

# WHEAT RIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

2019

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ANNUAL REPORT



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS  
1969-2019

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# LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

In addition to celebrating 50 years as a City and as a police department, 2019 was a very busy year.

We kicked off the celebration of our 50 year history with a panel presentation by some of the founders of the City and the Wheat Ridge Police Department (former WRFD Assistant Chief and WRPD Reserve Officer Howard Jaidinger, former WRPD Chief Howard Jaquay, former WRFD and WRPD Reserve Officer Kent Higgins, and former WRPD Division Chief Joe Cassa). Additional recognition of this special milestone for the department, came in the form of a commemorative badge designed by Division Chief Lorentz for uniformed officers to purchase and wear throughout 2019. The badge was retired on December 31, 2019.

The department also embarked on the restoration of Unit 1, the first patrol car used by the department in 1969. To fund the restoration, sponsorships were solicited from local businesses and a Passport to Wheat Ridge coupon book was produced and sold to residents and visitors. With the support of our sponsor Seyfer Automotive and other local auto repair shops, detailers and upholsters, Unit 1 made her debut at the Carnation Festival Parade in August.

We also opened the Wheat Ridge Ward Station for the G Line commuter rail line in June. RTD hosted a large community event and ribbon cutting at each station along the line. Thousands came out to ride the free train to Denver and back and enjoy a beautiful Colorado day at the new station in Wheat Ridge.

At the end of the summer, we also saw the retirement of Chief Dan Brennan after 42 years in law enforcement, 14 of which he served with the Wheat Ridge Police Department. A special event was held to honor his service. Many residents, former police officers and Chiefs from Jefferson County attended the event to wish him well. A nationwide search was conducted by the City Manager to hire a new Chief, and in the interim, Division Chief Dave Pickett stepped in to take the reins. After a robust vetting process that included a background investigation, psychological exam, polygraph, panel interviews, community forums, candidate information made available on social media and the City website, and a staff and community survey, I was offered the position as the Chief of Police for Wheat Ridge.

I am thrilled to join the department and lead an outstanding group of men and women who exemplify the best in community policing. I look forward to meeting members of the community throughout 2020, and welcome the opportunity to talk with you about anything of interest or concern.

Respectfully,  
Chief Chris Murtha



# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Members of the Wheat Ridge Police Department engage with the community in many ways: supporting fundraising events like Mother's Against Drunk Drivers; encouraging bicycle, skateboard and scooter safety with the issuance of tickets to children to redeem for free ice cream; volunteering for community programs such as Feed the Future by filling backpacks with food for low income children; stopping by lemonade stands set up by local children; building youth leadership skills with the WRPD Explorer Program; presenting at community forums and participating in National Night Out.

## Lemonade Stands

During the hot summer months, WRPD officers love stopping by lemonade stands hosted by the youngest of Wheat Ridge residents.



## National Drug Take Back Day

Twice annually WRPD works with the DEA to collect unused or expired medications to keep them out of the water system and out of the hands of young people.



## Trunk or Treat

A safe, fun event held each year by Localworks and WRPD brings out young ghouls and goblins who line up at the trunks of cars decorated for this spooky day.



## Operation Blue Santa

A toy drive in November helps gather toys and gift cards for families in Wheat Ridge who might otherwise not have any presents under the tree at Christmas. Optimist volunteers and officers deliver the toys to local children the week before the holiday.



## Explorer Scouts

The Explorer Scout Program held its annual Academy from April - Sept.

Eleven Scouts participated in community events, and training in criminal law, constitutional law, crisis intervention, arrest control, patrol tactics, report writing, narcotics identification, crime prevention, first aid/CPR, traffic control, traffic accident investigation, and radio procedures.



## National Night Out

This annual event is held throughout the country to bring neighbors together with local law enforcement to learn how they can help keep the community safe.

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



## Feed the Future Program

Each week volunteers from the community and WRPD fill backpacks at Stevens Elementary so children who might otherwise go without food have something to take home over the weekend.



## Tip a Cop

WRPD and Chili's Restaurant on Youngfield hosted a fundraising event called Tip A Cop. Officers waited tables and their tips, along with any donations, went to Colorado Special Olympics.



## Breast Cancer Awareness

This is one of the non-profits supported by WRPD with fundraising. In 2018, officers and staff made donations and purchased pink shirts and pink shoulder cords to show their dedication to cancer awareness, treatment and prevention.



## Ice Cream Safety Tickets

Each summer, patrol officers watch for children wearing bike helmets and otherwise modeling safe biking, skating, and skateboarding. "Citations" are issued for free ice cream at local Dairy Queens.



## No Shave November

Interim Chief Dave Pickett waived the facial hair policy during the month of November to fundraise in support of education about cancer prevention and aid for those fighting the battle. Women officers and staff could choose to donate the cost of a haircut or donate and sport a mustache on a stick.



