



2024 U.S. Public Safety Trends Report

 **MARK43**

Looking ahead to 2024

2023 was another challenging year for U.S. public safety. Agencies were faced with more severe weather events, large scale critical incidents, and a barrage of cyber and ransomware attacks targeting the public sector. This comes at a time when the number of first responders available to address these challenges continues to decline, with agencies missing, on average, between 29-36% of their ideal workforce. Notably, our public safety agencies again answered the call. The members of our local, state, county, educational, federal and tribal public safety agencies continued to work tirelessly to keep their communities safe.

As a technology partner to more than 200 U.S. public safety agencies, we make it our job to anticipate first responder needs of today and tomorrow. Throughout the past year, we had many conversations with public safety leaders, first responders (including telecommunicators), sworn and non-sworn personnel, and technology leaders about where the industry is, and where it is going. We also drew upon an independent national survey of first responders that we commissioned specifically to gain valuable insight from public safety workers.

The result is the 2024 U.S. Public Safety Trends Report, an overview of six trends that we see as being critical to the success of public safety agencies planning for 2024. We have identified topics ranging from Artificial Intelligence's impact on public safety, the importance of resiliency and robust security, the recruitment and retention crisis, and how data and technology support communities' violence reduction efforts.

While some public safety trends may change from year to year, one theme remains constant: public safety is a calling that continues to attract the very best. It is a calling that comes out of a desire to serve. Job one for every public safety leader in 2024 is making sure that everything is being done to keep first responders safe and get them back to focusing on doing the job they signed on for — being out in the field, engaging with the community.

It is our belief that these six trends materially influence that goal. We hope that this report will provide valuable insight and guidance as leading agencies navigate the public safety landscape in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Hughes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob Hughes
Mark43 Chief Executive Officer

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01 Artificial Intelligence is here to stay

In 2023, generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerged as a groundbreaking and powerful tool that can efficiently produce various types of content, such as text, images, and data. AI as a field has been around since the late 1950s, where humans try to “create self-learning systems that derive meaning from data, then, apply that knowledge to solve new problems in human-like ways.”¹ According to a McKinsey Global Survey on the current state of AI, one-third of respondents reported that their organizations were already using generative AI regularly in at least one business function, less than a year after the tools first appeared.² The potential users for AI methods also include public safety. In a 2023 survey of U.S. first responders, 77% of respondents shared they want their public safety agency to use AI.

In 2024, leading public safety agencies will continue to explore possible applications of AI methodologies, like generative and machine learning, while protecting human decision-making authority. There are three main approaches that agencies should consider as they determine use cases for their organizations:

1. Leveraging AI in a positive way.
2. Keeping people in the workflow.
3. Prioritizing transparent community engagement about AI.

77%

of U.S. first responders want their public safety agency to use AI

84%

of U.S. first responders think AI would save time

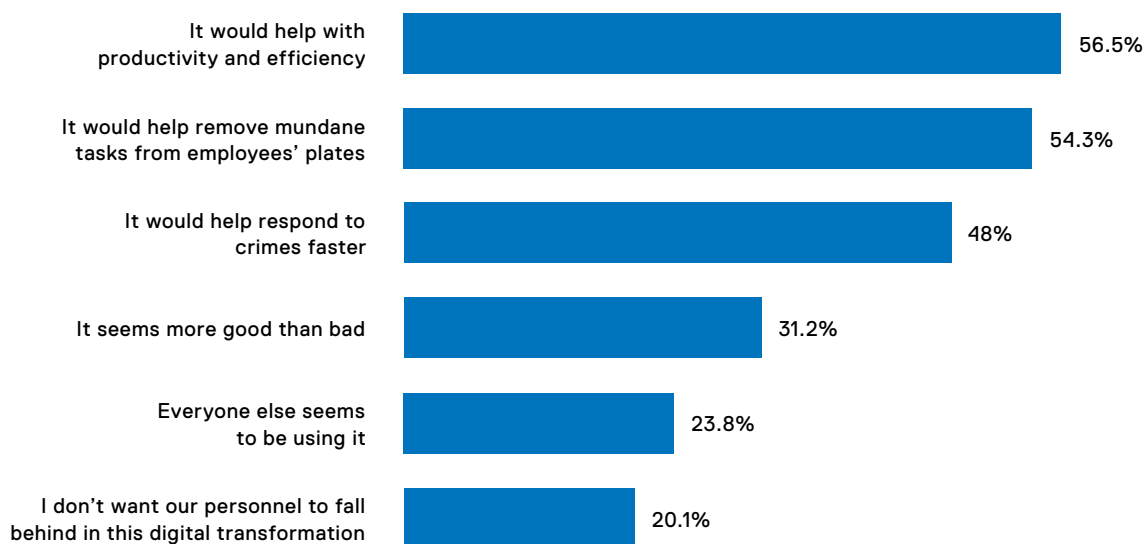
72%

of U.S. first responders believe AI could help reduce crime

Leveraging AI in a positive way

Like all emerging technology, it's critical that public safety leaders are aware of the benefits while also ensuring that guardrails are in place to protect their organization and communities from potential risks. The biggest immediate potential is in addressing staffing and resourcing constraints. AI promises to help alleviate these constraints by speeding up workflows and increasing efficiency. For example, AI could be leveraged to summarize thousands of narratives for command staff briefings, or to track criminal trends.

