews, and prepares threat assessments, information reports, linkage analyses, pattern analyses, and other items that may be useful to an investigation.⁶⁷

The Corner and the Crew: The Influence of Geography and Social Networks on Gang Violence, *American Sociological Review*, v.78 n3:417-447; McGloin, Jean Marie & David Kirk (2010), An Overview of Social Network Analysis, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 21 (2): 169-181.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

- At the least, a crime analyst should be assigned to a homicide investigation team each time a homicide occurs. (See Recommendation 33)

- **Recommendation #52: The CDP should invest in the tools and technology necessary for conducting crime analysis, networking analysis, and other up-to-date analytical functions. CAU personnel should receive formal training on how to use these tools and how to capture information in an actionable product for investigators.**
 - PERF learned that when the CDP switched to the new Law Enforcement Records Management System (LERMS), much of the crime data was lost in the transition.⁶⁸ The CDP must ensure that this data is restored and that LERMS communicates effectively with its crime analysis software.

 - The CDP should also consider utilizing technology to conduct social networking analysis, which is playing an increasingly critical role in homicide investigations. PERF learned that the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) recently hired a crime analyst to do network analysis and is willing to assist the CDP with this function; however, it would be preferable if the CDP had these capabilities as well.

 - Analyzing communications that are conducted via social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) is also increasingly important for criminal investigations. CAU analysts should be trained on how to conduct this type of analysis, and intelligence that is pertinent to homicide cases should be provided in an actionable report to Homicide Unit detectives. Homicide Unit detectives should also have access to and training on these tools, particularly if the CDP is unable to hire additional crime analysts to perform these functions. (See Recommendation 71)

- **Recommendation #53: The CDP should take steps to improve coordination between the CAU and the Homicide Unit in order to ensure that the CAU is being fully utilized in homicide investigations. These steps may include:**
 - Revising the Homicide Unit Manual to include protocols for utilizing the CAU during homicide investigations.

 - Making Homicide Unit detectives aware of how the CAU can contribute to homicide investigations, including the importance of crime analysis, the CAU's capabilities and functions, and the crime analysis tools available.

 - Holding regular briefings between the Homicide Unit and the CAU to share information and discuss new tools and technologies.

⁶⁸ See the section, "Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight" in this report for a more detailed discussion about LERMS.

- Ensuring that the intelligence produced by the CAU is current, fully analyzed, and operationalized before it is presented to Homicide Unit detectives. CAU leaders and crime analysts should seek input from the Homicide Unit to understand what types of information would be most useful for homicide investigations.
- Producing a daily crime report, generated by the CAU, which summarizes the crimes that occurred each day (e.g., date, time, location, and a brief description for each incident). The report should be distributed to all CDP personnel. The CAU should also produce regular crime analysis reports that identify crime trends and crime “hot spots” and distribute these reports throughout the CDP.

Patrol Units

Patrol officers serve a critical role in homicide investigations. They are typically the first officers on the scene; they are responsible for preserving and managing the crime scene; they often conduct the initial witness canvasses; and they may have contacts in their districts who can provide valuable information about a case.⁶⁹ Research has shown that certain actions taken by patrol officers – such as securing the crime scene and attempting to locate witness – can lead to higher homicide case closure rates.⁷⁰

The CDP’s Patrol Units are divided into five districts. PERF learned that patrol officers generally do an effective job of performing their duties related to homicide investigations. However, PERF found that there are two potential areas where improvement may be needed: crime scene management and security, and communication between the Homicide Unit and Patrol Units.

Crime Scene Management and Security

Several people throughout the CDP told PERF that patrol officers allow too many people into the inner perimeter of a crime scene, an area that should be reserved for detectives and crime scene technicians. They said that a failure to properly preserve and secure the crime scene can jeopardize evidence and make it difficult for detectives and technicians to focus on processing the scene.

However, it should be noted that the personnel interviewed by PERF did not blame the patrol officers for failing to properly manage crime scenes. Instead, they said that patrol officers need more training on crime scene management, that the patrol supervisors on the scene need to take more control, and that CDP leaders should make it clear to everyone – patrol officers and supervisors, elected officials, other CDP personnel, etc. – who is allowed and who is not allowed

⁶⁹ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁷⁰ Wellford, Charles and James Cronin, *Clearing Up Homicide Clearance Rates*, National Institute of Justice Journal (April 2000), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000243b.pdf>. See also the full report for a more comprehensive look at this study: *An Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multistate Study* (October 1999), http://www.jrsa.org/pubs/reports/homicides_report.pdf.

at the scene. PERF learned that patrol officers receive no formal training on their roles and responsibilities at a homicide scene.

Communication with the Homicide Unit

PERF found that Patrol Units and the Homicide Unit share very little information regarding homicide cases. Patrol officers may give detectives information while at the crime scene, but there is little follow-up after that point. Homicide detectives do not attend roll calls to discuss cases, and when patrol officers receive information from the public related to a homicide, there are no clear channels for sharing that information with the Homicide Unit.

Several patrol officers told PERF that it would be useful to receive more information in general regarding homicides and other crimes that occur throughout the city. They said that there have been times when they have learned about homicides through the media, rather than through official CDP channels. The CDP does not have formal mechanisms in place to provide patrol officers with crime updates; for example, patrol officers do not receive a daily crime report.

This lack of information-sharing makes it more difficult for the CDP to strengthen cross-agency coordination and emphasize shared goals. Additionally, officers who patrol neighborhoods on a daily basis often have contacts and sources who could provide them with vital information about homicide cases. Failing to properly use this information results in a lost opportunity for patrol officers to assist in investigations, deter further crimes, and keep communities safe.