## Pass The Pinwheel Fundraiser

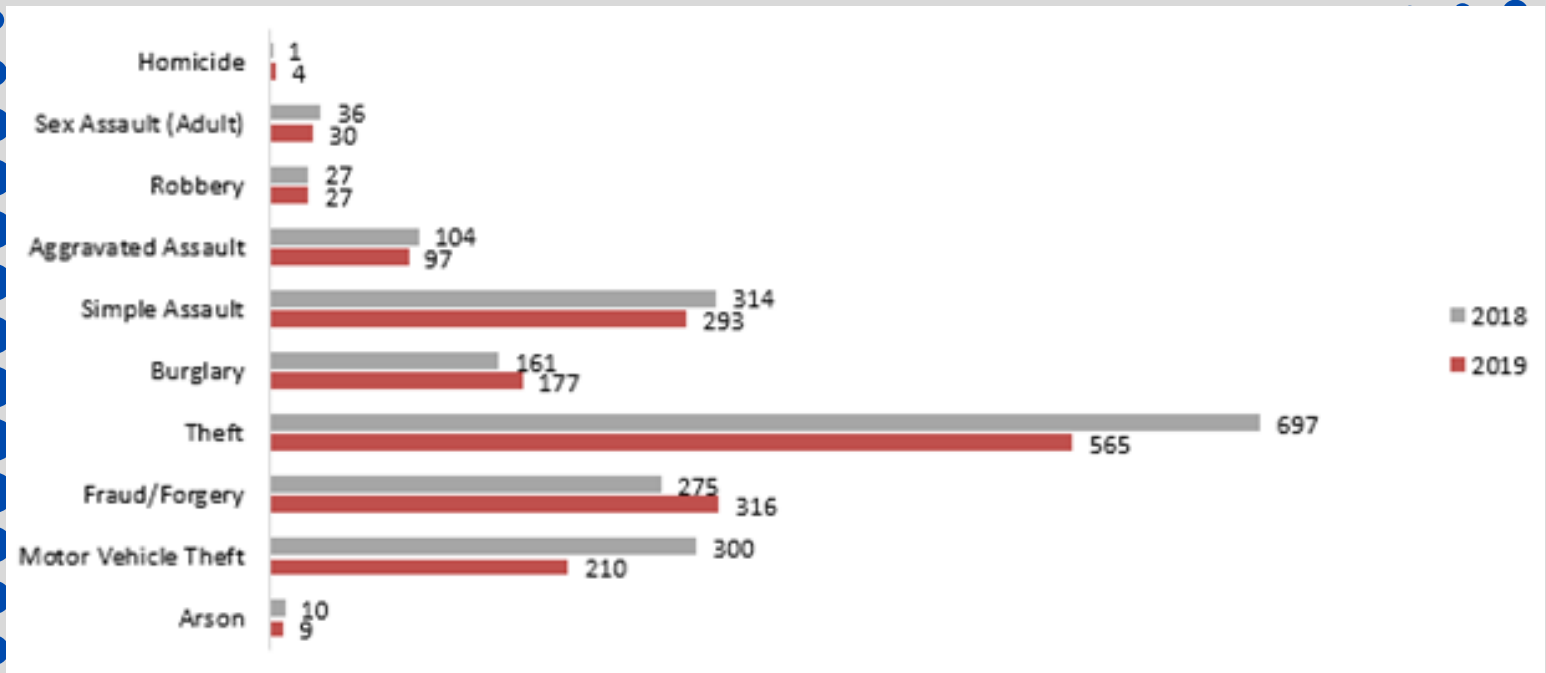
Each year local law enforcement agencies support fundraising for Ralston House during Child Abuse Prevention Month. Purchased Pinwheels are placed outside the PD and City Hall with all the proceeds going to programs and services Ralston House provides to children and families.



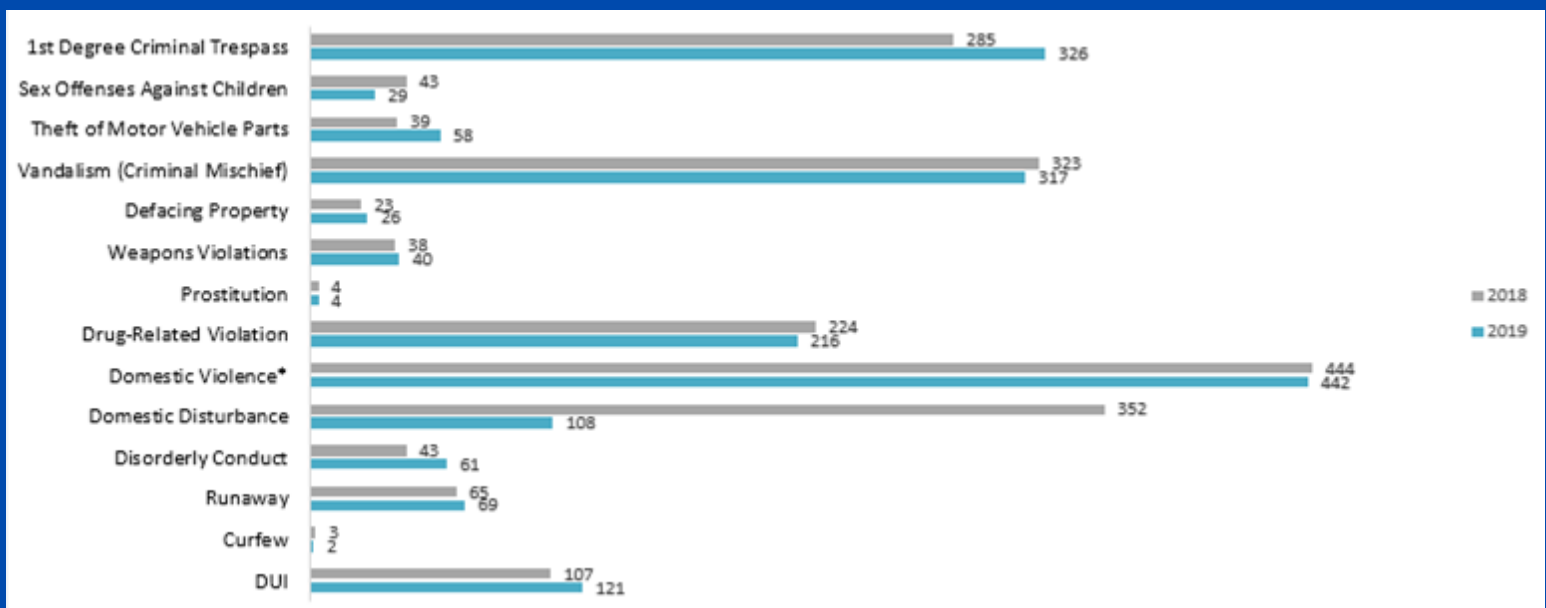
# CRIME IN WHEAT RIDGE

These charts provide detailed information about the number and types of calls for service by the Wheat Ridge Police Department in 2019 compared with those in 2018.

## Part I Crimes



## Part II Crimes



# PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH



The Public Information Officer (PIO) is responsible for media relations including on-scene interviews, press release creation and distribution, and follow up with reporters and producers. The PIO oversees the Digital Communications Specialist position and works in collaboration on content for social media accounts and the City website. Information about crime prevention, safety tips, and upcoming special events and community programs are shared on the City website, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor, YouTube, and Channel 8. Community Forums and other special programs are often live streamed and video is posted later for those unable to attend in person.

Breaking news and traffic updates are most often shared first on Twitter and picked up by mainstream media who monitor these accounts for updates to share with their viewers, readers or listeners. Department social media accounts and the website are promoted as official sources of information about the department and incidents occurring in Wheat Ridge.

