



# Strategic Vision for the Paterson Police Department

## **PPD** NEXTGEN

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*Officer in Charge  
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## Message from Officer in Charge Isa Abbassi

For nearly 157 years, the Paterson Police Department (PPD or the Department) has served this historic city. As the demand for change in the public safety culture of Paterson grows stronger, we must collectively envision a path forward—a path that serves this diverse community in the constitutionally-focused and responsible manner every resident and visitor to Paterson deserves.

The evolution toward the Next Generation (NEXTGEN) of policing in Paterson will be an exciting, yet challenging transition. This transition will require listening, discourse, reconciliation, and change. Most of all, it will require a willingness to move forward together.

As we embark on this journey to make the PPD NEXTGEN approach to public safety a reality, please allow me to share my vision of how the members of the PPD, by working together with this community and our public safety partners, can position our police department to lead the law enforcement profession into the NEXTGEN of policing and beyond.

I look forward to achieving this vision with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isa M. Abbassi'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Isa M. Abbassi  
*Officer in Charge*  
*Office of the Attorney General*  
*Paterson Police Department*





# Paterson Police Department Mission Statement

**Mission:** The mission of the PPD is to protect life, maintain order, impartially enforce the law, and reduce fear while partnering with the community to improve the quality of life for all.

**Vision:** The PPD is committed to delivering excellence in public safety by achieving and maintaining the highest standards of fairness, integrity, and inclusiveness while employing innovative and effective strategies in response to the needs of the community we serve.

**Values:** The values of the PPD will be the roadmap by which its members model behavior both on duty and off. Always cognizant of our ethical responsibility to the community we protect, our focus will remain on:

- Respect for the Constitution and the Law,
- Maintaining the highest standards of integrity at all times,
- Achieving public safety with courtesy and compassion,
- Serving the community, and
- Achieving excellence through innovation.





## Rebuilding Public Trust and Restoring Order in our Community

Perhaps the greatest challenge ahead of us is earning the trust of those we serve. This will be a long journey that will be undertaken together with the community to ensure that the PPD is providing the information and accountability the City of Paterson demands and deserves. Meaningful reinvention, however, will require that the voices of the community are included in every step of the process. This important work will begin with:

Setting the Standard by establishing a clear mission, vision, and values for the PPD accompanied by a nationally recognized Code of Ethics to guide its members and inform the public. These standards can be found on pages 5 and 15 of this document.



Improving transparency, accountability, and trust by increasing public access to data, enhancing supervisory oversight, and establishing meaningful quality controls. Members of the public can expect that the PPD will:

- Not only satisfy the Early Warning System requirements of Attorney General Directive 2018-3, but also establish a proactive and effective Early Intervention Program to quickly identify and intervene when employee performance does not meet expectations;
- Leverage bodyworn camera technology as an auditing tool to ensure policy compliance and customer service;
- Improve transparency surrounding officer complaints, discipline, and public contact offenses;
- Adopt a FORCESTAT use of force tracking and evaluation model, which utilizes reporting and analytical tools available in the Attorney General's Use of Force Portal as required pursuant to Attorney General Directives and policies;
- Evaluate and improve the PPD's civilian complaint intake and investigation processes;
- Establish pathways for true community participation in the management of its police department;
- Prioritize cultural immersion for all employees and facilitate community roundtable discussions;
- Establish customer service as a priority; and
- Work closely with community-based violence intervention (CBVI) groups.

Establishing a comprehensive youth strategy and refocusing community resource collaborations to ensure that outreach, partnerships, and policies are effectively engaging young people in productive and meaningful ways.

Putting more cops on the street through creative deployment strategies, civilianization, and thoughtful reorganization, in order to increase the number of officers visible on the streets of Paterson and in our community where they are needed most.

Precision policing and restoring quality of life will be at the forefront of the PPD's crime strategy. These efforts will include increased transparency to ensure that the Department's goals remain aligned with those it serves. To aid in this effort, the PPD will adopt a COMPSTAT model of crime analysis to provide data-informed strategies with public input.



## Evolution of Community Policing

**Bringing community stakeholders into the management of their police department.** Key to the PPD NEXTGEN strategy is the ability to solicit community feedback in real time to ensure its services are properly tailored to its customers. To accomplish this goal, the status quo must be reimagined. The community can expect that the PPD will:

- Work with community, government, business, and agency partners to develop a holistic and community-led approach to problem solving;
- Bring an unrelenting focus on interagency partnerships to hone in on those who drive violence in our community while ensuring a shared responsibility for public safety is upheld by all;
- Establish a Police Advisory Council to leverage community partnerships in ways that improve the delivery of police services on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood scale; and
- Develop enhanced business recovery and neighborhood revitalization strategies.