Recommendations: Patrol Units

- **Recommendation #54: To ensure that homicide crime scenes are consistently and thoroughly secured and managed, Homicide Unit detectives should develop a standardized worksheet for patrol officers to use when responding to all homicide scenes.**
 - The worksheet could include a checklist of all tasks that must be completed, notes regarding any essential information gathered (e.g., witnesses identified, evidence collected, etc.), and space to record information about the people, conditions, and circumstances at the scene.
 - Officers would be responsible for submitting the worksheet to the Homicide detective before leaving the scene.
 - The BJA best practices guide provides samples of similar worksheets used by police departments in Sacramento County and San Diego.⁷¹

⁷¹ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.
http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

- **Recommendation #55: Patrol officers should receive comprehensive formal training on their roles and responsibilities at a homicide scene, including how to properly secure, manage, and preserve the scene. Training topics should include:**
 - *Crime scene processing and management*, including securing and preserving a scene, maintaining a crime scene log, locating surveillance cameras and other evidence at the scene, conducting initial witness canvasses, and other aspects of initial case investigation and crime scene management. PERF learned that CDP patrol officers particularly need additional guidance on how to secure the scene and limit the flow of personnel into the inner perimeter.
 - *Managing witnesses and victims' family members*, including how to identify and separate potential witnesses at the scene, how to respond to possible confrontations with members of the public at a crime scene, and protocols for transporting witnesses to and from the crime scene. It is important that patrol officers know how to protect a crime scene and handle witnesses without isolating the community, as this is crucial for maintaining positive police-community relationships and may lead to better cooperation from potential witnesses.⁷²
 - *How to best contribute to a homicide investigation*, including what to look for at a homicide scene, what the various units need from patrol officers, and how patrol officers can add value throughout an investigation. PERF recommends that officers receive ongoing training from the Homicide Unit and other investigative units on what they need from patrol officers.
- **Recommendation #56: The General Order for death investigations should specify that at a homicide scene, there should be only one entry point for all personnel, and that each person who enters the scene must check in with the patrol officer who is keeping the crime scene log.**
- **Recommendation #57: Homicide Unit detectives should be encouraged to routinely attend Patrol Unit roll calls to share information about homicide incidents and investigations.**

Internal Forensics Units

The BJA guide on best practices for homicide investigations states that “a competent, well-equipped, and well-staffed crime laboratory that is responsive to investigators will have a significant effect on homicide clearances.”⁷³ In Cleveland, most forensic testing and analysis, including DNA testing, has moved to the crime lab run by the Cuyahoga County Medical

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

Examiner's Office (CCME). The CDP's role in forensic testing and analysis is very limited, though it has retained a handful of forensics functions.

This section of the report examines the two remaining CDP units that are involved with processing, testing, and analyzing physical evidence: the Crime Scene & Records Unit and the Firearms Section. The report then examines the CCME's role and its relationship with the CDP's Homicide Unit.

Crime Scene & Records Unit

Detectives from the CDP's Crime Scene & Records Unit are responsible for collecting and processing physical evidence found at crime scenes, which is then submitted to the CCME crime lab for testing and analysis. There is one CDP crime scene detective who is assigned to handle all homicide cases. This detective works eight-hour shifts, five days a week, and is on call at all other times to respond to homicide scenes.

At the scene, the crime scene detective identifies, documents, collects, and preserves evidence. This includes taking photographs of the scene and collecting evidence such as blood and saliva samples, fingerprints, firearms, fired cartridges, clothing, and automobiles. Each item is documented, placed into a separate package, labeled, sealed, and entered into the property book and LERMS. Evidence is then submitted to the CCME crime lab for testing.

PERF found that the Homicide Unit detectives and the dedicated homicide crime scene detective have a strong working relationship based on a great deal of trust. PERF also found that homicide investigations could benefit from addressing gaps in staffing, training, and equipment that currently exist in the Crime Scene & Records Unit.

Staffing: There is currently only one crime scene detective who is primarily responsible for processing all homicide crime scenes. Other crime scene detectives can fill in when this detective is out, but PERF learned that they do not always have the training or experience necessary to work homicide scenes. Additionally, PERF found that due to the shortage in crime scene detectives, the responsibility for processing crime scenes and handling and submitting evidence sometimes falls to Homicide Unit detectives. This is problematic, because it reduces the amount of time that Homicide detectives can spend investigating cases, plus it can create chain-of-custody and other evidentiary concerns.

Training: PERF learned that crime scene detectives are not required to undergo any formal training on evidence collection or processing. If crime scene detectives wish to attend an outside training course, they must identify – and often pay for – the course themselves. PERF found that the crime scene detectives desire more training but do not always have the time or funding to obtain it. Formal, consistent training on evidence collection and processing is critical for ensuring that evidence does not get contaminated and that the chain of custody is preserved.

Equipment and Facilities: According to CDP personnel, crime scene detectives lack the basic equipment necessary to effectively process homicide scenes (see Recommendation 60 for a detailed list of equipment needs). PERF also learned that personnel do not have access to a

secure, temperature-controlled room at CDP headquarters in which to store and dry evidence that contains blood or other bodily fluids before it can be submitted to the CCME crime lab. This type of evidence can create a biohazard and needs to be stored in a room that is specifically designed to avoid contamination.