## Social Media Analytics



Page Likes 10,163  
Followers 10,386

@WheatRidgePD



Impressions 117.9 K  
Followers 9,402

@WheatRidgePD



Verified Residents 10,584

@WheatRidgePoliceDepartment



Followers 1,226

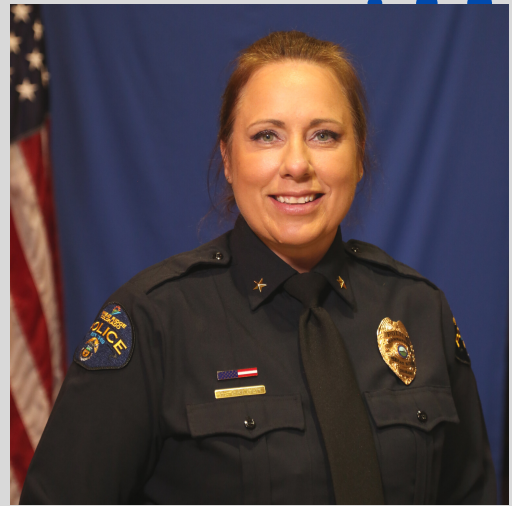
@wheatridgepolice



# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The City of Wheat Ridge continues to utilize an Emergency Management Team to organize and manage both human-caused and natural disasters in the community. The goal of the Emergency Management Team is to continually design and update the framework necessary to reduce the City's vulnerability to hazards, and to successfully respond to and manage disasters. The City's Emergency Manager assists with the planning and preparation of emergencies and disasters, using an all-hazards approach.

The City's Emergency Management Team meets regularly, and when warranted by the type and size of the incident, utilizes a joint Emergency Operations Center (EOM) located in the City of Lakewood staffed by key city and county emergency personnel. Working collaboratively with the Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management, the Lakewood Police Department, and the West Metro Fire Rescue, the team oversees the safety of the community. This past year, a complete review and revision of the City's Emergency Response Plan was completed and adopted by the Wheat Ridge City Council.



**Emergency Manager  
Commander  
Shellie Salser**

Throughout the past year, the Emergency Management Team supported joint tabletop exercises with local organizations, including Lutheran Medical Center, Victim's Outreach Inc. (VOI), the American Red Cross, West Metro SWAT, regional police and fire departments, and the Colorado and Jefferson County Offices of Emergency Management. Tabletop exercises included multi-agency responses to severe weather and flooding as well as addressing the safety and security of residents and local businesses.

In addition to emergency planning, and response and recovery, other responsibilities of the Emergency Manager include monitoring risks associated with flooding and access to Clear Creek as well as seasonal fire bans in collaboration with the Jefferson County Sheriff and surrounding communities.



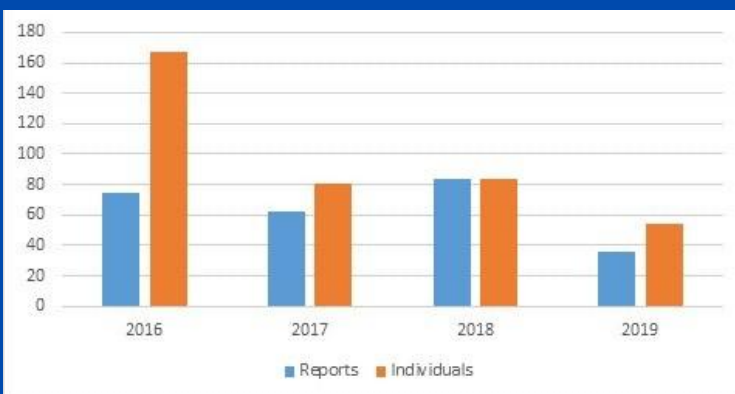
# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT

The primary duty of the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) is to ensure the integrity of the Wheat Ridge Police Department. The PSU is responsible for several areas within the Police Department including the development, implementation, and supervision of recruitment and selection processes within the department, the police department awards and recognition program, and internal investigation activities.

PSU accepts positive and negative comments from the public, professionals, and staff. The Unit investigates and maintains records on commendations, complaints, use of force incidents, employee-involved accidents, and eluding and pursuit events. The PSU also researches, recommends, develops, and writes policy revisions, and other responsibilities as assigned by the Chief of Police.

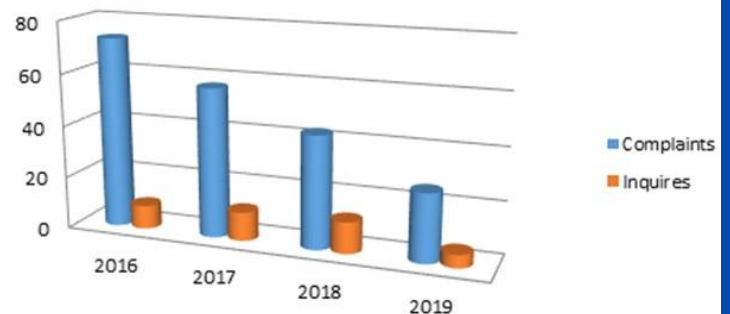


**Sergeant**  
Jamie Watson



**Complaints**  
**4 year Comparison**

**Commendations**  
**4 year Comparison**

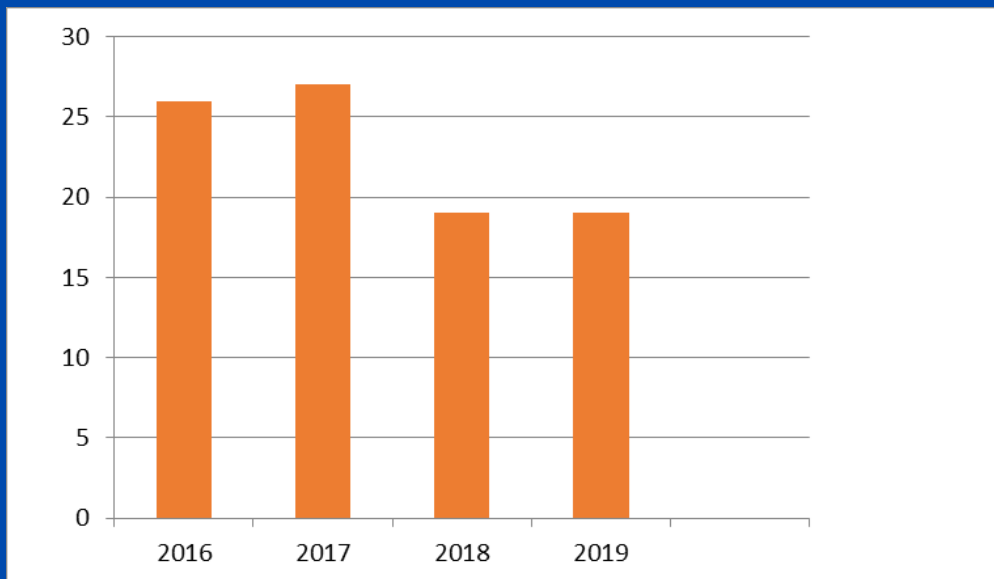




# USE OF FORCE/ BIAS-BASED PROFILING

WRPD officers are required to complete a Use of Force report when they use force greater than control and compliance, or whenever any person sustains an injury. Control and compliance are defined as the use of some combination of leverage and strength to generate compliance, including joint locks, pressure points, take downs, and come-along techniques. Supervisors review the reports and make recommendations as to whether the incident needs further investigation.