Why would you want your public safety agency to use AI?



Keeping people in the workflow

Agencies must proceed intentionally. Effective public safety relies on empathy and the human touch, so first responders must continue in their essential role as stewards of the public trust and be part of every workflows and interactions. Users still need to remain accountable for the data they enter into a records management system, and leading agencies will continue to keep people an integral part of the report writing process.



Seattle Police Department

More efficient response to bias crimes

The Seattle Police Department is piloting a program that uses machine learning (ML) to assist its bias crimes coordinator with automated report triage, by identifying reported crimes motivated by any of the more than 30 bias or hate crime types relevant to the jurisdiction. While machine learning has been used in many disciplines over the past few decades, this novel approach in public safety can help alleviate a manual process, reduce the workload of the bias crime coordinator, and improve the response with faster pattern identification, interdiction, and crime prevention efforts.

Previously, the coordinator would manually review incident and offense reports for indications the offender acted with a bias motivation. The new intelligent decision support process integrates with existing workflows and scans every report filed by the SPD records management system (RMS), identifying with a high degree of accuracy whether a crime included bias or not. Once identified, the cases are processed as normal, allowing the bias crime investigators to focus on investigation and crime prevention, rather than spreadsheet wrangling.

The new ML-assisted workflow cuts the time it takes to identify new bias crimes from 8-10 weeks down to 48 hours, and the identification of patterns of bias crimes now occurs within 72 hours. This enhanced process enables Seattle PD to provide early warning to vulnerable populations who may be the target of a pattern offender.

“Because the SPD is an incubator for these types of technologies, our goal is to inspire other agencies to think about how to do this and also how to use machine learning responsibly.”

Loren Atherley

Senior Director of Performance Analytics
& Research at Seattle Police Department

Addressing community concerns around AI

As public safety agencies develop policies for how AI will be used, leading agencies will be transparent and involve the community in the development of these policies.

According to a 2023 Pew Research Center survey, 52% of Americans say they feel more concerned than excited about the increased use of AI.³ Concerns around AI can be amplified in the context of public safety, as AI could be used in areas that have historically been a point of contention with some communities, such as data collection, predictive policing, facial recognition, and image and video classification.

Agencies should insist that their technology partners are transparent in their uses as well. Among the issues to consider:

- The role of humans in the AI workflow.
- The moral, ethical, privacy, and civil liberties concerns associated with AI.
- Clear regulations on the retention and storage of data collected using AI.

Public safety agencies can help preempt community pushback by having clearly articulated policies and involving community leaders and elected officials in the development of those policies.

01 Artificial Intelligence is here to stay

LOOKING AHEAD

AI is quickly becoming mainstream technology that promises to be extremely beneficial to public safety agencies by helping to ease first responder workflows. However, as with any technology, agencies need to proceed deliberately by developing clear and thoughtful policies regarding the use of AI to mitigate potential strains with the community. If done right, the opportunity is vast.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. AI can alleviate resource constraints, reducing manual processes and saving users' time.
2. AI is not a replacement for users — humans must be kept in the workflow.
3. Be aware of community fears around AI, and engage the community early and often.

02 Modern technology is a solution to the recruitment and retention crisis

Public safety agencies continue to face a recruitment and retention crisis. According to the Police Executive Research Forum, 69% of law enforcement agencies saw a drop in the number of applications for full-time officer positions between 2020 and 2022, and overall officer staffing levels fell by 4.8% between January 2020 and January 2023.⁴ As these statistics show, agencies are not only challenged to recruit the next generation of talented professionals, but also keep them.

In 2024, leading agencies will continue to focus on innovative ways to address the recruitment and retention crisis. There are three main ways in which agencies can use modern technology to do so:

1. Provide modern technology options in the workplace that will appeal to the current generation of recruits.
2. Decrease the paperwork burden on first responders, freeing them to get back to the job they signed up for.
3. Alleviate issues specific to telecommunicators.

Modern technology will attract the next generation of first responders

Agencies that are using legacy technology for their mission-critical systems are at a disadvantage when appealing to new recruits. The current generation of recruits are accustomed to using modern, intuitive tools in their daily life — specifically smartphones powered by responsive apps — and they expect the same level of technology in their work environment. This expectation can drive their decision making, for example, according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, “updated equipment and technology...play a significant role in a candidate’s valuation of an agency.”⁵ Progressive agencies are prioritizing the implementation of modern technology to improve working environments.