Lot 2 – Vehicle Processing: Vehicles that are involved in a crime or traffic fatality are taken to a CDP facility called Lot 2, where they are stored and processed for evidence by crime scene detectives. Lot 2 is located in a fairly remote location and is manned by at least two sworn officers during the day, and one sworn officer overnight. Vehicles awaiting evidence processing are stored inside a large garage that can hold several vehicles. After a vehicle is processed, it is then stored outside in the Lot 2 yard. Interviews with CDP personnel, as well as a tour of the facility by the PERF team, revealed that there are many issues with Lot 2 that need addressing. These issues include: animal infestations that could lead to evidence contamination; poor security (e.g., a damaged perimeter fence, lack of security cameras or alarms, no base radio); a lack of space to store vehicles; a lack of proper equipment for processing vehicles and for cleaning the garage; and poor lighting inside the garage. Although PERF found no reason to believe that the problems at Lot 2 have thus far affected the integrity of evidence, these deficiencies should be addressed to avoid the potential for destroying or contaminating evidence (see Recommendation 62).

The CDP Firearms Section

At the time of PERF's review, firearms examinations were conducted by CDP's Firearms Section. This function is in the process of being moved to the external crime lab at the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCME). The CDP's Firearms Section is responsible for conducting ballistics testing and analysis of firearms and spent casings from homicides and non-fatal shootings.

The Firearms Section is comprised of a sergeant, one detective, two civilians, and one officer. PERF was told that these staffing levels are insufficient for keeping up with the section's caseload. Furthermore, the detective primarily responsible for processing firearms evidence was nearing retirement at the time of PERF's review. Personnel said that there is a significant backlog for processing firearms evidence and entering information into the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN). It can take up to a year for firearms evidence to be processed, and sometimes cases have gone to trial before ballistics analysis was completed.

PERF also found that personnel do not receive sufficient training and certification in firearms examination. Other than NIBIN training offered through the ATF, the detective and civilian examiners in the Firearms Section were primarily self-trained through online courses and by instruction by former personnel in the Firearms Section. PERF learned that when examiners are called to testify in court, they often have to quickly undergo additional training so that they can be certified as expert witnesses.

Due to these gaps in staffing and training, it is critical that the firearms testing function be transitioned to the CCME lab as quickly as possible. Officials from the CDP and CCME must work together to ensure a smooth transition. For example, PERF learned that there is some question as to whether the CCME lab will absorb the Firearms Section's significant backlog.

Leaders from the two agencies must coordinate to identify and prioritize which backlogged evidence should be tested once the CCME lab takes over this function.

Recommendations: Internal Forensics Units

- **Recommendation #58: The CDP should ensure that the Crime Scene & Records Unit is staffed so that a crime scene detective is able to respond to and process every homicide scene.**
 - PERF learned that there is only one crime scene detective responsible for responding to and processing homicide scenes. When the crime scene detective is unavailable to respond to a scene or complete a task, the responsibility generally falls to the Homicide Unit detectives. This creates inconsistencies in how scenes are processed and additional work for already-overburdened Homicide detectives.
 - The CDP should ensure that at least one additional crime scene detective is trained and able to respond to and process homicide scenes.

- **Recommendation #59: The CDP should ensure that all crime scene detectives receive comprehensive formal training on how to collect and process evidence from crime scenes.**
 - Mandatory training should cover topics such as crime scene photography, fingerprint collection, DNA, trajectory analysis, and the legal issues surrounding evidence collection and processing.
 - Training should be ongoing to reflect changes in science, technology, and the law.
 - The CDP should work with personnel from the forensics lab at the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office to identify areas for training and potential training courses. PERF can help the CDP identify additional training resources.

- **Recommendation #60: The CDP should ensure that the Crime Scene & Records Unit has the tools and equipment necessary to process crime scenes.**
 - Much of the equipment that the unit is lacking is inexpensive and can be purchased at a hardware store. This list includes:
 - Power inverter (as an additional power source for equipment and for recharging batteries at scenes)
 - Rechargeable batteries and recharger
 - Extension cords
 - Lightweight folding ladder
 - Single use brushes for fingerprints (to eliminate cross-contamination)
 - Drywall handsaw (power saws create more dust, which may contaminate evidence)
 - Saw blades
 - Assorted hand tools (wire cutters, chisel, screwdrivers)

- Drill bits in assorted size and types
 - Portable, pop-up cover to protect equipment and evidence from the elements.
 - The unit is also lacking some of the more advanced tools and technologies used for modern crime scene processing. The CDP should explore purchasing these tools, such as:
 - Presumptive blood test strips
 - Forensic alternative light source, such as an Ultralite ALS
 - Lithium ion laser rangefinder with inclinometer (used to quickly and accurately measure distances)
 - Hot-shot fingerprint developer (used to process vehicle interiors and large items, helps to eliminate possibility of evidence contamination)
 - 3D laser scanner (CDP personnel told PERF there is a grant available that would cover 85% of the purchase costs).
 - The CDP should also consider upgrading the crime scene vehicles to ensure they are adequately equipped and secure for the task of collecting and transporting evidence. Vehicles should be outfitted with an alarm system and tinted windows.
- ***Recommendation #61:*** The CDP should ensure that the department is equipped with a temperature-controlled biological fluid drying room that is secure and easy to decontaminate.
- PERF learned that Homicide Unit personnel do not have access to a secure room in which to store and dry evidence that contains blood or other bodily fluids. This can create a biohazard and potential evidence contamination issues.
 - There are low-cost options for police agencies unable to afford renovation costs to build a blood drying room. The “Biological Evidence Preservation Handbook,” written by members of the Technical Working Group for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), provides police agencies with best practices for handling biological evidence.⁷⁴ Some of the examples given in the handbook are using lockers or prefabricated shower stalls to dry biological evidence.
- ***Recommendation #62:*** The CDP should take steps to improve the security at Lot 2 and to reduce the risk that evidence processed at Lot 2 may be destroyed or contaminated.
- PERF found that Lot 2, which is the facility for processing evidence from vehicles involved in crimes and traffic fatalities, currently faces a number of issues, including: animal and bird infestations that could lead to evidence contamination;

⁷⁴ National Institute of Health and National Institute of Standards and Technology, *The Biological Evidence Preservation Handbook*. 2013. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6028/NIST.IR.7928>.

poor security (e.g., a damaged perimeter fence, lack of security cameras or alarms, no base radio); a lack of space to store vehicles containing evidence from homicides, which must be kept at the lot indefinitely; a lack of proper equipment for processing vehicles and for cleaning the garage floor; and poor lighting inside the garage.