The Professional Standards Unit received 19 reported Use of Force incidents in 2019. The chart below illustrates a four-year comparison of reported Use of Force incidents.



**Use of Force Incidents  
2016-2019**

## **Bias-Based Profiling**

Bias-Based Profiling complaints are thoroughly investigated and subjected to an administrative review. Complaints are typically investigated by the named department member's direct supervisor. The supervisor takes into account the concerns, department policies, and municipal, state, and federal laws. The investigating supervisor thoroughly documents the results of the investigation and makes a recommendation regarding disposition. The documented investigation is then forwarded to the named department member's chain of command. The Chief of Police conducts a final review of the investigation, taking into account each previous recommendation, and issues a final disposition.

There were three bias-based profiling allegations received in 2019. All allegations were thoroughly investigated and found that there was no evidence to support the allegations.

# PATROL OPERATIONS DIVISION



The Patrol Operations Division is led by a Division Chief and managed by two Commanders and nine sergeants. The division is comprised of the uniformed men and women that patrol the City's neighborhoods, greenbelt and parks; respond to emergencies; engage with the community on special projects and education classes; and support community involvement programs.

The Patrol Division includes sworn officers who patrol the City of Wheat Ridge during three shifts covering a 24-hour period, seven days a week. The total number of Calls for Service in 2019 was 38,921. This includes all calls whether Patrol Officers, School Resource Officers, or Community Service Officers who responded to address crash and traffic issues, reports of domestic violence and child abuse, robbery and attempted robbery, code enforcement, animal concerns, and issues at area schools as well as other crimes. Calls for Service may also include calls for assistance from the West Metro Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) and other local agencies like the Arvada Fire Protection District, W. Metro Fire Rescue and the Lakewood and Arvada Police Departments.

**Crime Prevention**  
**School Resource Officers**  
**Community Services Team**  
**Crash and Traffic Team**  
**Body Camera Program**  
**West Metro SWAT**  
**Explorer Scout Program**



**Division Chief**  
Jim Lorentz



# CRIME PREVENTION TEAM



## Coffee with a Cop

Coffee with a Cop events cultivate community relationships over a cup of coffee. The Crime Prevention Team conducted four Coffee with a Cop events in 2019, to include National Coffee with a Cop Day where events were held simultaneously at three locations with officers and command staff.

## Scam/Fraud Education

The WRPD Crime Prevention Team made more than eight presentations to local retirement homes, Neighborhood Watch organizations, and other community groups warning about online and telephone scams.



## Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

This annual program provides residents and businesses with an onsite crime prevention evaluation and analysis of their property with suggestions on how to improve safety.

## Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is a group of residents who have organized themselves with the goal of taking an active role in keeping their neighborhoods safe and crime-free. In 2019 there were three active groups in Wheat Ridge.

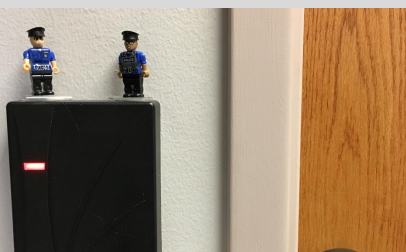
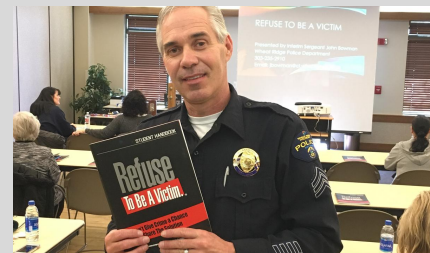


## Dog Walker Watch

In this program, presented annually by the Crime Prevention officer, those walking their dogs on a daily basis are taught to clearly identify and report suspicious activity and behaviors to police. Dogs receive a certificate signed by the Chief and a yellow neckerchief as designation of being a WRPD Honorary K-9.

## Refuse to be a Victim

Refuse to be a Victim is a community policing seminar that provides the tips and techniques to avoid dangerous situations. The seminar also teaches participants how to avoid criminal confrontation by creating a personal safety strategy that highlights the most important steps. Five presentations were made in 2019.



## Workplace Safety

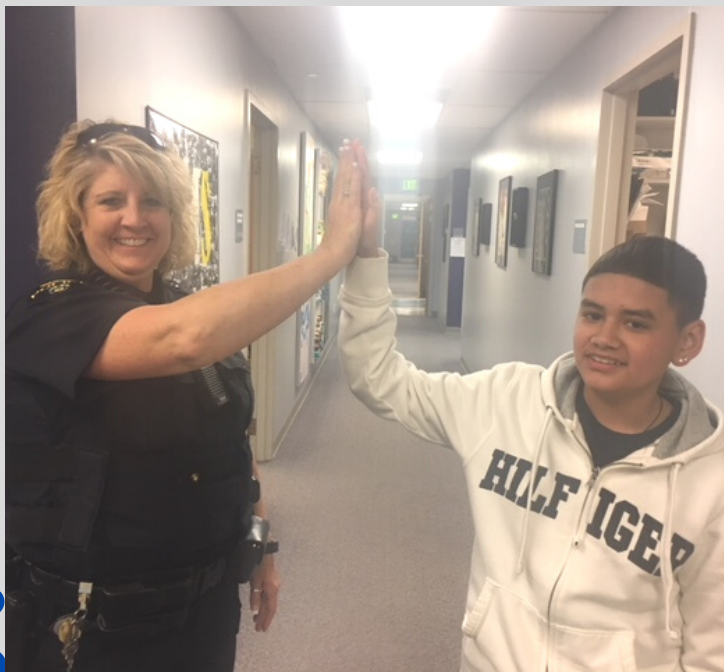
This workplace safety presentation focuses on awareness in response to situations within the workplace. Participants are also taught how to protect themselves in their personal lives. Five presentations were made in 2019.

# SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

The WRPD School Resource Officer (SRO) program is one of the most popular police department programs in the community. The Wheat Ridge Police Department provides two SROs to Jefferson County Public Schools located within the City of Wheat Ridge's jurisdiction, including elementary, middle and high schools. The SROs foster a close working relationship with school administrators and their staff members as well as the students and their families.



The SROs handle the majority of calls for service at all the schools, complete case filings on serious misdemeanor and most felony cases, and are available to teach classes at the request of their assigned schools. The SROs also work closely with truancy intervention, anti-bullying, school safety protocols, and peer counselors, and mediate administrative situations with students and their parents. They work in collaboration with mental health organizations, Children's Hospital, Jefferson County Juvenile Assessment Center, the District Attorney's Office, Jefferson County R-1 Security, and the Jefferson County School District.



For many students interactions with School Resource Officers are their first with law enforcement. Often that interaction is one in which the SRO offers guidance and support instead of having to resort to legal intervention. Building that initial positive bond can lay the groundwork for future relationships with law enforcement that as adults, are based on a greater understanding for the value of community-based policing.



# COMMUNITY SERVICES TEAM

The Wheat Ridge Community Services Team is comprised of non-sworn Community Services Officers (CSOs) who provide enforcement, investigation, and education of the Code of Laws pertaining to nuisance codes, animal concerns, and parks/greenbelt regulations.

2,400 Code  
Enforcement  
Calls

776  
Written  
Warning  
Notices

5  
Hearings

138  
Citations

1,444  
Animal-  
involved  
Calls

532 Park  
Calls,  
issued 92  
warnings

**Code Enforcement** remains a critical component for the successful promotion and management of the City's Traffic safety, Life-quality and Crime reduction (TLC) Program.

**Animal Control and Management** includes response to barking dogs, animal cruelty, or aggressive dogs, pet licensing verification, and wildlife monitoring as well as education for responsible pet ownership.

**Parks Enforcement and Greenbelt Patrolling** enables the CSO Team to meet and interact with park users and guests of Wheat Ridge. With more than 20 municipal parks, including the Clear Creek Greenbelt, there are many opportunities for the community to enjoy the outdoors. The CSOs and seasonal Park Rangers strive to provide positive customer service while educating park users about the rules and restrictions.



# CRASH AND TRAFFIC TEAM

The Crash and Traffic Team (CATT) was re-deployed to assist with patrol staffing from January until May 2019 with one sergeant and two officers. In July, one or both of the CATT officers were utilized as training officers for the Patrol Division due to a large number of recruits. In late 2019, a third CATT officer was added and a process for the remaining position was put into place for 2020.



In 2019 CATT handled five major traffic events:

**1 - Auto/pedestrian accident.** A pedestrian in dark clothing crossed in the middle of 44th Ave at night. The pedestrian suffered multiple serious bodily injuries. The pedestrian was found to be at fault.

**2 - Auto vs. motorcycle accident.** An automobile turned left in front of a motorcycle. The motorcyclist did not cooperate with the investigation. A summons was issued to the driver of the car.

**3 - Auto vs. auto.** A vehicle northbound on Kipling St. moved into southbound traffic, striking another vehicle head-on. It is believed the driver of the at-fault vehicle died prior to the collision due to a medical condition.

**4 - Auto/pedestrian accident.** A vehicle traveling westbound on 44th Ave. swerved onto the sidewalk, striking a pedestrian and his dog. The driver of the vehicle appeared to have had a medical condition which caused the crash. The pedestrian was transported to the hospital and the dog survived and was treated at a local animal hospital.

**5 - Auto vs. auto.** A vehicle traveling southbound on Sheridan ran the red light at W. 38th Ave. The vehicle struck another car that was eastbound on W. 38th. The at-fault vehicle then struck two cars traveling northbound who were stopped at the red light on Sheridan. The at-fault drivers' passenger suffered serious bodily injury in the crash.



# BODY WORN CAMERAS

In 2017, the Wheat Ridge Police Department received a \$90,000 grant from U.S. Department of Justice funding the purchase of Personal Video Devices (PVDs) or body worn cameras. The program, overseen by Commander Lucas Hunt, was deployed in 2019 and training was provided to all uniformed officers.

Body Cameras are worn at all times by officers in uniform, and are used by WRPD to collect audio-visual evidence of criminal activity. The cameras record officer's interactions with the public in compliance with all laws and department policy. The goal of this program is to provide accurate and unbiased recordings of officers during their interactions with the public.

Body worn cameras are manually activated at the start of any interaction between an officer and a member of the public where there is the potential for enforcement and/or criminal investigation or in the event the encounter may become adversarial. Once activated, the camera will remain on (with some exceptions outlined in the policy) until the incident has reached a conclusion or until the officer leaves the scene. The camera system has a feature that allows members to mute the audio while the camera is activated. Officers are permitted to use this feature when discussing investigative techniques with other officers or in discussions including victim family information, protected personal information, or personal medical information.

Examples of situations in which body cameras are activated include but are not limited to the following:

- Traffic stops (e.g. traffic violations, stranded motorists)
- Emergency response
- Vehicle pursuit
- Suspicious vehicles/persons
- Arrests
- Vehicle/person searches
- Physical or verbal confrontations or use of force
- Pedestrian contacts
- DUI investigations
- Crimes



# WEST METRO SWAT



The West Metro Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) was created to provide the cities of Lakewood and Wheat Ridge with personnel who are specially trained and equipped to manage unique occurrences outside the scope of normal operations. W. Metro SWAT includes members of the Wheat Ridge Police Department who have applied to serve, and once accepted, have received specialized training and equipment. W. Metro SWAT responds when incidents exceed the capability of local first responders and/or investigative units for apprehensions, high-risk security operations, reports of terrorism, and special assignments. Additional incidents to which the team responds include hostage situations, barricaded suspects, sniper operations, and the serving of high-risk warrants.

Tactical SWAT operators completed 6310 hours of training in 2019. SWAT snipers trained an additional 80 hours throughout the year. Specialized training included: barricaded subject considerations, clearance and movement techniques, dynamic hostage rescue movement, covert movement, vehicle assaults, room clearances with a K-9, open air movement, firearms, working in a chemical environment, less lethal options and Tactical Combat Casualty Care.