Agencies who have already transitioned to a modern technology platform, such as the Carrollton, TX Police Department, have used this modern technology as part of their recruitment effort, citing the specific computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and RMS technology platform in their job postings as a way of appealing to a younger generation of recruits.

“CPD became the first agency in Texas, in April 2019, to implement the cloud-based Mark43 records management system...The application saves officers invaluable time by enabling seamless communication and report-filing out in the field.”

City of Carrollton, TX police exam announcement

Decreasing the paperwork burden

No first responder ever chose a career in public safety to spend several hours of each shift writing reports. However, administrative duties such as paperwork and complying with local, state, and federal reporting requirements consume an increasing part of a first responder’s day, preventing them from engaging in the duties that first attracted them to the profession. According to a 2023 survey of U.S. first responders:

- 86% reported that the amount of paperwork they must complete has increased over the course of their career.
- 69% reported that they must return to an office or station house to fill out reports.
- 61% reported that filling out paperwork gets in the way of being out in the community.
- 69% need to use overtime to finish paperwork.

This burden can lead to decreased job satisfaction and first responder burnout. Agencies that transition to a cloud-native platform can reduce this burden for their responders by providing them with technology that is:

- Intuitive and easy to use.
- Resilient, with little or no planned down time.
- Mobile, allowing first responders to complete reports and receive CAD and RMS data from their mobile devices.

“The young police officers love the new tools. They were discouraged when they had to sit at terminals for hours and fill out reports, and then Mark43 offered this new option to use a tablet in the field and produce reports in a timely fashion, and they were now using technology that they were accustomed to. It was a win-win all around.”

Kathleen O’Toole

Former Chief of Police, Seattle Police Department

Ensuring telecommunicators are there to answer the call

Modern technology can also help alleviate the staffing shortfalls that are impacting telecommunicators. The job of a telecommunicator is emotionally and mentally taxing. These stressors can be compounded by legacy CAD technology that is prone to fail at critical moments, requiring dispatchers to revert to pen and paper to track calls for service.

- According to a survey of U.S. first responders, 90% of those surveyed would be more likely to extend their career if there were an option to work remotely. Agencies are beginning to explore technology options that could allow dispatchers and call-takers to take calls from anywhere. Agencies who have upgraded to cloud-native CAD platforms are uniquely positioned to address the needs of their telecommunicators. Unlike on-premises legacy CAD systems, a cloud-native CAD platform does not tie a telecommunicator to specific physical location — all a telecommunicator needs is a computer and an internet connection.
- Cloud-native CAD systems are resilient, greatly reducing the number of outages and system disruptions.

In addition, modern technology that offers intuitive user experiences can deliver fast implementation and require less training. By implementing a cloud-native alternate CAD system, for example, the Metro Nashville Department of Emergency Communications is now able to successfully train their experienced dispatchers on the new CAD in under four hours.

“Technology helps us with recruiting and retention. Technology is something that today’s youth are very aware of — as we showcase some of our technology, it gets today’s generations to think about a career in law enforcement because it is something that they are very familiar with.”

Chief Harold Medina

Albuquerque Police Department, NM

02 Modern technology is a solution to the recruitment and retention crisis

LOOKING AHEAD

While recruitment and retention remain a crisis for public safety agencies, modern technology is a game changer that leading agencies can leverage to help recruit the next generation of first responders. The advantages that a modern cloud-native platform can offer, such as ease of use and resiliency, can be used to help keep current personnel motivated, satisfied, and engaged.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Providing modern, intuitive technology can attract new first responders.
2. Reducing the paperwork burden will increase user satisfaction and retention.
3. Cloud-native platforms can help improve job satisfaction among telecommunicators by reducing system disruptions and allowing for increased flexibility.

03 Technology systems must be resilient and secure

Events that were previously once-in-a-generation, such as extreme weather, large-scale protests, and cyberattacks exploiting security vulnerabilities have now become far more frequent. Unfortunately, many agencies are confronting these hurdles with dated, legacy technology such as on-premises CAD and RMS. Too often these systems become overwhelmed in a crisis, resulting in service interruptions or worse — a CAD or RMS failing altogether. According to a 2023 poll of U.S. first responders, 66% of respondents reported that they experienced dispatch outages within their public safety role.

88%

of U.S. first responders have experienced tech malfunctions on the job, with over a third (35%) experiencing this at least 6-10 times per year, putting the communities they serve at risk

For mission-critical CAD and RMS, downtime is unacceptable as lives are at stake. In 2024, leading public safety agencies will minimize interruptions to their public safety technology by:

1. Investing in modern, cloud-native technology.
2. Prioritizing resilient platforms.
3. Focusing on security.

Investing in modern, cloud-native technology

When a CAD outage occurs, telecommunicators often revert to one of the oldest “technologies” to log calls for services — pen and paper. The decision to move toward cloud-native technology significantly improves an agency’s ability to safeguard the public, especially in times of great emergency. While on-premises and hybrid-cloud platforms still involve physical servers at a central location such as a police station or municipal facility — potentially in the path of a hurricane or other hazardous event — a cloud-native platform distributes vital computing resources (such as servers, storage, cabling, cooling, and power) across data centers distributed across geographic locations in the U.S.