- Many of these issues could be addressed with modest renovations, such as repairing the perimeter fence, installing security cameras and alarms, improving the lighting sources, and ensuring that the garage is reinforced to prevent bird and animal infestations.
 - The CDP should also consider purchasing a new floor cleaning machine and a base radio for the facility, as well as the software needed to properly access vehicle information.
 - PERF found that Lot 2 is running out of space to store vehicles, largely because the CDP's policy is to keep vehicles indefinitely if they were used in a homicide. CDP officials should consider working with prosecutors to determine if there is a way to adjust this policy and free up space in the lot.
- ***Recommendation #63:* Firearms testing and analysis functions are in the process of being transitioned from the CDP to the forensics lab at the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCME). Officials from both agencies should work together to ensure that this transition is completed in a timely and comprehensive fashion.**
- One question that has arisen during the transition is whether the CCME lab will absorb the CDP's significant backlog of firearms evidence. PERF recommends that CDP and CCME officials work together to identify and prioritize which backlogged evidence should be tested once the CCME lab assumes this function.

External Crime Lab – the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office

The bulk of forensics testing and analysis for CDP cases, including DNA testing, is conducted by a regional forensics lab housed in the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's office (CCME). Evidence collected from a homicide scene is submitted to the CCME lab by the CDP crime scene detective or the Homicide Unit detective working the case. When evidence is collected after the initial crime scene is processed (e.g., DNA evidence from a suspect who is brought to the police station at some point after the crime has occurred), it is stored in the Homicide Unit's evidence room until the Homicide detective can submit it to the CCME lab.

PERF found that the relationship between the CDP's Homicide Unit and the CCME lab is generally positive and productive. However, some CDP personnel said that the current protocols for evidence submission and case reviews can undermine information-sharing and create delays in evidence testing. These protocols should be reviewed to determine whether coordination between the two agencies can be improved.

Evidence Submission

For example, CDP personnel told PERF that the CCME lab typically only receives evidence submissions between 8:30am-11:00am, Monday through Friday, a policy that they said can create problems for detectives who are working later shifts or who are otherwise unable to make it to the lab during that window of time.

Case Reviews

Additionally, case reviews between the Homicide Unit and the CCME currently take place only once per week, during a conference call held each Thursday afternoon between CCME personnel and Homicide Unit detectives. Homicide Unit supervisors generally do not participate in these calls. During the call, detectives present their cases, discuss the evidence they have submitted, and make requests for certain pieces of evidence to be tested. CCME personnel rely on these weekly calls to determine which evidence they will test and how to prioritize their work. If detectives are unable to make the Thursday call, they must generally wait until the following week's call to present their cases and make their requests. This can create frustration among detectives, whose schedules may not always allow them to participate at the required time of the call.

According to CDP personnel, having more frequent case reviews and more flexibility with evidence submissions would help improve coordination with the CCME, especially with respect to decisions about which evidence will be tested. PERF recommends that these protocols be reviewed to ensure that information is being properly shared between the Homicide Unit and the CCME. PERF also recommends that the Homicide Unit maintain a log of what evidence was submitted to the CCME lab, when it was submitted, and the status and findings of the submission.

PERF also found that top officials in the CDP and CCME should improve coordination regarding high-level policy decisions. For example, PERF learned that there is some disconnect between the two agencies regarding when and how information about ongoing cases should be publicly released. Leaders in each agency must regularly communicate to ensure their information release policies and protocols are aligned.

Recommendations: External Crime Lab – The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office

- **Recommendation #64: Leaders from the CDP and the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCME) should work together to enact case review and evidence submission protocols that are sufficient for facilitating coordination between the two agencies.**
 - PERF learned that the CCME lab typically receives evidence submissions from CDP detectives on weekdays between 8:30am and 11:00am, and that case reviews with the Homicide Unit take place once per week during a conference call held each Thursday afternoon. However, detectives' schedules often make it difficult for them to meet these time requirements.

- According to CDP personnel, having more frequent case reviews and more flexibility with evidence submission would help improve coordination with the CCME, especially with respect to decisions about which evidence will be tested. PERF recommends that these protocols be reviewed to ensure that information is being properly shared.
 - When reviewing these protocols, CDP and CCME leaders should solicit input from detectives and lab personnel to ensure that the needs of both agencies are met.
 - The Homicide Unit should also maintain a log of what evidence was submitted to the CCME lab, when it was submitted, and the status and findings of the submission.
- **Recommendation #65: Top leaders in the CDP and CCME should coordinate with each other on high-level policy decisions, especially regarding how and when information about ongoing cases will be publicly released.**
- **Recommendation #66: The CDP should ensure that all detectives and members of the command staff receive annual training regarding the CCME lab’s capabilities, limitations, services, and policies. This will help CDP personnel better understand evidence analysis and how to most effectively work with the crime lab.**
- Prosecutors from the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor’s Office should be invited to attend this training. The training should include a tour of the forensics lab.
 - CDP investigators, particularly Homicide Unit detectives, should also receive training in:
 - Basic forensics (see Recommendation 11).
 - Evidence collection and processing, particularly how to avoid contaminating evidence at the crime scene. This could be taught during briefings by CDP crime scene detectives.
 - How to properly take DNA samples from suspects. PERF learned that the CCME has provided this training to personnel from the CDP’s Gang Impact Unit, and this knowledge would be similarly useful for homicide investigators.

The Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office

Successful homicide investigations rely on strong relationships and respect between investigators and prosecutors.⁷⁵ Studies have shown that the keys to a successful relationship between investigators and prosecutors include delineating clear roles and responsibilities, demonstrating a respect for each another's expertise, viewing the relationship as reciprocal, and understanding that each party is working towards the same goal.⁷⁶

The Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) prosecutes criminal cases in the City of Cleveland and surrounding county. Homicide and sexual assault cases are handled by the CCPO's Major Trial Unit, which is comprised of 12-14 prosecutors. **PERF found that the relationship between the CCPO and the CDP Homicide Unit is generally productive and positive.** Personnel from the two agencies meet regularly to discuss cases; the CCPO routinely holds formal training sessions for CDP detectives; and the CCPO provides assistance with intelligence gathering and analysis.

However, PERF identified three issues regarding coordination between the CDP and CCPO with respect to homicide investigations:

Obtaining Arrest Warrants

First, PERF learned that CDP detectives must obtain arrest warrants from the Cleveland City Prosecutor's Office, rather than the CCPO, even though the CCPO is responsible for prosecuting cases. Under this current process, when detectives identify a suspect they present an affidavit to a City prosecutor, who issues an arrest warrant for the judge to sign. During interviews, PERF heard mixed reports about whether detectives were consulting with CCPO prosecutors prior to seeking arrest warrants from a City prosecutor.

This process is cumbersome and has resulted in cases being dropped because the CCPO and City Prosecutor's Office have different standards for charging suspects. Officials from these agencies should revisit this process.

Responding to Homicide Scenes

Second, PERF learned that in 2013 the CDP and CCPO entered into an informal agreement that allowed for prosecutors to respond to all homicide scenes. The purpose of this is so prosecutors can become familiar with the case from the start and answer questions that detectives may have while on the scene. Though this is a practice that occurs in a number of jurisdictions,⁷⁷ it has presented some challenges in Cleveland. One problem is that cases do not get assigned to a specific prosecutor until closer to the court date, so there are no guarantees that the prosecutor who responds to the crime scene will be the one prosecuting the case. Additionally, because this

⁷⁵ Carter, David L. (2013), *Homicide Process Mapping: Best Practices for Increasing Homicide Clearances*, Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance.

http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

is an informal practice, it is not always consistently followed, and there are no formal policies governing it.

Strengthening Communication

Finally, although communication between the CCPO and Homicide Unit is generally very strong, PERF found a few areas for improvement. Primarily, Homicide Unit sergeants should regularly speak with CCPO personnel (currently the Homicide lieutenant does this, but there was no indication that the sergeants did as well), and Homicide Unit supervisors should attend any intelligence-sharing meetings hosted by the CCPO.

Recommendations: The Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office

- **Recommendation #67: Top officials from the CDP and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) should strive to maintain a frequent and open dialogue about their goals, capabilities, limitations, and expectations for one another.**
 - Officials should strive to build a strong working relationship, built on respect and reciprocity, and emphasize the importance of this relationship throughout all levels of their organizations.⁷⁸

- **Recommendation #68: The CDP should work with officials from the CCPO and the Cleveland City Prosecutor's office to review the process of having CDP detectives consult with City prosecutors to apply for charges in homicide cases.**
 - PERF learned that CDP detectives must obtain arrest warrants from the Cleveland City Prosecutor's Office, rather than the CCPO, even though the CCPO will be responsible for prosecuting the case. This process is cumbersome and has resulted in cases being dropped because the CCPO and City Prosecutor have different standards for charging suspects.

 - Leaders from the three agencies should work together to develop a procedure for charging homicide suspects that would best improve homicide investigations and subsequent prosecutions.

- **Recommendation #69: The CDP and CCPO should work together to implement a permanent policy requiring a prosecutor to respond to homicide scenes.**
 - Currently, an informal agreement from 2013 allows prosecutors to respond to homicide scenes. Though this is a practice that occurs in a number of jurisdictions,⁷⁹ it has presented some challenges in Cleveland. Officials from both agencies need to collaborate to determine how to best implement this practice.

 - This practice should be governed by a written policy that states:

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

- The role that prosecutors will play while at the homicide scene
 - The process for scheduling and assigning prosecutors to respond to scenes
 - Policies and procedures that prosecutors must follow in order to ensure that the crime scene is properly secured and preserved
 - Guidelines for information that prosecutors and detectives should share while on the scene.
- The benefits of having a prosecutor at the scene of a homicide may be best realized if the prosecutor who responds to the scene is also responsible for prosecuting that case. The CCPO may consider implementing this assignment system in homicide cases.
- ***Recommendation #70:* The CDP and CCPO should explore strategies for improving communication and coordination. Potential strategies may include:**
- Providing Homicide Unit detectives with training on the CCPO's policies and relevant case law. Training should also include how to produce, document, and present evidence in a way that strengthens its value in court. PERF learned that the CCPO holds regular trainings for detectives, and Homicide Unit detectives should be encouraged to attend.
 - Promoting regular communication between Homicide Unit sergeants and CCPO personnel. Homicide Unit sergeants should also attend intelligence-sharing meetings hosted by the CCPO, and should host their own intelligence meetings to share information.

Working with the Community

It is critical that members of the CDP's Homicide Unit build strong relationships with members of the community. These relationships can help increase the willingness of witnesses and other residents to cooperate with investigators, and they are also important for promoting the CDP's overall community policing goals.