Five specialized vehicles are assigned to and maintained by the SWAT Team. The "SWAT Van" is used primarily for equipment storage and transport. WRPD used their mobile command post for this function throughout 2019. A Crisis Negotiation Team vehicle provides a base for communications. This year, the Wheat Ridge Police Department and the Lakewood Police Department worked collaboratively to purchase a 2019 Lenco Bearcat, one of two armored rescue vehicles. The Bearcat provides additional support and safety for SWAT operators.

The team maintains membership in the Rocky Mountain Tactical Team Association (RMTTA) and the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) in order to remain current on tactical best practices and resources. Additionally, SWAT Commanders attend meetings with members of South Metro Area SWAT Commanders, and Jeffco Regional SWAT Commanders. Negotiators routinely attend training sessions hosted by the Rocky Mountain Hostage Negotiators Association and conduct monthly trainings.

W. Metro SWAT personnel were utilized 35 times in 2019; this includes full team, partial team, and on-duty callouts. Of those 35 utilizations, 16 were full team callouts.

In 2019, West Metro SWAT:  
Responded to 16 full team  
call-outs

Completed 6,310 hours  
of training



# EXPLORER SCOUT PROGRAM

The Explorer Scout Program is in its sixth year. Eleven recruits attended this year's Academy and seven completed the program. The Academy consisted of 48 hours of law enforcement training, including criminal law, constitutional law, crisis intervention, arrest control, patrol tactics, report writing, narcotics identification, crime prevention, first aid/CPR, traffic control, traffic accident investigation, and radio procedures.

The Explorers assisted with staffing at many community events, including the Localworks Criterium, the opening of the G Line commuter rail station in Wheat Ridge, National Night Out, the Carnation Festival and Parade, and WRPD's Operation Blue Santa.



In 2019, a former WRPD Explorer Scout graduated from the Adams County Police Academy. The Explorer went on to complete field training and became a Thornton police officer.

Over the course of 2019, the Explorer Advisers reviewed the benefits of continuing to be affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America (Learning for Life) and proposed the program become independent, changing the name to the Wheat Ridge Cadet Program. This proposal was approved by the Chief of Police.

The Explorer Scout program has been very successful and is a popular program with area youth. It also helps in staffing special events for the City.

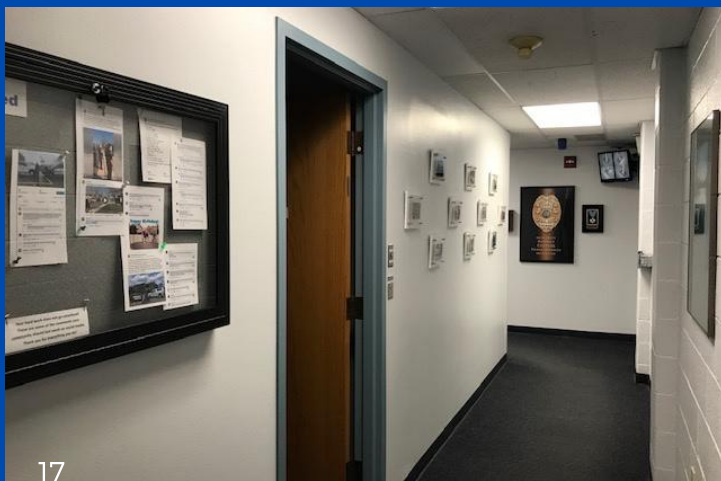
# BRIEFING ROOM UPDATE



In the fall of 2019, the Patrol Division undertook a renovation to the briefing room that is used by patrol officers to meet with their supervisor before each shift. They receive updates on any locations requiring additional patrol, reports of ongoing criminal activity, and any metro or statewide law enforcement notifications. The briefing room also houses work stations where officers conduct follow-up investigations, contact community members by phone, review body camera video, and write reports.

Prior to the renovation, officers were surveyed regarding their needs within the update to the briefing room. A team of six volunteers was formed under the leadership of Patrol Commander Shellie Salser and a proposal was presented along with a budget to the Interim Chief for approval. In order to minimize the impact on continued patrol operations, the renovation was completed in stages.

New countertops were installed and existing cubicle-style separators were removed allowing for an increase in work stations from four to seven. New computers, monitors and charging stations were also added. In addition, a new large screen television was purchased for internal display of law enforcement bulletins and to supplement training for personnel. Chairs were showing significant signs of wear (tears in the webbing) from catching on duty belts as they were not specifically designed for heavy public service use so custom eForce chairs were purchased. A conference table was also purchased to allow for improved team seating during briefings. Decals and artwork reflecting pride in the profession and the community were installed in the room. Hallways were updated with framed interchangeable photographs celebrating employees and the history of the police department. A wall was also dedicated to departmental awards as well as those received by teams and individual officers. All renovations were supported through remaining 2019 police department non-operational budget funds.



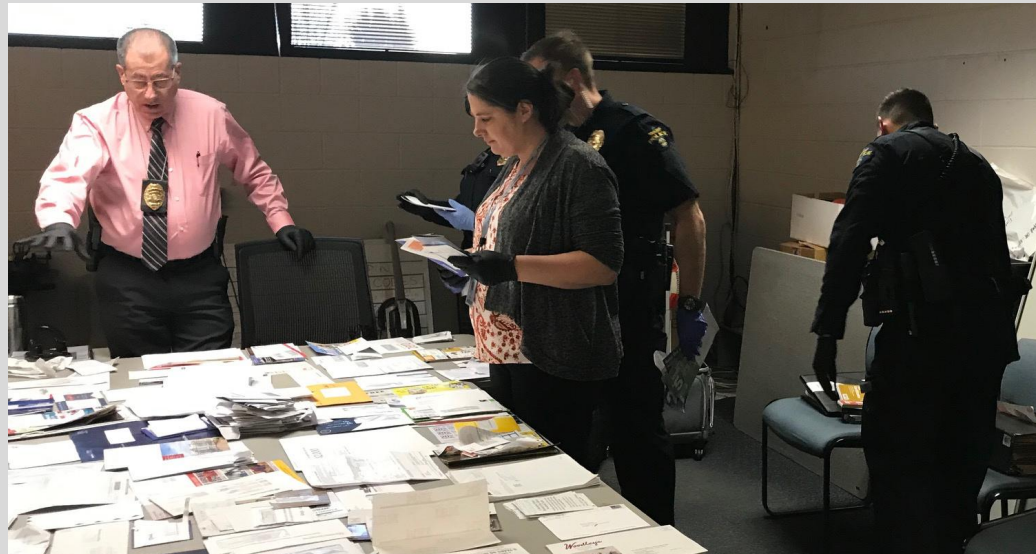


# SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION



The Support Services Division, led by a Division Chief, a Commander, two sergeants and a civilian supervisor, provides investigative and administrative support to the department and the Patrol Operations Division.