In addition, because it does not rely on on-premises servers that are on-site at the agency, a cloud-native environment is highly scalable and flexible, allowing an agency to quickly add users, computing demand, and traffic to a mission-critical platform as is typical during a critical incident.

On-premises environment

An agency’s data resides on an aging, physical server inside a police station or municipal building.

Hybrid cloud environment

Applications may be in the cloud, but the data is still duplicated to a fragile, hosted server.

Cloud-native environment

Vital computing resources such as networks, servers, storage, applications, and services are duplicated to data centers distributed across geographic locations in the U.S.

“A key advantage of a cloud-native environment is scalability. When a large critical incident occurs, agencies need to be able to quickly increase their ability to take in, store, and process large volumes of data. For agencies who are in the cloud, this can be achieved in minutes and allows them to instantaneously respond to an incident.”

Zal Azmi

Former CIO of the FBI and the Executive
Office for United States Attorneys

Power of resilient technology

For the effective delivery of public safety services, mission-critical CAD and RMS need to remain online and operational. Modern, cloud-native platforms are the best defense against interruptions and outages by offering a solution that is resilient to large-scale incidents and able to withstand traffic spikes and natural disasters. A cloud-native platform:

- Needs only a computer and an internet connection for the CAD and RMS to remain operational.
- Relieves the strain on agency IT resources in a time when recruitment and retention remain in crisis. Most local U.S. police departments have fewer than 50 sworn officers, and partnering with a cloud-native provider means leveraging the financial, technical, and staffing resources of large cloud providers such as Amazon.
- Requires no downtime for necessary tasks such as system updates. With on-premises systems, vendors must physically travel to the agency and manually update every instance or connect to an on-premises system through a VPN. This requires the CAD or RMS to be taken offline for several hours. A cloud-native provider performs these actions remotely, across the entire environment, and requires no downtime.

Security is a must

Effective cybersecurity, or the lack thereof, is emerging as a key issue in public safety technology. According to the survey of U.S. first responders, 82% of public safety professionals surveyed reported that they were worried that their organization's data could be stolen or a victim of ransomware. With an uptick in cyber and ransomware attacks against U.S. public safety agencies and local governments, agencies cannot ignore these potentially debilitating threats to their operations. In 2024, the best way to safeguard data against ransomware and other malicious actors is with a cloud-native platform.

- By partnering with cloud-native providers, agencies offload much of the burden of data protection to large cloud service providers who spend billions of dollars annually on cybersecurity.
- Keeping ahead of hackers has become an arms race, and security measures must be constantly evolving. Cloud-native platforms are continuously monitored and updated across all locations, meaning that agencies can marshal the most up-to-date defenses.
- Cloud-native applications maintain the familiar, impactful security measures historically deployed by the agency while adding the power of security measures from the vendor and cloud provider, like AWS.

As agencies look to strengthen their security posture, they should seek technology partners who adhere to rigorous state and federal security standards. To help mitigate cybersecurity risks for state, local and tribal governments and education organizations, the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) and the State Risk and Authorization and Management Program (StateRAMP) were launched to build a framework for a standardized approach to cybersecurity standards. FedRAMP and StateRAMP provide agencies with assurances that cloud technology providers meet rigorous cybersecurity standards through independent audits and ongoing continuous monitoring.

03 Technology systems must be resilient and secure

LOOKING AHEAD

The public demands that their public safety agencies remain available to answer the call every time. To answer that call, first responders need to trust that their technology will always be there to support them – no matter what type of disruption. In 2024, this can be accomplished with a modern, cloud-native platform for their mission-critical CAD and RMS. Only with a modern system, safely divorced from an on-premises server, can public safety agencies assure their community that their mission-critical lifesaving data will always be available and secure.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Investing in a modern, cloud-native platform is essential for keeping an agency online during a critical incident.
2. Effective security controls are critical in the face of rising cyberattacks, malware, and ransomware.
3. Look to technology vendors that adhere to state and federal security standards.

04 Mobility is not the future, it is the now

In recent years, there has been an increase in the use of mobile applications by public safety agencies. Technology advances have made it easier to take first responders' workflows off laptops and mobile data terminals (MDT) and onto their mobile devices. As a result, the ability of first responders to use handheld devices is becoming less of an added benefit for agencies and rather a necessity. According to a 2023 survey of U.S. first responders, 89% of those surveyed said that they used their mobile phone as a part of workday tasks. In 2024, leading public safety agencies will accelerate their use of mobile device technology. To do this successfully requires:

1. Leveraging the mobility to improve first responder safety.
2. Embracing the expectations of a new generation of first responders.
3. The intentional development of mobile-first strategies.