PERF found that, on the whole, there was strong witness cooperation with respect to homicide investigations in Cleveland. **Of the 114 homicide cases PERF reviewed, 78 percent of the files contained documentation of multiple witnesses being developed during the course of the investigation. Additionally, in 63 percent of the files PERF reviewed, there was documentation of witness cooperation that extended beyond just the provision of generic information.**

PERF's case file review demonstrates the importance of witnesses to a homicide investigation. **The review found that in Cleveland, cases with witness cooperation were more than seven**

times more likely to be cleared than cases without cooperation.⁸⁰ As these findings show, it is critical that the CDP continue to foster positive police-community relationships and take the steps necessary to ensure that witnesses feel comfortable cooperating with Homicide Unit detectives.

PERF learned of several strategies already employed by the CDP and the Homicide Unit to promote strong police-community relationships and witness cooperation. These include, but are not limited to:

- ***Victim Advocacy and Assistance:*** A social worker is embedded within the Homicide Unit to provide advocacy and assistance to homicide victims' families and friends. The social worker is employed by a nonprofit organization. PERF learned during interviews that the social worker's services are very valuable to the Homicide Unit, both in terms of victim advocacy and in freeing up detectives to focus on investigations.
- ***Community Policing Efforts:*** Within each district there is a Community Services Bureau, which is responsible for handling quality-of-life issues and attending community events. Although some CDP personnel told PERF that foot patrols and other community policing efforts need to be expanded, the presence of these units is a good step towards promoting strong police-community relationships. Additionally, the CDP's settlement agreement with the Department of Justice (DOJ) requires the CDP to integrate a comprehensive community policing model. As part of this process, the DOJ's Monitoring Team provided CDP with a report outlining a community policing framework.
- ***Community Outreach:*** PERF was told that the CDP regularly utilizes social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) to share information with the community and to solicit investigative tips from community members. This is done through the CDP's official social media accounts and the department's Public Information Officer (PIO).
- ***Crime Stoppers:*** PERF learned that the CDP works with Crime Stoppers to solicit tips and disseminate information regarding crimes.

PERF recommends that the CDP generally, and the Homicide Unit specifically, continue to take steps to engage with the community and promote witness cooperation.

Recommendations: Working with the Community

- ***Recommendation #71:*** **The social worker located within the Homicide Unit, the Homicide Unit detective assigned to the case, and an attorney from the DA's office should regularly meet with a victim's family, starting as soon as possible after a homicide.** Such an organized, comprehensive response often comforts the family by letting family members know that homicide cases are given the highest priority. This approach has been used by other police agencies.

⁸⁰ The importance of witness cooperation to solving homicide cases is supported by research, which has found that having a witness at the scene who is willing to provide valuable information is associated with higher rates of case closure. Wellford & Cronin (1999), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000243b.pdf>.

BJA's best practices guide states: "If there is a barrier of distrust that precludes widespread substantive information gathering, the investigation will be limited." Carter, David L. (2013), http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

- ***Recommendation #72:*** The CDP should continue its efforts to implement strong outreach programs and other community-wide initiatives aimed at improving the relationship between police and the community.
 - Strengthening the community's trust in police is a key step towards increasing the willingness of community members to cooperate with police investigations.⁸¹

Homicide Unit Equipment and Technology

Finding: The CDP's Homicide Unit is lacking many of the tools and technologies necessary to perform basic investigative functions. Addressing these needs would help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of homicide investigations.

PERF's review revealed that the equipment and technology available to the Homicide Unit are largely outdated or nonexistent. The unit's current tools fail to meet the needs of a modern homicide investigation, thus limiting detectives' abilities to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.

The CDP should review the resource needs of the Homicide Unit, as well as other investigative and support units within the department, and prioritize investing in updated tools to assist with investigations. The CDP should develop a plan for addressing these needs, both presently and as the needs change moving forward.

The recommendations below are specific to the Homicide Unit. Recommendations for improving the resources in other CDP units are discussed in Recommendations 32-72 in this report.

Recommendations: Homicide Unit Equipment and Technology

- ***Recommendation #73:*** The CDP should invest in technological tools that could greatly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of homicide investigations. These include:
 - *Tools to expand the field capabilities of Homicide Unit detectives, such as tablets, smartphones, or other mobile devices.* PERF learned that Homicide Unit detectives do not have the ability to perform certain important tasks while at the scene of an investigation or otherwise out of the office, including recording witness statements, querying CDP databases, or accessing emails and the internet. Equipping detectives with mobile devices that are linked to CDP databases would help improve the efficiency of investigations and reduce the workload for

⁸¹ Carter, David L. (2013), http://www.iir.com/Documents/Homicide_Process_Mapping_September_email.pdf.

detectives carrying heavy caseloads. It would also help detectives more easily communicate with one another and with other CDP personnel.

- ***Tools to analyze social media communications.*** The ability to analyze communications conducted via social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) is increasingly important for criminal investigators. Though some social media analysis is currently being done by the CDP's Crime Analysis Unit, Homicide Unit detectives should have access to and training on tools that allow investigators to perform this function.
 - ***Tools to improve information sharing.*** Technologies that could improve the flow of information in homicide cases include: crime-scene drawing software (detectives currently draw scenes by hand); technology to allow CDP communications personnel to immediately email recordings of 911 calls to detectives; and access to databases that allow detectives to immediately verify the locations of suspects who are on court-ordered GPS monitoring.
- **Recommendation #74: The CDP should invest in upgrades to Homicide Unit facilities and vehicles.**
- For example, CDP personnel told PERF that a shortage of interview rooms in the Homicide Unit often results in people having to wait in line to be interviewed. The CDP should review these facilities and ensure that they are sufficient for homicide investigations.
 - CDP personnel also told PERF that the Homicide Unit lacks a sufficient number of reliable vehicles, which can create delays in how quickly detectives can respond to a homicide scene. The CDP should examine whether the Homicide Unit's vehicles are meeting the needs of detectives.
- **Recommendation #75: The CDP should invest in upgrades to the video equipment in the interview rooms to ensure that interrogations are accurately and consistently recorded.**
- PERF learned that, although Homicide Unit detectives videotape witness interviews, the video equipment in the interview rooms is outdated, unreliable, and produces poor-quality recordings. This is particularly problematic given the importance of having video recordings of interviews, both for the effective investigation and the prosecution of a case.