**Redefine community policing.** Community policing must be rooted in the knowledge and understanding of the community. By ensuring true engagement and communication with residents, officers are able to develop a first-hand knowledge of what the community needs from its police department and its officers. This allows the PPD, in partnership with the community, to:

- Focus deployment to deter crime and disorder;
- Address quality of life concerns;
- Arrest those few individuals in our community who choose to victimize the innocent and drive violence;
- Provide referrals to services for those in need;
- Develop strong community relationships;
- Work with community-based credible messengers and CBVI groups to ensure that the shared responsibility for public safety is effectively coordinated;
- Engage youth and participate in community events; and
- Build bridges and make lasting friendships.





## Innovation, Technology & Strategic Evaluation

The evolution of policing in the City of Paterson requires innovation in people, process, and culture. This includes a laser focus on emerging technologies and best practices. To ensure the PPD achieves a culture of Excellence through Innovation, it will undertake a top-to-bottom review of the PPD.

### **2023 PPD Assessment**

This review, expected to be completed in the fall of 2023, will build upon the significant assessment work begun by the transition team and will be conducted with the goal of identifying existing policies, practices, tactics, and equipment that no longer suit the needs of the Department. Further, the Department will explore innovative new technologies and best practices from law enforcement and beyond, allowing the PPD to lead the way into the NEXTGEN of policing.





Additional goals of the 2023 PPD Assessment include:

- Soliciting participation and feedback from all members of the PPD about how to improve policing in Paterson;
- Ensuring the agency's focus on de-escalation and active bystandership solutions to reduce the risk of unintended outcomes pursuant to Attorney General Directive 2021-14 and increasing the number of Crisis Intervention Trained officers, which currently stands at 52;
- Launching mental health and co-response strategies for responding to persons in crisis [as an ARRIVE Together expansion site];
- Evaluating technologies that keep officers on the street longer and with less administrative downtime;
- Recommending innovations and technologies that maximize both officer and public safety as well as reduce the likelihood of unintended outcomes during encounters with the public;
- Evaluating and improving crime and data reporting;
- Developing effective mechanisms for gauging both public and employee sentiments; and
- Developing a robust culture of employee recognition for those who consistently exceed expectations.





## Recruitment, Training & Employee Well-being

**Recruiting the future and training for success.** The future leadership of the PPD has yet to be hired. It is through this lens that we must view recruitment of new officers and civilian employees. For too long, underrepresented communities have been deprived of the opportunity to view law enforcement as a viable career choice. The Department must closely examine recruiting and hiring practices to ensure equity, fairness, and access for all those who wish to join our ranks.

Once hired, an eye must always be kept to the horizon so that innovation and improvement upon policy, practice, and resources will continue while providing comprehensive and continuous training. To this end, the PPD is committed to:

- Identifying pathways to recruit those who have been historically underserved or under-recruited in the past;
- Examining and reimagining the field training program and officer education;



- Making the NEXTGEN of the PPD a reflection of the population it serves;
- Ensuring members of the PPD are paid a fair living wage and a salary commensurate with their regional counterparts;
- Exploring innovative training and equipment options for our membership;
- Maintaining an unwavering commitment to continuous evaluation of our use of force guidelines;
- Developing professional development and mentorship programs for all employees from entry level through executive positions; and
- Increasing exposure to training and best practices from throughout law enforcement.

Employee well-being is key to any organization's success. Doing all that we can in such a demanding profession to allow our members and their families to spend time together, find the support they need when life or work become challenging, or make sure our employees are well-rested and ready to take on whatever the day may bring must be our priority.

There must be a commitment to care for one another so that all are physically and mentally prepared to respond when the public needs our assistance.

To expand upon the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement, which is mandated by the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, an extensive evaluation of the PPD's employee well-being resources, services, and policies will take place. Planned evaluations and improvements include:

- Evaluating peer support programs;
- Engaging employees at all levels, sworn and civilian, to identify areas for supporting employee well-being;
- Prioritizing leave for employees experiencing personal hardships or work-related trauma; and
- Adopting a From Hire to Retire approach to supporting employee wellness through financial literacy and retirement planning.



## Conclusion

This vision for the future of the PPD represents the first step of many to align our cops and our community on what public safety in Paterson, New Jersey could look like. The road ahead will be challenging at times but worth the effort. The PPD will be making tangible changes to the way it does business. Members of the public can expect to see progress reports as well as a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines specific projects and initiatives that will achieve the goals stated in this document. Public safety is a shared responsibility, and we look forward to achieving it together.



## Code of Ethics

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my Department. I will keep ever secret any information I see or hear of a confidential nature or information that is confided to me in my official capacity, unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities, or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence, and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession—law enforcement.



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