Improved safety for first responders

First responders need mobile, responsive technology that works where they work, and lets them take their mission-critical data with them. Clear safety benefits include:

- Mobile device apps use the location of the first responder, not their vehicle, allowing telecommunicators and supervisors to always see exact responder locations. This can be critical when an emergency takes a responder somewhere on foot and away from their vehicle for an extended period during their shift.
- Mobile device apps give first responders access to mission-critical information at every point of their response, improving situational awareness.
- Cloud-native-built mobile applications can have extremely robust offline modes, providing another layer of resiliency in the event cellular connectivity is lost.

“Officers can do a lot more away from their car. It’s been a huge help and will relieve dispatchers from a lot of functions and will increase efficiency. On-person GPS will increase officer safety. To be able to login on the phone, anywhere, is huge for situational awareness.”

Captain Glen Brock

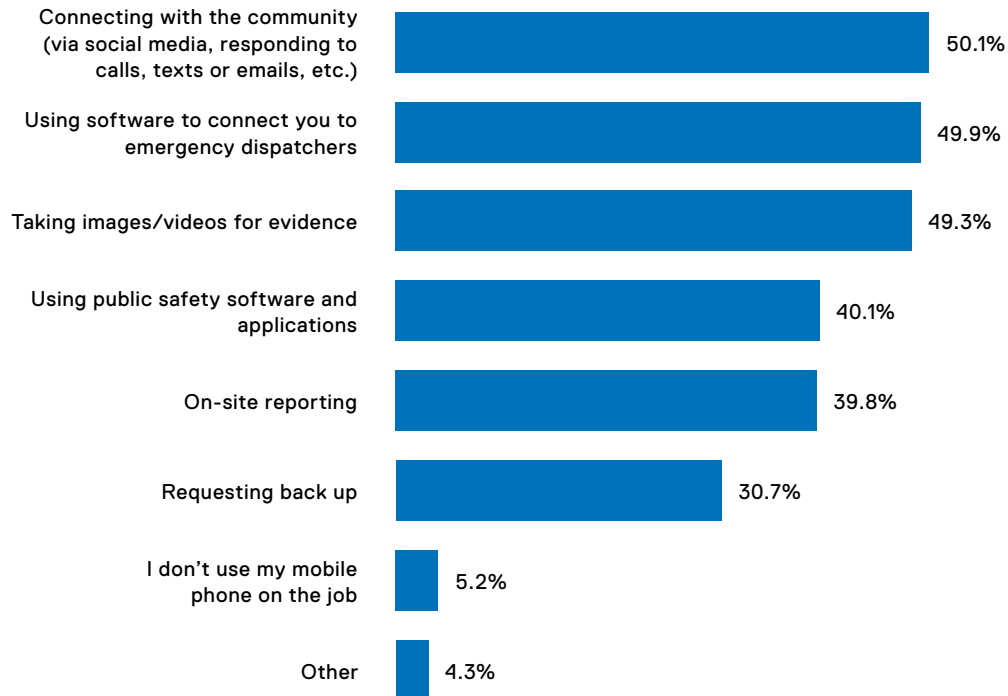
Hemet Police Department, CA

Improved first responder satisfaction and efficiency

The current generation of incoming first responders are digital natives who grew up with technology and are accustomed to using their mobile devices as their primary way of interacting with the world. Public safety agencies are entering a time when the new generation of members coming on to the job interact with technology in a fundamentally different way than those who came before them.

- Agencies need to acknowledge that the mobile device is a part of everyday life and develop tools that enable first responders to use the device on the job in a way that is similar to the way they use mobile applications daily.
- Digital natives are adept at using tools such as voice dictation on a mobile device, enabling the deployment of apps that offer report-writing capabilities.
- Mobile devices allow officers to spend more time engaged in proactive policing and interacting with the community, increasing job satisfaction by letting them do the job they signed up for.

What do you use your mobile phone for on the job?



Intentional strategy

Many public safety agencies are still building out their handheld device strategy. To be successful, a mobile device strategy needs to be intentional. Not every capability that currently exists on a laptop or an MDT needs to be translated onto a mobile device. An effective mobile device strategy is more about determining what matters to users in the field, as opposed to overwhelming them with the hundreds of capabilities that exist on an RMS or a CAD.

Agencies should:

- Be thoughtful in choosing which workflows they put onto a mobile device application and avoid the “kitchen sink” approach.
- Use available RMS and CAD data to research first responder activity, ask what workflows make sense for users in the field, and what workflows can wait until they are back at the vehicle, laptop or in the station.
- Look for software partners that have a true mobile-first approach, who will work with them to configure the mobile device applications in ways that will benefit how first responders work.
- Design workflows that are easy to use on a mobile device, making sure the design is compatible with a mobile device and that the way that tasks and activities are completed align to the device.

