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Chicago Police Cut Crime with Major Upgrades to Analytics and Field Technology

Since deploying six Strategic Decision Support Centers across the city, Chicago saw a 21 percent drop in shootings last year.

BY THEO DOUGLAS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOVTECH.COM/AUTHORS/THEO-DOUGLAS.HTML](https://www.govtech.com/authors/theo-douglas.html)) / JANUARY 23, 2018



SHUTTERSTOCK



The Chicago Police Department (CPD) is deploying predictive and analytic tools after seeing initial results and delivering on a commitment from Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a bureau chief said recently.

The issue, as the mayor said during his 2018 Annual Budget Address on Oct. 18 (<http://www.govtech.com/budget-finance/Seeing-Shootings-Murders-Decline-Chicago-to-Double-Down-on-Predictive-Analytics-Tools-Body-Cameras.html>), is how best to ensure that a rise in shootings and murders dating to 2015 continues to decline. Emanuel emphasized and police officials agree that using the latest in IT, including video surveillance and computer analysis of incidents, is reducing violent crime in the city.

Last year, CPD created six Strategic Decision Support Centers (SDSCs) at police stations, essentially local nerve centers for its high-tech approach to fighting crime in areas where incidents are most prevalent.

Jonathan Lewin, chief of CPD's Bureau of Technical Services, revealed plans to expand the number of centers at the recent CES 2018. Effective immediately, CPD will add four additional SDSCs, Lewin told an audience of more than 100 on Jan. 11 at the consumer electronics show in Las Vegas.

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"I'm happy to say that in the first six districts that went live, we were able to tie together a range of technology into a single platform," Lewin said during a discussion of "Paving the Way for Connected Emergency Vehicles."

(<https://www.ces.tech/Conference/ConferenceProgram/Conference-Tracks/Transforming-the-Future-of-Public-Safety-Communica/Paving-the-way-for-Connected-Emergency-Vehicles>)

Connecting features like predictive mapping and policing, gunshot detection, surveillance cameras and citizen tips lets police identify "areas of risk, and ties all these things together into a very consumable, very easy to use, very understandable platform," said Lewin.

“The predictive policing component ... the intelligence analyst and that daily intelligence cycle, is really important along with the room itself, which I didn’t talk about,” Lewin said in an interview.

“There’s an actual physical room that’s built out in each of these districts. It’s like a fusion center, but it’s an actual room,” he added.

The nation’s second-largest police department also has a large-scale deployment under way of ShotSpotter, the gunshot detection technology. It’s currently live in three of the city’s 22 policing districts with plans to add a fourth by the end of January and two more this spring.

Ultimately, CPD intends to add ShotSpotter in 13 districts by summer, covering areas where crime is highest, according to Lewin.

“It will be the largest ShotSpotter deployment in the U.S. It will be in about 110 square miles,” he said.

Results thus far are promising. Citywide, shootings dropped 21 percent in 2017 compared to 2016, Lewin told the audience; and in districts No. 7 and 11, on the city’s southern and western sides — home to the first two SDSCs — shootings are down 33 percent.

In each of the six districts initially equipped with SDSCs, shootings declined an average of 20 percent, CPD First Deputy Superintendent Kevin Navarro said in October.

In a video presented at CES, CPD said its strategy of “smarter policing, fewer victims” includes SDSC personnel using data analysis and technology to provide officers with real-time information and deploy them more effectively; crime forecasting software to identify areas most at risk for violence; and “360-degree feedback” to analyze data transmitted from officers in the field.

“The ultimate goal of the SDSCs is to provide a process and environment for collaboration and analysis, resulting in fewer injuries,” according to the CPD video.

Most CPD patrol vehicles now have in-car cameras, while some have license plate readers. The department is moving toward equipping vehicles with wireless routers — ultimately connecting in-car and body-worn cameras and offering on-demand, real-time

streaming.

CPD partners with the University of Chicago crime lab on data analysis and has worked with the New York City Police Department to develop best practices. But Lewin acknowledged in a tweet

(https://twitter.com/CPD_Tech/status/841963413790154752) last year the department will likely continue to face challenges.

“We have literally hundreds of millions of rows of data. And how do you develop insights from all these different data points, how do you translate them into actual intelligence? That’s what we’re very focused on right now,” he said.

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