Conclusion

The CDP's stated mission is to "enhance the quality of life, strengthen our neighborhoods and deliver superior services with professionalism, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence by working in partnership with our neighborhoods and community."⁸² At the core of this mission is the idea that protecting human life is paramount. When the city's homicide rates begin to rise, it is more important than ever that the CDP take all possible steps to reduce killings, investigate homicide cases thoroughly, and bring perpetrators to justice.

The CDP's Homicide Unit currently faces many significant challenges. First and foremost, the unit lacks the staffing and resources to adequately respond to the city's rising homicide rates. Severe understaffing, as well as the burdens created by using an on-call system during the hours when most homicides are likely to occur, threatens to undermine the ability of detectives to investigate cases thoroughly and effectively.

Additionally, the lack of attention given towards responding to and investigating non-fatal shootings is troubling. Although investigating non-fatal shootings is not the responsibility of the Homicide Unit, shooting incidents and homicides are often closely connected. For this reason – as well as to protect the general safety of the community – non-fatal shootings must be treated with a greater sense of urgency by the CDP.

Many of the challenges facing the CDP are similar to those experienced by other police agencies across the country. In Cleveland, perhaps the only resource *not* lacking is the talent and dedication of Homicide Unit detectives and other agency personnel, who are doing the best that can be expected given the severe lack of resources available to them. **With better staffing, training, and equipment, PERF believes that the Homicide Unit could make great strides in improving its clearance rates.** Without these tools, most of the recommendations in this report will be difficult to implement.

In addition to these resources, there must be systems in place to provide proper guidance and supervision for those involved in homicide investigations. This means updating policies to reflect promising investigative practices, implementing thorough investigative plans and supervisory case reviews, and holding personnel accountable through rigorous selection and evaluation processes.

There must also be a greater emphasis on improving coordination within the CDP, particularly between the Homicide Unit and District Detective Units. All shooting incidents – including those that do not result in death – must be investigated with a sense of urgency, and personnel throughout the CDP need to understand how their work contributes to preventing and solving homicide cases.

⁸² Cleveland Division of Police website:

<http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/CityofCleveland/Home/Government/CityAgencies/PublicSafety/Police>.

PERF acknowledges that many of the recommendations included in this report will require long-term planning and implementation. However, there are some steps that the CDP can take now to immediately strengthen its homicide investigation process. These steps include:

- **Homicide investigations team:** Creating a homicide investigations team to provide input on policy development, share ideas for implementing these recommendations, and discuss strategies and next steps. Members of the team should include leaders from CDP units that are involved in homicide investigations, as well as representatives from the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office and Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office. (See Recommendation 7)
- **Homicide Unit Manual:** Revising the Homicide Unit Manual to include standard policies and protocols that personnel must follow, including a standard investigative checklist, investigative plan, and supervisory case review process. (See Recommendations 1-7)
- **Review other departments' approaches:** Consulting examples of written policies and protocols, training programs, and strategies used by police departments that have built effective homicide units. As a starting point, Appendix C to this report includes a list of national best practices guides and research resources for homicide investigations.
- **Adjust caseloads:** Reviewing crime data and the Homicide Unit staffing structure to find ways to alleviate detectives' heavy caseloads. This may involve revising the shift schedules, creating a dedicated overnight shift, or moving some functions out of the Homicide Unit. (See Recommendations 16-20)
- **Training:** Exploring existing low-cost training opportunities that are provided by other criminal justice agencies in the region. (See Recommendations 11-14)
- **Non-fatal shootings:** Reviewing DDU policies and staffing structures to explore ways for ensuring that a detective responds to the scene of all non-fatal shootings that occur in Cleveland (See Recommendations 36-37).

PERF, with support from BJA, is committed to providing ongoing technical assistance to help the CDP implement the recommendations contained in this report. As part of this effort, PERF can provide the CDP with sample policies from other police agencies and help the department identify additional resources regarding investigative best practices. PERF can also establish a cadre of experts experienced in a cross-section of investigative techniques who can provide the CDP with training and technical assistance, and will connect the CDP with other police agencies that can provide peer-to-peer assistance.

The CDP must demonstrate that preventing and solving homicides is a top priority for the department. Participating in this project is a good first step towards this goal, and the CDP must now build upon these efforts by ensuring that personnel have the guidance and support they need to conduct thorough homicide investigations and serve the City of Cleveland.

Appendix A: Findings from the PERF Case Review

PERF reviewed the files of 114 homicide incidents that occurred between January and October 2015. The purpose of the review was to collect additional data elements to further understand the challenges in clearing cases.