04 Mobility is not the future, it is the now

LOOKING AHEAD

As more public safety agencies are embracing mobile device technology to strengthen communication and increase responsiveness, they need to make sure the technology they choose is one that empowers their first responders to react and respond effectively, no matter where their mission takes them. To provide them with the right tool, agencies will develop thoughtful and intentional strategies that not only ensure the safety of their first responders, but also consider their workflows and level of familiarity with mobile technology. This is the path to creating more efficient workflows, happier users, and safer communities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The incoming generation of first responders are digital natives, adept at using their devices to interact with the world.
2. An effective mobile device strategy must be intentional and based upon an evaluation of officers' workflows.
3. Look for technology partners who have a true mobile-first approach.

05 Breaking out of data silos is critical for facilitating community trust and multi-agency coordination

Driven by new technology and increases in federal, state, and local compliance requirements, public safety agencies have been collecting more data of varying types in recent years. Capturing, analyzing, and disseminating this data in thoughtful ways is essential to building and maintaining community trust and advancing public safety goals. However, determining how to effectively share this data can be challenging.

In 2024 leading agencies will develop ways to break down information silos and coordinate their systems and data to inform decision-making and effective crime fighting. These efforts will include:

1. Building trust through data transparency efforts.
2. Using modern technology to enable data and system interoperability.

Building trust through data transparency efforts

Increasing data transparency to build community trust is critical for several reasons, including encouraging community members to call 911 when they need help, provide public safety agencies with tips for crime prevention, and cooperate with the police in situations where a crime may have occurred. Data transparency can help facilitate this.

84%

of U.S. first responders think there should be greater transparency for data and statistics with the general public

One of the first steps in any data transparency effort is directly engaging with the community and asking what data they would like to see and how they would like to see it. Sharing that data in ways that resonate with the community will result in more useful and sustainable initiatives. Examples of data transparency efforts include:

- Public-facing dashboards that provide the community with timely, reliable data to facilitate an understanding of public safety activities and outcomes.
- Releasing raw data to provide researchers and academic partners with the opportunity to uncover trends, correlations, and associations to inform public safety strategies and methods.
- Internal transparency. Even agencies that proactively share data with the community may not always share it internally. This data can include deployment information, key performance metrics, and crime data. Doing so can improve morale, increase situational awareness, and help with internal planning.

Using modern technology to enable data and system interoperability

Enabling system interoperability and data sharing among public safety, government agencies, and service providers requires clean and accurate data. Modern, cloud-native technology platforms can help ensure data is a clean, reliable source of truth and interoperable. These platforms offer:

- Intuitive interfaces with error validation that helps facilitate accurate data collection.
- Systems with open APIs that easily connect to and integrate with other mission-critical applications.
- Reduced opportunity for human data entry error as users only need to enter data in one system that automatically populates another.

“The biggest issue that we have in South Florida is the fact that we have to communicate with one another, and there are 37 different police departments in Miami-Dade County. Crime really doesn’t know the borders, so the ability for us to communicate in real time but also through our data sharing is something that’s important.”

Chief Edward Hudak

Coral Gables Police Department, FL

Technology partners are instrumental in supporting agencies with data transparency efforts. They can provide expertise, resources, and work directly with key public safety stakeholders to develop an infrastructure that makes data-sharing a straight-forward process. Creating these favorable conditions will significantly increase the likelihood that agencies have the capacity to consistently share data and information with law enforcement, government, social service, and community partners and organizations.

05 Breaking out of data silos is critical for facilitating community trust and multi-agency coordination

LOOKING AHEAD

As public safety agencies continue to collect more data, the challenges and opportunities for effectively using that data will grow as well. Successful agencies will find ways to analyze and share it with the community, building relationships and trust. Leading agencies will also find ways to ease data sharing and facilitate cross collaboration with partners across agencies and jurisdictions by investing in modern technology platforms.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The amount of data that public safety agencies are collecting is growing every year and will only get larger.
2. Sharing this data with the community is key to maintaining public trust.
3. A modern technology platform is essential for breaking out of silos and sharing data across agencies and jurisdictions.

06

Gun violence continues to require a relentless focus

While violent crime and homicides are trending down when compared to previous years, gun violence continues to be an escalating crisis across the United States, with more than 33,000 gun violence deaths as of October 2023.⁶ For communities and public safety agencies impacted by this negative trend, there is a clear need for a relentless focus on gun violence.

In 2024, leading public safety agencies will keep their focus on driving down violent gun crimes by:

1. Embracing alternative response models to provide the community with more holistic response options while enabling law enforcement to focus on gun crime.
2. Turning to technology hubs like real-time crime centers.

Alternative response models to free up resources

Alternative response models, also known as multi-disciplinary or civilian response models, provide communities with a new cadre of first responders including mental and behavioral health professionals, social workers, mediators, and other trained specialists. According to a 2023 survey of U.S first responders, 89% of those respondents feel that police should work with non-police agencies like social workers to respond to certain nonviolent calls for service. Over the last few years, several models have emerged where a “third public safety agency” is created and specifically tasked with responding to these calls instead of police and fire:

- Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS), established in 2021, is a cabinet-level public safety agency in Albuquerque, NM that allows 911 dispatch to send trained professionals with backgrounds in behavioral and mental health and social services to non-violent and non-medical calls.
- In 2023, Seattle launched the Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) department, also a cabinet-level public safety agency engaged in enhanced violence intervention efforts. CARE has emergency telecommunicators, community-focused public safety responders including behavioral health professionals, and violence intervention specialists.

