



AUDIT HIGHLIGHTS

Crime Reporting Statistics

April 14, 2022

Audit No. 2007

WHY WE DID THIS AUDIT

An audit of Crime Reporting Statistics was included on the City Council-approved fiscal year (FY) 2021/22 Audit Plan. The audit objective was to evaluate controls over and reliability of crime statistics reporting.

BACKGROUND

The Scottsdale Police Department (SPD) reports crime statistics to the Arizona Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Within SPD, the Planning, Research and Accreditation (PRA) unit reviews and submits these crime statistics. DPS compiles all Arizona statistics and sends them to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) UCR program.

As of January 1, 2021, SPD submits crime statistics for the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which is more detailed than the previous Summary Reporting System.

NIBRS data is generated from police reports entered in the department's records management system (RMS). Throughout the month, PRA police analysts perform quality reviews of the accuracy of the UCR information before transmitting the monthly data to the DPS system.

This audit reviewed calendar year 2021 crime reporting in NIBRS.

City Auditor's Office

City Auditor 480 312-7867
Integrity Line 480 312-8348
www.ScottsdaleAZ.gov

WHAT WE FOUND

The department can improve its processes to ensure data submitted to and reported by DPS is complete and accurate.

Based on our review of incident data and the department's quality review process, crime statistics were generally reported accurately, though some quality control processes could be improved. We found:

- Inconsistencies in coding incident dispositions resulted in minor errors in the number of crimes and clearances reported. Inconsistencies may also affect the accuracy of internal department data on clearances.
- Because of the transition to the new reporting method, crimes that occurred in the past but were reported to SPD in 2021 are not included in crime statistics.
- Errors and outdated information in the statute mapping table may impact the accuracy of crime reporting.
- Overrides to UCR codes are not routinely documented and reviewed.

Some aspects of crime reporting could be improved.

Specifically, we found:

- Written procedures would help promote consistency in the quality review process, and review of duplicate clearances may no longer be needed.
- A change review and approval process is needed for modifications to the statute mapping.
- 2021 crime statistics are not currently available on the SPD website.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

We recommend the Police Chief require staff to:

- Clarify reporting procedures to ensure consistency in coding and establish processes to verify the completeness of data submitted to DPS/NIBRS.
- Ensure the statute mapping review is completed and establish a process for managing changes.
- Establish written procedures for the monthly quality review, require override reasons to be documented and reviewed, and evaluate whether the review of duplicate clearances can be eliminated.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The department agreed with the recommendations and plans to complete implementation by the end of calendar year 2022.