The division includes the Investigations Bureau, the Training and Accreditation Unit, Major Case Investigations, the Special Investigations Unit, the Records Team, Crime Analysis, and Property and Evidence.



Investigations Bureau  
Training and Accreditation  
Major Case Investigations  
Special Investigations Unit  
Records Team  
Crime Analysis

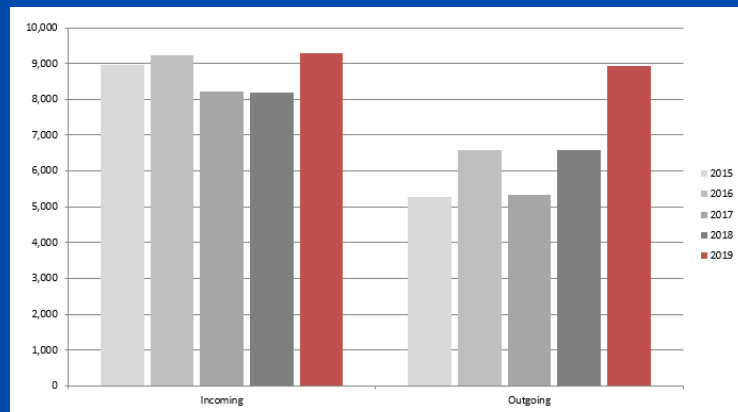


**Division Chief**  
Dave Pickett

# INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU

## Property and Evidence

Property and Evidence Technicians are responsible for receiving, logging, storing, and for the disposition of all evidence and property items in the Wheat Ridge Police Department, as well as maintaining accurate files and tracking the chain of custody for all items.



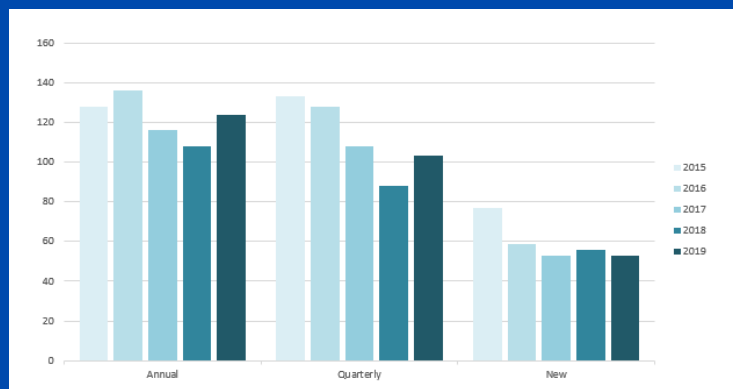
The Investigations Bureau is led by a Commander under the direction of the Division Chief of the Support Services Division. The Investigations Bureau reviews all felony crimes and more than 2,200 case reports a year.

The Investigations Bureau includes the Property and Evidence Unit, and the registration of sex offenders. There are 16 detectives assigned to the Bureau as well as two investigations technicians.

Six detectives are assigned to the Persons Team which is supervised by a sergeant, and five detectives are assigned to the Property Team, which is also supervised by a sergeant. There are currently four detectives assigned to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU).

The SIU reports to a sergeant and consists of:

- Two detectives assigned to the West Metro Drug Task Force (WMDTF)
- One detective assigned to the CATPA Metropolitan Auto Theft Task Force (C-MATT)
- One detective assigned to Vice/Intelligence



## Sex Offender Registrations

In 2019, 280 individuals registered as sex offenders living in the City of Wheat Ridge (an increase of 11% from 2018), while 53 individuals deregistered with the City. Of those who registered, 124 were annual registrations, 103 were quarterly registrations, and 53 were new registrations.



# TRAINING / ACCREDITATION

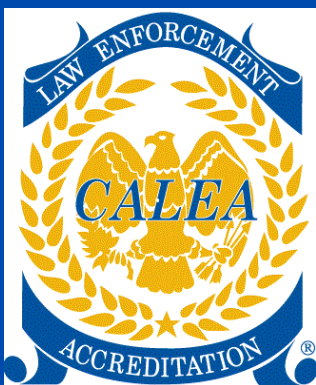
The Wheat Ridge Police Department provides mission critical and specialized training to officers, sworn, and civilian staff in order to develop a department capable of responding in any given situation while serving the Wheat Ridge community.

Annually department members receive on average more than 15,000 training hours. Examples of this training include:

- Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST); firearms, arrest control
- Ethics, Human Trafficking, Crisis Intervention (CIT), Force Science, Patrol response to suicidal subjects, SWAT Command, Incident Command decision making and leadership, and advanced critical engagement
- Annual In-Service Training: body worn cameras, force-on-force, driving, de-escalation

The in-service training program provides certified peace officers with a minimum of 24 hours annually with a minimum of 12 hours in Arrest Control, Driving and Firearms in accordance with Colorado POST standards.

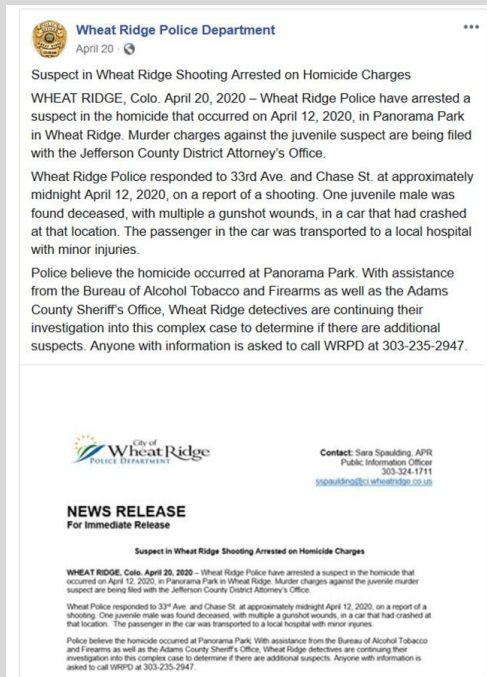
The in-service skills training includes an additional 40 hours on such topics as Anti-Bias, Ethics, Community Policing, Use of Force, Mental Health Issues, and Crises Recognition and Response. Crisis Intervention Training is also provided for all officers as well as training in Procedural Justice.