82%

of U.S. first responders agree that non-police agencies should respond to certain non-violent calls

By responding to non-violent, non-emergency calls, these alternative response agencies can free up already-strained police resources to focus on violent crimes. From January 1 - September 1, 2023, ACS responded to a cumulative 46,482 calls for service. 28,322 of those calls were diverted from the Albuquerque Police Department to the ACS.⁷

Real-time crime centers

One of the ways public safety agencies have been using technology to enhance their collaborative response to violent crime and gun violence is with real-time crime centers (RTCC). Although it varies by jurisdiction, an RTCC is typically a technology and information hub that leverages multiple data sources from a variety of agencies to enhance real-time situational awareness, intelligence gathering and coordination among stakeholders. These stakeholders can include other federal, state, and local agencies, as well as regional partners such as schools, nonprofits, and businesses.

Four ways RTCCs can support crime response efforts:

- Facilitate coordination of local, state, and federal partners.
- Bring disparate data streams, siloed systems, and various partners together in meaningful ways for action including preventing and more effectively responding to crime.
- Allow for quick identification of crime patterns and sprees.
- Support detectives with real-time investigative analysis when a violent crime occurs, including pulling relevant data and reports, reviewing camera footage, looking up critical information in databases, and if applicable, reviewing social media to understand involved criminal actors.

Modern technology as the driver

The success of both alternative response models and RTCCs is largely driven by the use of modern and secure technology. The core of an RTCC's operations is processing and analyzing critical data sources — CAD, arrest and incident reports, CCTV footage, social media, gunshot detection, investigative databases, among others — and equipping stakeholders with the intelligence to make more informed tactical decisions about response plans, crime prevention strategies, and resource allocation.

In the case of alternative response models, timely and accurate data analysis is necessary to not only shape the development of the program but also to evaluate and course correct where needed.

- Incident and crime data provides insight about which call types could or could not be diverted to non-police resources.
- Calls for service data shows how first responders are spending their time — are they spending it responding to non-criminal activities that could be better suited for another non-police entity?
- There is the potential for data sharing among law enforcement and the alternative responders in secure and thoughtful ways. Depending on the agency's policies and guidelines, alternative response programs may also need to share certain types of information with service providers and the community.

The use of alternative response models is a fast-growing field, and the data collection and administration requirements are still evolving. As there currently is no standard for alternative response and data governance, strong policies need to be in place to govern, oversee, and manage data use, with special considerations around privacy. Agencies looking to share data should engage with a technology partner that is willing to provide a secure, configurable solution.

“The data speaks to the work that we’re doing. As we start to grow and assist other cities with this type of department or program that they’re going to create, that’s going to be their big piece — how are we collecting information.”

Director Mariela Ruiz-Angel

Albuquerque Community Safety, NM

06 Gun violence continues to require a relentless focus

LOOKING AHEAD

As communities respond to a crisis in gun violence, many public safety agencies are thinking broadly about partnerships and ways to use technology to drive efficiencies. Alternative response models currently being established in several U.S. cities can help with this effort, as can existing technology hubs such as real-time crime centers. Both rely on technology and data analysis to direct their efforts. Communities that embrace these efforts while engaging in data analysis of their progress and effectiveness are able to amplify their responses to critical issues such as gun violence while still addressing other critical community needs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