The following metrics, which have been found to be associated with homicide case clearance,⁸³ were used to analyze the files from the 114 cases⁸⁴:

- Were multiple victims injured during the incident?
- Did detectives arrive within 30 minutes of being dispatched?
- Were there initial witnesses to the incident identified?
- Were multiple witnesses developed over the course of the investigation?
- Was there witness cooperation beyond generic information?
- Did the case have traceable physical evidence documented and sent for analysis?
- Was a weapon left at the scene?
- Were there initial leads regarding motive?
- Was the victim's body found quickly after death?
- Did confidential informants come forward with information?
- Did the suspect confess to the crime, either to CPD or to a witness/informant?
- Is there a named suspect documented but not yet arrested?
- Is there documentation of a formal supervisory review?
- Was a copy of the victim's autopsy report from the OCME included in the file?
- What was the level of organization/completeness in the case jacket (low, medium, or high)?
- What seemed to be the potential motivational factors documented in the case?
- How many days did it take to clear a case (when closed)?
- Time period of case documentation (i.e. number of days between the incident and the newest dated document in the case jacket).

Note that the findings from the case file review reflect only what is *documented* in the file. Without more information, it is difficult to know whether the results discussed here measure the variable in question, the degree of documentation, or both.

⁸³ Wellford, Charles and James Cronin, *Clearing Up Homicide Clearance Rates*, National Institute of Justice Journal (April 2000), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000243b.pdf>. See also the full report for a more comprehensive look at this study: *An Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multistate Study* (October 1999), http://www.jrsa.org/pubs/reports/homicides_report.pdf.

⁸⁴ PERF also examined the demographic characteristics of victims (e.g., age, race, gender), but none of these factors were found to have an impact on case clearance.

Time to Case Clearance

Of the 114 cases reviewed, a total of 59 cases were cleared (about 52 percent):

Average Time to Clearance	24 days
Median Time to Clearance	2 days
Percent of cases closed on the same day	41%
Percent of cases closed in two days or less	51%

This indicates that half of the cases which are closed end up being closed in about two days, on average. The median time to clearance is the preferred metric, as the average time to clearance is skewed by outlying cases at both extremes.

Characteristics of the Cases Reviewed

When reviewing the case files, PERF looked for the existence of certain factors that research has found to be associated with homicide case clearance.⁸⁵ Again, these findings reflect only what is documented in the file. So, for example, the finding that only 44.7 percent of the case files contained documentation of a confidential informant coming forward could mean that only 44.7 percent of cases had a confidential informant, or it could be that informants existed in more cases but were not documented. Regardless, these findings provide a baseline for determining where follow-up may be needed, both for investigations and for documentation.

The following table presents the characteristics of the 114 cases reviewed:

⁸⁵ Wellford, Charles and James Cronin, *Clearing Up Homicide Clearance Rates*, National Institute of Justice Journal (April 2000), <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000243b.pdf>. See also the full report for a more comprehensive look at this study: *An Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multistate Study* (October 1999), http://www.jrsa.org/pubs/reports/homicides_report.pdf.

Characteristics of the 114 Cases Reviewed

Metric	Percent of cases in which documentation of the metric existed
Traceable physical evidence was documented and sent for analysis	88.6%
Victim's body was found quickly after death	83.3%
Multiple witnesses were developed over the course of the investigation	78.1%
Copy of the victim's autopsy report from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner was included in the case file*	78.1%
Initial witnesses to the incident were identified	73.7%
Witness cooperation existed beyond generic information	63.2%
Evidence of an initial lead regarding the motive for the crime	54.4%
Confidential informant came forward with information	44.7%
Suspect confessed to the crime, either to the CDP or to a witness/informant	28.9%
Multiple victims were injured during the incident	24.6%
Weapon was left at the scene	20.2%
Named suspect was documented in the file, but not yet arrested	19.3%
Detectives arrived within 30 minutes of being dispatched	14.9%
Documentation of formal supervisory review of the case file**	0.0%

* While the official report produced by the medical examiner was rarely in the file, it was clear the official report language was used verbatim to write the CPD supplemental report.

** As there is no formal review process or cold case unit, there is no expectation of formal reviews of the whole case by supervisors.

Regression Analysis

To help clarify which factors were most important in homicide clearance in the CDP, PERF researchers conducted a logistic regression analysis using the data from the 114 reviewed cases. The analysis included the list of data elements noted previously, as well as other case information, such as victim characteristics. This technique allowed a ranking of variables in order of their impact on case clearance.

When considering all factors, two data elements were statistically significant⁸⁶ predictors of having a cleared case:

- 1) The presence of witness cooperation**
- 2) Initial investigative leads regarding motive**

Holding all other factors constant means that two cases are identical in every measured way; obviously, this does not typically happen in homicide cases, but the analysis method can take all of the factors and mathematically simulate identical cases. The purpose of this simulation is to hold everything constant but then change a single factor. When that one change is made, any differences can be attributed to the change, since the cases were identical before.

Cases with an initial lead regarding motive are more than five times more likely to be cleared than cases without such leads, holding all other factors constant. Similarly, cases with witness cooperation are more nearly seven times more likely to be cleared than case without cooperation.

Equally as important are factors which did *not* significantly predict case closure among the cases that PERF reviewed. Victim characteristics such as age, gender, or race were not significant predictors. The presence of physical evidence also did not significantly predict closure in the cases PERF reviewed, though the reason for this is uncertain.

From a practical standpoint, these findings show the importance of solid police work in obtaining case closure. While homicide investigations are complex and influenced by many factors, this analysis suggests the highest-priority factors in Cleveland during this time were directly linked to good detective work. Additionally, the results support recommendations or programs that would help detectives obtain cooperation in the community or would capitalize on known intelligence to develop initial leads. **Finally, these findings demonstrate that police and the community are partners during an investigation. When witnesses cooperate with investigators, detectives are better positioned to arrest perpetrators.**

⁸⁶ Being statistically significant for this analysis indicates that the result is highly unlikely (less than 5%) due to random chance after holding all other factors constant

Appendix B: Cleveland Division of Police Homicide Assessment Project Team

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Appendix C: References and Resources

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