The Wheat Ridge Police Department initially received law enforcement's most prestigious certification by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) in 2011.

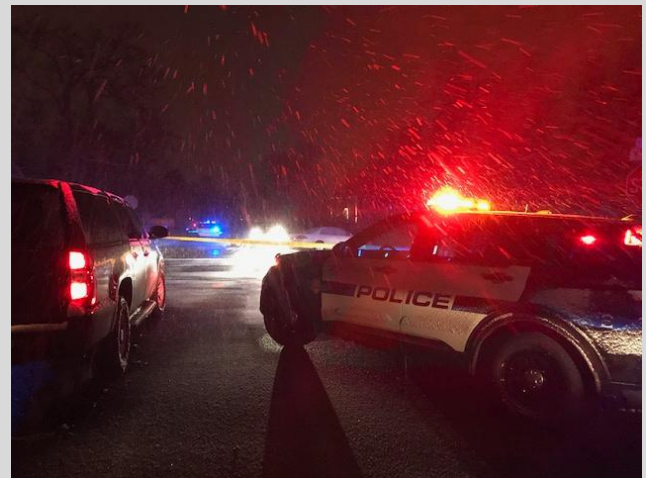
The Wheat Ridge Police Department has achieved recertification in each subsequent review period. Reaccreditation occurs every four years with a review of work completed by police personnel to ensure the department's standard operating procedures, policies, and actions are consistent with CALEA national standards. Audits are conducted annually.

# MAJOR CASE INVESTIGATIONS



On January 26, 2019, WRPD officers responded to the area of the 3200 block of Fenton Street on a report of shots fired. Officers located 23-year-old Ervin Spahitch deceased in the driver's seat of a Toyota Prius. There were several bullet holes in the Prius, and the autopsy confirmed that Spahitch died from gunshot wounds. The owner of the Prius was contacted and she identified Spahitch as her boyfriend. She advised officers that Spahitch had gone to sell marijuana to someone he had previously sold to in December of 2018. The extensive investigation lasted for more than a year and included numerous interviews, and social media and other warrants. Four suspects, including juveniles and adults, were identified as having been involved in the attempted robbery and murder of Spahitch. All four suspects are currently in custody and awaiting trial.

On January 7, 2019, an 87-year-old woman arrived at the Dollar Tree located at 6090 West 44th Ave. to do some shopping. Prior to entering the business she was hit from behind and her purse was taken. She fell to the ground and sustained serious bodily injury. She was admitted to the hospital with a broken arm and a subdural hematoma. The robbery was also captured on video from the Dollar Tree; however, the quality was not sufficient to make a legal identification. The elderly woman's bank was contacted because her debit card had been stolen in the robbery and detectives learned the card had been used after the robbery at a convenience store in Aurora. Surveillance video from the convenience store was obtained and it showed the suspect in the store about an hour after the robbery in Wheat Ridge. In surveillance video from the Dollar Tree, the suspect appeared in the same clothes. Further investigation led police to 22-year-old Contarius Alexander. Detectives learned that Alexander had been involved in a robbery of someone he knew in Aurora on the same day. Detectives contacted the victim in that case and had her view some surveillance footage and photos from the convenience store and she positively identified Alexander. The FBI Fugitive Team arrested Alexander a few days later charging him with Robbery/Assault of an At-Risk Adult. During an interview while Alexander was in custody, he admitted to his involvement in the robbery.





# SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is comprised of detectives who are assigned to various work assignments or task force operations that, by their nature, are focused on a particularly specialized area of investigations work. The Wheat Ridge Police Department has detectives assigned to the CATPA - Metro Auto Theft Task Force (C-MATT), the West Metro Drug Task Force (WMDTF), and the Vice/Intelligence Unit.

C-MATT reported that 172 vehicles were stolen in Wheat Ridge and 149 were recovered within 30 days.

WMDTF investigated / filed 1247 cases in 2019. The Task Force initiated 37 cases that resulted in arrests. In addition to self-initiated investigations, the WMDTF responds to tips or complaints from community members regarding drug-related activity. This can be a challenge as many of the tips are vague, complaining of a smell or high traffic at their neighbor's house, and frequently reporting parties do not provide their contact information.

In 2019 the Task Force also initiated or assisted in the investigation of six Drug Trafficking Organizations. All were dismantled or disrupted and the investigations were closed.



## CRIME ANALYSIS

Staffed by a Crime Analyst, this unit is responsible for gathering, analyzing, and presenting data to members of the police department, as well as to law enforcement agencies and organizations. In 2019, the Crime Analysis Unit worked on major case investigations; cell phone, financial records, and surveillance analyses; timelines; accident analyses; city-wide calls for service statistics; calls for service resulting in use of force; race statistics; drug overdoses; patrol call load; mental health holds; location-specific statistics; DUI statistics; marijuana statistics; and hotel/motel statistics and analyses. Additionally, the Unit produced bulletins for investigations and patrol notifications regarding officer safety, attempts to locate or identify individuals or vehicles, and requests for information regarding similar crimes or suspects.

# RECORDS TEAM

The Wheat Ridge Police Records Team consists of a Supervisor, a Lead Police Records Technician and four additional technicians. They cover the needs of the department for approximately 14 hours a day and assist the public Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. The Records technicians perform several duties each day, from assisting residents with dog licensing to taking accident reports. They are also the main point of contact for police reports, records, and documents related to the cases responded to by the Wheat Ridge Police Department (WRPD) each year.

In 2019, Records continued to experience many changes. The biggest project was the implementation of the Body Worn Camera (BWC) program. Records is solely responsible for the redaction and release of BWC footage under the Colorado Open Records Act. All case-related video is also sent from Records to the Jefferson County District Attorney's office.

As the City transitioned to a new financial platform, Records began accepting credit card payments in 2019. The new payment process provides a more timely response to records requests and enhanced customer service to residents of Wheat Ridge as well as others. Staff are also preparing to offer online reporting and report requests in 2020.





# MISSION

The Wheat Ridge Police Department is committed to providing the highest standards of service in partnership with the community.