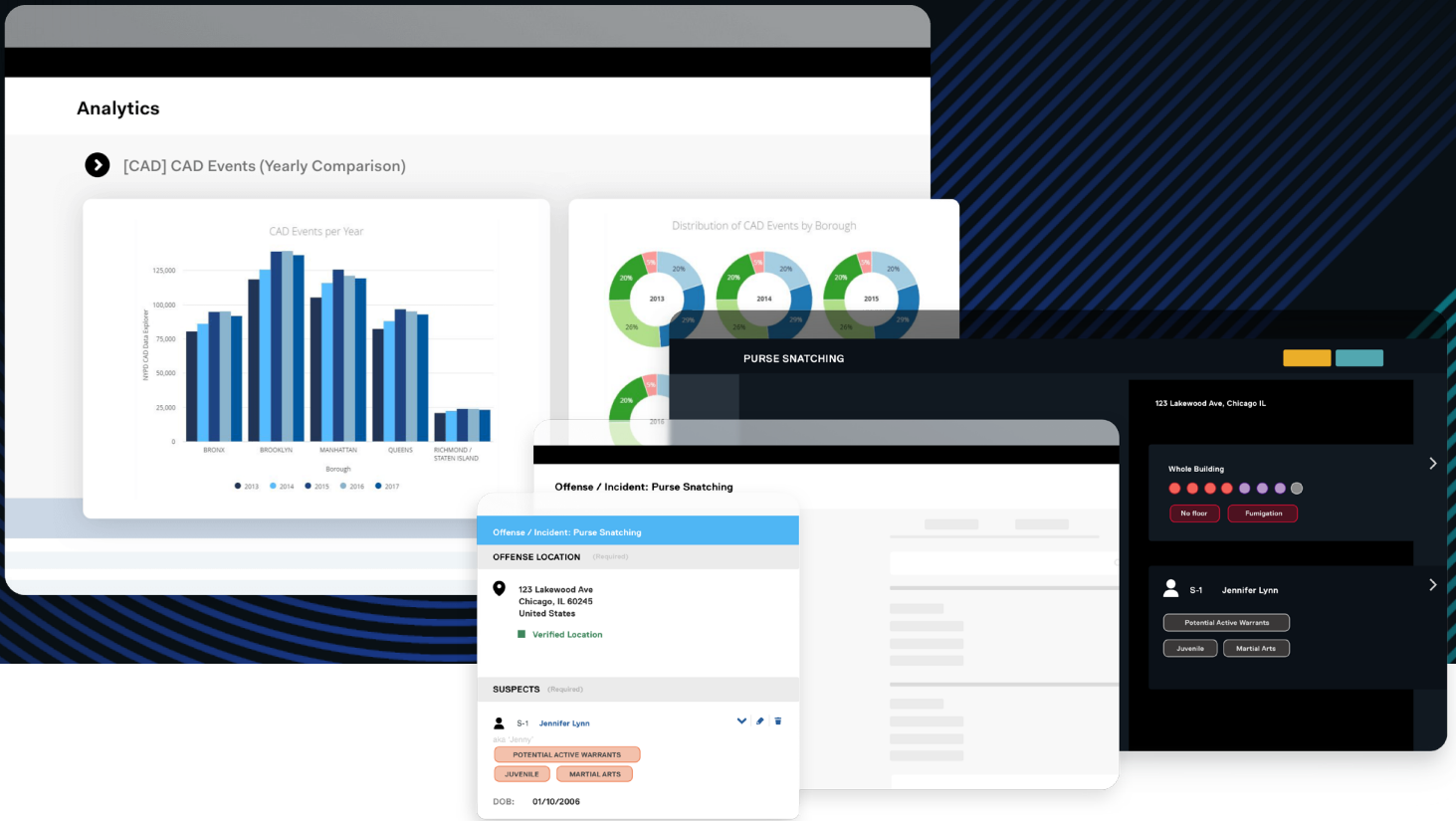
1. The growth of alternative response models provides a more holistic community response and allows law enforcement to focus resources on addressing violent gun crime.
2. Technology hubs such as real-time crime centers can enable a relentless focus on violent gun crimes.
3. Modern technology is essential to the success of these efforts.

2024 and beyond

At Mark43, our imperative is to see around the corner on behalf of our public safety partners. As a technology partner to over 200 U.S. public safety agencies, we are a source of support, care, guidance, and stability as agencies work to best serve their communities. To that end, we will continue to innovate and deliver for them by delivering the most secure and reliable RMS, CAD and analytics platform that stays true to the Mark43 spirit of innovation that has been foundational since the company began.

While technology can indeed have a transformational impact on the public safety of a community, it is important to remember that it is a tool to enable agencies to fulfill their core mission of serving the community. Even as modern technology continues to improve, effective public safety relies on empathy and human touch, so first responders must be part of every workflow and interaction in 2024. Therefore, it is essential for public safety agencies to invest their resources in their people, bolstered by modern technology. When first responders have the technology that enables them to do their jobs more efficiently, they are better able to serve their communities — the primary reason people choose to work in this field.

It is our hope that the trends identified in this report will help keep them on the path to fulfilling that mission. To all the public safety professionals reading this report: thank you for your service.



About Mark43

Mark43 is the leading cloud-native public safety technology company. By delivering a modern, intuitive and mobile-first records management system, computer-aided dispatch and analytics platform, Mark43 empowers governments and their communities to improve the safety and quality of life for all. Working with more than 200 local, state and federal public safety agencies, Mark43 is transforming how first responders use technology to respond, engage and serve the community. Mark43 provides the tools, resources, expertise, and security foundation that public safety needs today, tomorrow, and beyond. For more information or to request a demo, visit www.mark43.com.

Notes

Unless otherwise noted, statistics cited are from a national online survey conducted by Propeller Insights of 349 first responders between October 3 and October 18, 2023. Respondents opted into an online database, from there, they were targeted based on demographics. To further confirm qualifications, respondents were asked to verify their information in the survey itself, self-identifying qualifications, with the maximum margin of sampling error was +/- 5 percentage points with a 95 percent level of confidence.

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